

1881,\* in a paper upon the cure of hernia, I described the use of the tendon suture from the kangaroo and other animals, as especially to be commended. Reference to my recommendation of the kangaroo tendon and its value in surgery was some time later made in an Australian publication. This came to the notice of Dr. Girdlestone, who wrote me that he had used kangaroo tendons for ligatures with great satisfaction, and that he had published his results.\*\*

The tendons should be taken from recently-killed animals, quickly sun-dried, and kept dry until ready for further preparation. This prevents primary decomposition, which we have pointed out as unavoidable in the preparation of cat-gut. When soaked until soft, they are easily separated into as fine strands as desired with remarkably little waste, and are from fifteen inches to two feet in length. Kangaroos are very numerous in Australia, their skins have a very considerable commercial value, and hundreds of thousands are exported annually; yet it has been with the greatest difficulty that I have succeeded, until quite recently, in securing tendons more than sufficient for my own use, although I sent *carte blanche* orders to various parts of Australia. These are prepared under my personal supervision, and can now be obtained from the various dealers in surgical materials at a cost somewhat in excess of that of cat-gut, to which they are in every way greatly to be preferred.

The larger varieties of the common rat have the tendons of the tail similarly disposed, but are hardly long enough to be of any practical value.

In the *Medical News* for December 5th, 1891, Dr. E. Oliver Belt, of Washington, states that he has made extensive use in ophthalmic operations of a fine fibre derived from the rat's tail. The tail is skinned and soaked in water for several days, when, on slight manipulation, it splits into, perhaps, a hundred fibres, each about eight inches long. They are placed in alcohol and, about once a month for two or three days at a time, they are soaked in a 1 to 5,000 solution of corrosive sublimate. Dr. Belt recommends these fibres in cases where a strong and fine animal suture is required. He says they are much finer than those pre-

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\* "The Cure of Hernia," Transactions of the International Medical Congress, 1881, Vol. ii., p. 446.

\*\* "Tendon Ligatures," T. M. Girdlestone, *Australian Medical Journal*, 1877, Vol. xxii., p. 356.