

# Dominion Medical Monthly

And Ontario Medical Journal

Vol. XLV.

TORONTO, AUGUST, 1915

No. 2

## Original Articles

### ADDRESS ON SURGERY \*

BY FRANCIS J. SHEPHERD, M.D., LL.D., F.R.C.S.

It is one of the privileges of age to be reminiscent, and when asked to give this address I thought it would be interesting to look back and see what changes have taken place in the science and art of surgery since I entered as a medical student in the fall of 1869.

It is well for the present generation of surgeons to be aware of the condition of affairs in the pre-antiseptic days and to have some conception of the dangers and difficulties of surgery at that time. What is easy to the present generation was a source of difficulty then, and it is well to know that surgery was not born thoroughly equipped as was Minerva, the Goddess of Wisdom and Wars, Arts and Sciences, when she sprung full grown and completely armed from the brain of Jupiter.

The efficiency of surgery has been arrived at by a slow process of evolution. There had been but little advance in surgery for some time before I entered medicine. Lister was just being heard of in Glasgow as applying Pasteur's germ theory to surgery and trying to find some substance which would destroy the organisms he was convinced were the cause of sepsis and suppuration. But the germ theory was not yet admitted by surgeons in general and especially were the London surgeons opposed to it and even made fun of Lister's antiseptic efforts.

I remember my first experience of surgical responsibility was sitting up at night after an amputation of the thigh so as to be present and apply a tourniquet in case of secondary hemorrhage. At that time only one end of the silk ligatures was cut

\*Read before the Ontario Medical Association, May 27, 1915.