

ward in order to prevent a new descent of the parts, which notwithstanding all the pains and all the hazard the patient had undergone he was still liable to."

Cauterization by means of strong acids, such as sulphuric and nitric, were also employed.

It is not difficult to understand the dire results that not infrequently followed these methods and which finally led to their abandonment.

Bordenhave (quoted by Lawrence) states that of three patients treated at one of the hospitals in Paris, one died, one relapsed and the third had a swelling of the spermatic cord. Peritonitis, gangrene of the scrotum and testis, and even perforation of the bowel often formed part of the after history of these operations. During the eighteenth century castration became so common, especially in France, that finally stringent laws were passed condemning it. As an example, it is stated that the Bishop of St. Papoul found more than five hundred children had been castrated for hernia in his own diocese alone.

The celebrated "punctum aurem" was introduced by Geraldus of Metz. It consisted in exposing the sac and encircling it with a thread of gold in such a manner as not to include the cord.

Such then was the state of the radical cure of hernia at the beginning of the nineteenth century. We find an occasional return to ancient methods in the early part of the present century, notably by the Prussian surgeon, Schumaker, and the elder Langenbeck. They made an open incision and dissected the sac from the cord, then ligated it as high up as possible. Langenbeck stated that he had performed the operation twelve times with the most successful results. The method, however, did not meet with general approval and does not seem to have been much employed.

With the introduction of subcutaneous surgery by Stromeyer, in 1835, there followed attempts to apply its principles to the cure of hernia. The most notable example of these operations were the methods of Wützer and Gerdy, and a little later the method of John Wood, of London, which was a combination of the open and subcutaneous methods. Woods' method was introduced in England in 1857, and even up to recent times it was more generally employed than any other method both in Europe and in America.

The best results were obtained by Wood himself, who claimed a large percentage of cures. The mortality of the method was about 7 per cent., though in his later series of cases this was reduced very considerably.

By modern methods we mean those that have been introduced or rather re-introduced after the great discoveries of Lister and Pasteur. It took some years for the principle of antisepsis to become sufficiently accepted and put into practice by the leading surgeons, before serious attempts were made to apply them to the radical cure of hernia.

In the first place a distinction should be made between opera-