

# CANADA

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## VIENNA LETTER.

*(From our Special Correspondent.)*

VIENNA, June 30, 1883.

### THE REMOVAL OF ENLARGED THYROID GLANDS.

There is probably no operation in surgery that is attended with so much difficulty as the removal of an enlarged thyroid gland. No matter what the size and histological characters of the tumor are, its removal is always attended by great difficulty and considerable danger.

The operation, as performed at present, is, however, after all, a fairly successful one. During the last five years Billroth has performed this operation 68 times. The mortality was only  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. In the previous five years his mortality was 29 per cent., and 36 per cent. in the five years before that. This great reduction in the death-rate he accounts for thus—1st, The employment of the strictest antiseptic precautions, by which septicæmia, which formerly headed the list as the cause of death, is banished; 2nd, Improved method of operating. During the last few weeks Billroth has lost three cases; these cases are not included in the 68 previously mentioned. In one, death took place suddenly on the operating table, immediately after the completion of the operation. The cause of death in this case was supposed to be the entrance of air into the veins. In the second case, the death was directly due to collapse of the trachea five days after the operation. The patient had tetany, and to