

**60. Coley's fluid.**

The treatment of inoperable sarcoma by means of Coley's fluid—a mixture of the products of the growth of the streptococcus of erysipelas and the bacillus prodigiosus sterilised by heat—formed the subject of a paper by Mansell Moullin (*Lancet*, Feb. 5, 1898). He gives details of five cases, of which three were apparently cured. In one the original tumour disappeared, and in another there was only a temporary diminution affecting one portion. Amongst the conclusions drawn from these cases, and from the exhaustive study of the literature connected with this subject, may be mentioned the following:—(1) That the proportion of cases of sarcomata that are cured by the injection of the mixed toxins depends, amongst other things, upon the histological character of the growths. Spindle-celled sarcomata are by far the most successful. This suggests the inference that the mixed toxins have a selective effect, even if it is not specific. (2) The disappearance of sarcomata is not due to inflammation, but to an intensely rapid form of fatty degeneration, comparable only to that which affects the lymphatic cells in acute yellow atrophy of the liver. (3) The toxins are of no use unless the cultures are taken from a virulent case of erysipelas, or are made virulent by passing the streptococcus through rabbits. (4) The bacillus prodigiosus, in spite of theoretical objections, has the effect of immensely increasing the reaction.

At the discussion, when this paper was read, Watson Cheyne called attention to the fact that in all Coley's cases the tumours had been of the spindle-celled variety. Colman, in describing the results of *post-mortem* examinations on two persons who had died of some intercurrent disease after being subjected to the treatment, said that in one there was a large area of softening in the interior of the tumour, and in the other cicatrices had been found which probably marked the site of past inflammation.

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