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## ORIGINAL ARTICLES

### INCISION AND EXCISION IN PELVIC FLUID COLLECTIONS

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I am well aware of the mine of discussion that underlies the heading of these remarks, for under the banner of incision will be ranged those disciples of the principles of conservatism in surgery; while under the bunting of the excisionists will stand the radicals in pelvic work. Anyone following the course of the discussions of expert pelvic workers cannot, I think, but be amazed at the fact that, with a common pathological groundwork to start on their courses of treatment, should so materially vary; and that in a profession where calmness and deliberation ought to prevail, there should arise camps, hostile to one another and attacking each other with a venom that leaves lingering lesions in both the minds and the work of all concerned. I think I state the truth when I say that conservatism, when applied to the practice of general medicine and surgery, is a term that draws forth the respect of the majority of the profession. The greatest names in medicine and surgery are those of men of moderate views. It is a Fogge, or an Osler, who stamp themselves as leaders of medical thought, and it is an Erichsen, or a Dennis, who give permanent weight to surgical opinion. Such men are, or were, conservatives in their opinions and practice. But, only let a fellow-worker in the de-

vious windings of pelvic sepsis raise his voice in behalf of the unfortunate uterus and its appendages, and what a howl goes forth from the radical camp. "Conservatism is an excuse for cowardly surgery" will be their retort. It is a rule that holds good in general surgery to save all you can consistent with the circumstances of the case, but advance such beliefs before the specializing star in pelvic tragedy and what abuse and sarcasm will be brought from him. Brilliant and daring as is such an operator as Joseph Price, of Philadelphia, I still cannot but believe that his influence as a leader in gynecology is bad. Sift his sayings and writings, and what have we? Any principles of safe, permanent application? It seems to me not, but instead an assortment of coarse screenings that have one common aspect, viz., the individuality of their author. It is a curious, but it is, nevertheless, I think, a notable, observation that a man will follow the lines of general medicine and surgery with, usually, a mind open to conviction and ready to learn from the experience of others, but, let him gravitate to the regions below the brim of the pelvis, and it then behoves him that he stand upon every knoll, and, like the chanticleered autocrat of the barnyard, cock-a-doodle-doo his opinions to the assembled hennery, as the only ones right and proper to be followed. Does the reason for this bumptiousness, Mr. President, lie in the fact that there is a woman in the case? Pathologists, and other medical workers, do not attack each other with bitter personalities, however