

RETROSPECT OF LARYNGOLOGY.

BY JOHN MACINTYRE.

THE beginning of another year suggests the propriety of making some remarks upon the progress of laryngology during 1899, and while it cannot be admitted that anything very startling has been announced, nevertheless, much satisfactory work has been put upon record. Whether judged from the clinical or theoretical aspect, the abundant literature of the year is quite up to the average, and in the various societies at home and abroad a steady advance can be noted in the grasp of laryngological questions generally, and in particular in the etiology and pathology of many questions which have in the past been and which now remain obscure. As examples of this, we have had attention paid by Avellis to that extremely important group of cases known by the name of "inspiratory stridor of infants," or "tracheostenosis thymica." In some instances the old theory of Allen Burns of the relations between this condition and that of the thymus gland has been renewed with, as might have been expected, suggestions for the therapeutic use of the gland or its extracts. We might take as another example the somewhat difficult subject of the proper treatment of papillomatous tumours in children, to which Rosenberg and others have been paying attention. As a contrast to these, we have the ingenuity of the surgeon suggested by Mangolat's attempts at transplantation of costal hyaline cartilage in severe stenosis of the larynx. There are difficulties involved in such a procedure, and although the results attained do not seem to be very satisfactory at present, a statement suggesting easy dilatation afterwards is worth noticing. Passing from these to the extremely important question of the administration of the various serums in affections due to microbic influences which affect the larynx, although we are not flooded with so many papers and statistics, nevertheless interesting facts during the past twelve months have been gradually accumulated, thus further enabling us to form a correct estimate of their true value. Some points of importance are steadily being attained, namely, more careful preparation of the serums with regard to their preservation and constancy. The contributions to the study of nervous affections of the larynx have been increased by some important papers. Onodi has made some further investigation of the centres of the laryngeal nerves, and Krause in a monograph which was reviewed in the August number of our Journal has recorded some further experimental research bearing upon the question of the early proclivity to

interference of the abductor fibres. Our views, as far as they seem to affect Semon's law, were expressed in the number to which we referred. Our knowledge of the anatomy of the larynx has been enriched by the afore-mentioned study of the central nervous system by Onodi and by Gallatti, who has written an interesting paper upon the anatomy of the larynx in the infant.

New apparatus has, as usual, received a considerable amount of attention, and many useful modifications at least have been brought out during the year. An interesting new feature is the photography of the larynx somewhat upon the lines of French's previous work. Dr. Garelle, at the last meeting of the Société d'Otologie, de Rhinologie et de Laryngologie, gave a demonstration of a new apparatus by means of which he was able to produce stereoscopic photographs of the conditions of the larynx. Considerable improvement has taken place during the year in the technique of the X rays. The introduction of the Wehnelt interrupter, when once sufficiently strong Crookes' tubes can be made, promises to give us much steadier screen work and shorter exposures. Here, again, we have an interesting experiment of Dr. McKenzie Davidson, who has been attempting to show structures stereoscopically on the fluorescent screen. Photographic stereoscopic pictures had been already got, but it is easy to see how advantageous it would be in a search for foreign bodies to obtain a distinct image of the object and its relationship to the surrounding parts by direct vision. The soft tissues, particularly in the mediastinal region, such as neoplasms, aneurisms, etc., indirectly affecting the larynx through the recurrent nerves, have been still further localized by the same rays. So during the past year it may be said steady progress has been made.