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INGUINAL HERNIA.

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CHAPTER I.

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SOME ANATOMICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

DURING the past twenty years or so ideas as to the etiology and treatment of inguinal hernia have undergone a great change. This is chiefly due to the influence of the writings of Mr. Hamilton Russell, of Melbourne, who, in 1899, published a paper * in which he made the suggestion that in all cases of inguinal hernia, both in children and adults, the sac was a congenital structure and that it was always derived from a persistent patent funicular process. This theory, generally known as the Saccular Theory of Hernia, was subsequently elaborated by Mr. Russell in a series of papers,† and in these a congenital origin was also claimed for the sacs of femoral, umbilical and direct inguinal herniæ, as well as the ordinary indirect form of the latter. This led to considerable controversy, especially as to the etiology of femoral hernial sacs, but as it is proposed to discuss in these pages only the common indirect variety of inguinal hernia there is no need to go into this matter here. Those who wish to further consider the facts and arguments in favour of Mr. Hamilton Russell's views will find them ably and forcibly stated in the papers already mentioned, and also in the works of Mr. R. W. Murray, of Liverpool,‡ who is a strong supporter of

* R. Hamilton Russell, "The Etiology and Treatment of Inguinal Hernia in the Young," *Lancet*, 1899, Vol. II., p. 1353.

† R. Hamilton Russell, "Operation *c.* Truss in the Treatment of Inguinal Hernia in Childhood," *Lancet*, 1900, Vol. II., p. 1128; "The Congenital Factor in Hernia," *Lancet*, 1902, Vol. I., p. 1519; "The Congenital Origin of Hernia," *Lancet*, 1904, Vol. I., p. 707; "The Pathology and Treatment of Hernia in Children," *Lancet*, 1905, Vol. I., p. 7.

‡ R. W. Murray, "Observations upon the Etiology of Oblique Inguinal Hernia," *Lancet*, 1906, Vol. I., p. 363; "Note on the Etiology of Inguinal and Femoral Hernia," *Lancet*, 1907, Vol. I., p. 228; "Hernia, its Cause and Treatment" (Messrs. J. and A. Churchill), 1908.