

immediately after the peritonæal opening; the great majority of these twenty-one gave distinct evidence of micro-organisms in the fluid withdrawn by the gauze sponges at the end of the operation. Altogether, twenty cases out of twenty-eight were found to possess bacterially inoculated fluids just before the abdomen was closed. But in spite of this occurrence, in not a single one of these twenty cases demonstrated to be so infected, were there any septic manifestations during the convalescence.

In fifteen of these latter cases the organisms proved to be certain varieties of micro-cocci; and the clinical course of eleven cases out of the fifteen showed marked temperature elevations. On the other hand, out of eleven cases in which the operation did not last over a quarter of an hour, no rise of temperature occurred in six, a single moderate elevation in only three, while in two of these cases the febrile movement overstepped 38°C. for a few days.

The operations embraced all the usual varieties of abdominal section, including hysterectomy, ovariectomy, vaginal hysterectomy, etc. In eleven cases there was no recorded rise in temperature. Evidences of plastic peritonitis in the shape of adhesions were present in twelve cases; and in eleven of these, no micro-organisms were found on opening the abdomen. This fact is held to support the view that adhesive peritonitis may arise from simple local irritation, and without the intervention of any micro-organism. Further, the examination of cyst contents, and the secretions of adherent Fallopian tubes in the majority of cases showed no signs of proliferating bacteria.

The author concludes, from his observations, that the peritonæum contains no micro-organisms under ordinary conditions; and that it is impossible during an operation to keep the field of work completely aseptic. The practical import of this fact is of value.—*Medical Chronicle*.

BED-CLOTHING FOR THE SICK.—In hospital, as well as in private practice, great errors are made in the matter of bed-clothing for the sick, particularly for the sick who are suffering from febrile affections. We have got rid of the heavy curtains around the bed; of the grand accumulator of dust and other uncleanness, the tester; of the heavy valance which converted the under-part of the

bed into a close cupboard, in which all kinds of unwholesome and cumbrous articles lay concealed, including sometimes excreted matter itself; and we have banished the carpet, which often as a hard-trodden, dust-laden rag, made the floor beneath the bed persistently impure. This is all good reform, but we have still not advanced sufficiently in the reforms necessary for bed and bedding. The old feather-beds, flock mattresses, heavy blankets, thick, impermeable, and dense counterpanes, still encumber many a patient, rendering ventilation of his body as impossible as in the days of our forefathers. It does not, indeed, seem as yet to have been accepted by physicians, still less by nurses and patients, that the body calls for ventilation; that a bedroom or ward may be the purest in a general point of view, and yet that the advantage which ought to arise may be considerably curtailed by the unwholesomeness of the bed and bedding, and by the patient making an unwholesome atmosphere for himself in his immediate surroundings. The universal improvement that is now called for in the direction named, consists in substituting porosity for density in all articles of bedding. The thick dense bed and mattress require to be replaced by the light steel elastic bed; and the clothing under and upon the patient, now so close and heavy, require to be replaced by clothing that is porous, so that it can be permeated with pure air from without, and can, at the same time, permit the warm and impure air from the patient to have free exit. Under such condition of clothing, there is a double current of gases going on in the clothes, which is most purifying, cooling, and refreshing; the noxious odours which so easily accumulate under dense bed-clothes, have then no abiding place; and febrile heat is dispersed instead of being retained, as in addition to the evil that already exists. The mistake now so generally made, lies in the idea that the warmth which the bed calls for is best obtained by close material and close packing. The error is positive. There is nothing that retains warmth in so good and equable a manner as common air at rest. Dense materials, as Count Rumford demonstrated, cannot keep the body respirably warm. If they are non-conductors they may retain the heat, but then they retain also the cutaneous transpiration; whilst air, a splendid non-conduc-