

ROAD to HEALTH

APPENDICITIS

By A. C. TERRENCE, M. D.
Opelousas, La.

"Doctor, this is Mrs. Barker," said an anxious voice on my telephone several weeks ago. "My son George has a bad stomachache, and he seems to have a fever. Should I give him some medicine?"

"Put him right to bed and don't give him anything," I answered. "I'll be right over."

When I got there, 11-year-old George, looking miserable, said he felt sick at his stomach. When I asked him where he hurt, he pointed the lower right side of his abdomen, saying the pain had started higher up and then gone down.

I immediately suspected appendicitis, and after making a few tests I was sure. I told Mrs. Barker that George would have to go to the hospital and have his appendix out. He looked alarmed at this news, but I explained that taking an appendix out is not a dangerous operation if it is done at the right time. As a matter of fact, it is one of the most common operations of all.

Today George, rid of his troublesome appendix and getting over the effects of his operation, was in my office proudly showing me his scar. He told me that his seven-year-old brother Bobby, anxious to imitate his big brother in every way, was clamoring to have his appendix taken out too!

George is an intelligent, wide-awake youngster, and he was

full of questions about his appendix, questions I was glad to answer. First he asked, "What is an appendix, anyway? Will I miss it? Can I get along all right without it?"

I said that, as far as we know, the appendix is useless. I drew George a picture of a worm-shaped organ about four inches long, and explained that this was the approximate size and shape of his appendix. (Some are an inch or so longer, some an inch or so shorter.) I told George that the appendix is attached at the beginning of the large intestines. He was amazed that such a small organ could cause so much trouble.

"But since it didn't do me any good, but gave me an awful pain, I'm glad to be rid of it," he commented. Then he asked, "But why did my appendix hurt? What was the matter with it?"

I said that the inflammation which gave George so much pain was probably started when foreign matter, entering his appendix from the large intestine, blocked up the appendix. I explained that this blockage worked like the dams George likes to build in the brook, it kept his appendix from draining, and injured its walls. Once the walls were injured, germs could get in and set up an infection. The infection caused the pain, the nausea and the fever George had when his mother called me.

I told George I was glad his mother hadn't given him a laxative or an enema for his "stomachache." The laxative or enema would have increased the pressure already caused by the 'dam' in George's appendix, and might have caused the appendix to burst, spreading the infection all around. This is a serious condition called peritonitis, which endangers life.

"Well, I'm glad mother called you right away," George said. "You know, I felt so sick that morning I didn't eat any breakfast."

"As a matter of fact, it's a good thing you didn't eat any breakfast," I answered. "Anyone who has abdominal pain and feels sick at his stomach should not take any food or drink. Neither should he use an ice bag or hot water bottle. You see, they might make matters worse. Another thing—no one who thinks he has appendicitis should rub or massage his abdomen and he should avoid any exertion. That is why I told your mother to put you right to bed when she phoned that day."

George suddenly smiled broadly and said he was anxious to get back to school, so he could tell all the boys and girls about his operation. He said he was going to tell them all the things he'd learned about appendicitis.

"Well, if you do," I said, "be sure to warn them not to try any home remedies if they think they have appendicitis. There are only two things to do when anyone you know has abdominal pain and nausea," I reminded George, "get him to lie down quietly and have the doctor called."

If a person with acute appendicitis is under a doctor's care within a few hours of the time the pain starts, he has little to worry about. It is the people who delay calling the doctor, and who meanwhile experiment with home remedies, who endanger their lives.

PARENTS OF QUADS ARE HONORED WITH TEA AT PARAMOUNT GRILL

Mr. and Mrs. James Fultz and family were honored guests at a tea prepared especially for them at the Paramount Grill Sunday, May 18, following their appearance at Memorial Stadium during the Song Festival. Mr. and Mrs. Fultz are the proud parents of the famous Fultz quadruplets, of Madison. A basket of pink roses and blue robins was presented to Dr. Klenner, the quads' physician, by Mrs. Jessie Walton, as "Miss Rose Beauty Salon," at the song festival Sunday afternoon.

CARD OF THANKS

Mrs. N. E. McLean, of 403 Beech street, wishes to thank her many friends for the lovely flowers, beautiful cards, fruits, and other kindnesses shown her during her recent illness.

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E. L. Raiford, executive secretary of the Bloodworth Street Y. M. C. A., Raleigh, delivered the Commencement address at Berry O'Kelly Training school, Method, N. C., Thursday, May 22, at 10:30 a. m. E. A. Johnson is principal.

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