

The Canada Lancet.

VOL. XXX.]

TORONTO, APRIL, 1898.

[No. 8.]

ORIGINAL ARTICLES AND COMMUNICATIONS.

THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE RADICAL CURE OF HERNIA.

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN,—In appointing this subject for discussion, no doubt your committee had more particularly in view the inguinal form of hernia, which is the variety constantly met with in practice. I shall, therefore, largely confine my remarks to this class of cases and should time permit will give a brief resumé of the data and procedure in the radical cure of the more uncommon varieties, viz.: Femoral and Umbilical Hernia. In discussing the present status of the radical cure of hernia three questions naturally present themselves:

I. What degree of success may be anticipated as the result of a modern operation for the radical cure, if properly carried out?

II. Under what circumstances should we advise the operation?

III. What method should we adopt?

The answer to the first question must essentially be somewhat statistical. W. T. Bull has collected 5,000 operated upon, with 58 deaths or 1.16 per cent. He estimated that from 60 to 90 per cent of all the cases were permanently cured. Bull and Coley, of New York, have operated upon 300 cases by Bassini's method, with three deaths and seven relapses, the relapses being very slight. Bassini reported 262 cases with seven recurrences and no deaths; Macewen mentions 98 cases with one recurrence and no deaths. Quite recently, Marcy, of Boston, publishes the fact that in a series of nearly 400 cases operated upon he has not seen a single case in which the patient's life was endangered when the integrity of the intestine was not involved. His experience also establishes the fact that over 90 per cent. of the cases are permanently cured by the operation. Without multiplying statistics it may be positively stated that the percentage of deaths when the operation is carefully carried out is less than one per cent.

The percentage of recurrences will depend largely upon the operator, but from all the statistics at present at our disposal, I should be inclined to place 20 per cent. as the extreme, and at the same time I beg to remind you that the figures are improving every year as the technique becomes more perfectly understood. Surely, when we find it positively stated that Bassini, Marcy, Macewen and Coley in the aggregate did 1,041 radical cases with but one death, we should the less hesitate to recommend the operation.

In reply to the second question, I beg to note that it appears to have