

THE CAVENDISH LECTURE ON SOME PHASES OF
INFLAMMATION OF THE APPENDIX.*

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THE APPEARING OF APPENDICITIS.

Mr. President and Gentlemen,—Among those circumstances which are remarkable in the history of medicine in the closing years of the nineteenth century, few are more curious than the almost abrupt appearance of the disease now known as appendicitis.

I think that the writing which did more than any other to force upon the medical world a recognition of the true pathology of pericecal peritonitis was the monograph of Fitz, published in 1886.

It may be claimed for this communication that it gave the first precise, detailed, and fully demonstrated account of the disease now known as appendicitis.

THE PART PLAYED BY THE PERITONEUM.

In dealing with the pathology of appendicitis it is desirable to appreciate clearly that the clinical phenomena, which are familiar under the name of "an attack of appendicitis," are due to peritonitis in the region of that organ.

The disease is essentially a variety of peritonitis. Its manifestations, its effects, and its possibilities are those only of peritonitis. Whatever may be the antecedent condition, an attack of appendicitis is not in evidence, and, indeed, does not exist until the peritoneum is implicated.

It is needless to say that this peritonitis is induced by inflammatory changes in the appendix itself; and it was to these primary changes, which are antecedent to an attack, that Fitz first proposed to give the name of "appendicitis."

APPENDICITIS WITHOUT SYMPTOMS.

It is interesting to inquire what symptoms, if any, belong to pure appendicitis—to that uncomplicated inflammation of the appendage which precedes the familiar manifestations of an attack, and which are, in other words, preliminary to the peritonitis.

On this subject, three propositions may, I think, be made:

1. Extensive inflammation of the appendix, leading to great thickening of its walls, to widespread ulceration of its mucous

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