

THE
MARITIME MEDICAL NEWS,
A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY.

VOL. XI.

HALIFAX, N. S., MAY, 1899.

No. 5.

Original Communications.

STERILIZATION OF CATGUT.*

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I will not take up your valuable time by dwelling on the importance of having a perfectly sterile and reliable catgut.

What is catgut?

Catgut is made from the submucosa of the small intestine of the sheep. Volkman says:—"The process of maceration, by which the mucous, serous and circular muscular constituents of the intestinal wall are prepared for their mechanical removal, involves decomposition and permeation with millions of micro-organisms, among which have been found the bacillus anthrax and its spores."

There are a great many methods of sterilizing catgut. They may be divided for general reference into two methods:—

1st. The method of sterilization by "Antiseptic" means.

2nd. The method of sterilization by "Mechanical" means.

As regards the first method, the best is that which is called "Chromicized Catgut." This has one advantage over the other methods in that while it does not injure, it thoroughly disinfects and toughens the catgut. The stronger the solution the longer the sutures will last.

Morris, of New York by grading the proportions of his preparations, has produced catgut sutures which last as long as 24 days.

Bissell uses bichloride and alcohol.

*Read at N. S. Branch British Medical Association, March 22nd, 1899.