

toneum covering the abscess to adhere to the parietal peritoneum, before the surgeon could venture to open the abscess either by the lancet or by the trocar and cannula. Abscesses have often emptied through into the peritoneal cavity, with the result of the death of the patient, or they may have burst into some portion of the intestine, and so emptied themselves, in which case the patient usually recovered; they may perforate the diaphragm, and burst into the lung, the pus being expectorated, and here, again, many patients have recovered. While, however, the abscess was eating its way into these organs, the patient's strength often failed and he died. The introduction of the aspirator has happily been the means of our saving many poor sufferers from months of agonizing pain, and also very many have been restored to health by its early application. I think it cannot be too forcibly impressed upon every physician or surgeon, that, if a patient present himself who has a circumscribed hard swelling in the liver, the nature of which is doubtful, it should at once be punctured with the aspiration-needle, and if it should turn out to be an abscess or hydatid cyst, by means of the pneumatic aspirator the cavity can be emptied. Again, I would go further and say that, if the patient present any symptoms of hepatic abscess, and if there be any one tender spot traceable over the liver, the surgeon is quite justified in puncturing the liver at the tender spot, with a view of discovering an abscess. Surgeon-Major Condon has recorded twelve cases that came under his notice and treatment: seven perfectly recovered and five died; of these five he points out that "four of them were in a dying state when received by me under treatment, and the operation was merely resorted to as a *dernier ressort*, and with the satisfactory results of relieving suffering and prolonging life." In one case he tapped an abscess fourteen times, when a second abscess was discovered, which was tapped sixteen times, and the patient was enabled to be removed to a P. & O. steamer and conveyed to England, where he died. Mr. Condon remarks that the enormous quantity of pus taken from the liver (about 400 ounces) is, he believes, the largest quantity taken from a human liver on record. Numerous other cases have been reported by