

PERISCOPIC DEPARTMENT.

Surgery.

CLINICAL LECTURES ON INTESTINAL OBSTRUCTION.

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ON LUMBAR COLOTOMY FOR THE RELIEF AND CURE OF RECTAL OBSTRUCTION AND DISEASE.

(Reported by Mr. Henry CLARKE, student.)

GENTLEMEN,—I have selected the operation of lumbar colotomy—that of opening of colon in the right or left loin—as the subject of to-day's lecture, not only because I know it to be well worthy of your attention, but because I believe it has not yet found its true place in Surgery. It is admitted among the justifiable operations in exceptional cases, to be performed when all other means have failed to ward off death and give relief, but under no other circumstances; as an operation for any curative purpose it is hardly recognised. When successful also it has generally been believed that the condition of the patient is so miserable—that the escape of feces and wind from the artificial wound causes so much distress and discomfort—that life at such a price is hardly worth having; that at the best it may prolong life, but with a local discomfort that is almost unendurable. Yet I think I shall be able to show you that the operation deserves far higher claims upon our attention than these; that it not only is a most valuable means of prolonging life and relieving pain; that when successful the artificial anus is not such a source of local discomfort as you might believe; and that, as a curative agent, it bids fair to be of great and undeniable value. I propose, therefore, to consider the operation in two points of view—first, as an operation of expediency to prolong life and relieve pain; and, secondly, as a curative agent. As an operation of expediency, it may be called for under any circumstances in which some chronic obstruction in the large intestine exists: whether the obstruction be due to the presence of some tumour pressing upon the bowel—that is, to some outside influence—or to some stricture contracting the calibre of the bowel from some inside influence. As a curative agent, it may be performed for severe examples of ulceration of the rectum, which in a