

instructed to keep as still as possible, especially the part affected. No pressure was made to force out the contents, a practice I regard as extremely pernicious. A light poultice was placed over the wound and the contents allowed gradually to discharge. This allows the structures around the abscess which have been pressed aside by the accumulating fluid gradually to return to their normal position. In these cases I am particularly referring to, as well as in many others noticed no septic poisoning followed the opening; indeed no fibrile symptoms. On the contrary the patient felt at once relieved, and immediately began to improve; and in good time perfectly recovered. The explanation to my mind appears very simple. By gradual contraction of the walls of the abscess, the contents were slowly pressed out; and at no time was there less fluid within the walls than completely filled the sac. Consequently there was no space for air to enter. Under these circumstances the walls of the abscess gradually coalesce, and ultimately, if rest be maintained, unite by adhesion. The so-called pyogenic membrane, immediately after the opening is made, is relieved from pressure, irritation ceases, and lymph is no longer poured out to become pus. Finally when the walls come into contact, the false membrane is in a condition to unite in the same manner as union takes place in secondary adhesion.

The *rationale* of those cases in which septic poisoning follows the opening of the abscess, seems to be equally plain and simple, and without the aid of air germs. When a small incision is made which subsequently closes, especially when from pressing out of the contents, or from motion of the part, a space is made into which the air naturally enters. By the closing of the aperture the air is imprisoned, and as before stated, the conditions, favorable to putrefaction at once exist. The walls become distended by fluid containing dead organic matter, and the pyogenic membrane continues its work of pouring fluid into the sac and of absorbing. Before the abscess was opened, the material absorbed, consisting of serum and worn out lymph corpuscles, was innocuous, but now the presence of pent up air causes putrefactive decomposition, which matter being absorbed produces septicæmia. In the course of my practice I have seen cases where the air did enter the abscess; but so long as the opening was sufficiently large to per-

mit fresh air to enter, after the foul air had been pressed out, and this repeated often enough, there was little or no putrefaction. Of late years however I have been in the habit of injecting some antiseptic, to suspend putrefaction, not to destroy imaginary germs but to act chemically upon the devitalized tissue in the same manner as common salt will prevent or arrest decomposition of animal flesh.

I am sir, yours truly,

WILLIAM CANNIFF.

Toronto, May 20th, '79.

## ONTARIO MEDICAL COUNCIL.

### MINUTES AND PROCEEDINGS.

The annual meeting of the Council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario was held in Toronto, on Tuesday, the 13th ult., and following days. All the members were present, except Hon. Dr. Brouse, Drs. Grant and Lynn. Dr. Allison, Vice-President, occupied the chair. After the reading of the minutes of the last annual meeting, the election of officers was proceeded with.

Dr. McDONALD, of Hamilton, was elected President, and Dr. LOGAN, of Ottawa, Vice-President.

Dr. McDONALD thanked the Council for the honor conferred on him. He had thought that some other member of the profession might be selected. However, he would attempt to justify the honor.

It was moved by Dr. C. V. BERRYMAN, seconded by Dr. M. LAVELL,—“That the following gentlemen be a Committee to appoint Standing Committees:—Drs. Aikins, Geikie, D. Clarke, W. Clarke, McDonald, Vernon, Irwin, Berryman.”—*Carried.*

The Council adjourned for half an hour, to allow of the drafting of the Standing Committees.

### STANDING COMMITTEES.

REGISTRATION—Drs. Bethune, Henwood, Lynn, Vernon, and Spragge.

RULES AND REGULATIONS—Hon. Dr. Brouse, Drs. W. Clarke, Edwards, Husband, and D. Clarke.

FINANCE—Drs. Hyde, Henwood, Irwin, Henderson, and Ross.

PRINTING—Drs. Allison, Herriman, and Morden.