

## A HANDY METHOD OF STERILIZING INSTRUMENTS.

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Dr. Karl Gerson describes in the *Deutsche medicinische Wochenschrift* an efficient and simple mode of sterilizing instruments. Professor Mikulicz brought into use some time ago the method of sterilizing the hands before performing an operation by means of friction with spirits of soap. As a sterilizing agent for the hands the spirits of soap acted well.

Dr. Gerson has recently tested the efficiency of the same method, and has proved to his own satisfaction that instruments rubbed with cotton wool moistened with a solution of spirits of soap are effectually sterilized against the most virulent germs, and that by wrapping them in cotton wool wetted with it they will retain their aseptic condition for a length of time. By applying the spirits of soap thus, the spirit evaporates, leaving a coat of soap on the instruments while the substance adheres to the wool throughout.

Dr. Gerson goes so far as to declare that such are the remarkable antiseptic properties of spirits of soap, that in the case of bougies, catheters, and other large instruments, which it might be difficult to wrap in cotton wool, a rubbing with spirits of soap for three minutes before an operation fully answers the purpose.

*The Hospital*, December 6, commenting upon this statement, says that it alone is enough to throw doubt upon the whole of Dr. Gerson's conclusions. The writer in the *London Journal* goes on to say: "The septicity of a foul catheter lies within, and it must be quite impossible to sterilize such an instrument with certainty by means of any solution, however germicidal it may be. It is here that heat has the pull, penetrating as it does into the joints and corners of the most complicated apparatus. Still, for solid and smooth instruments there is every reason to believe that the application of spirits of soap will be useful. A somewhat lengthy experience has shown that it does very well for the hands, which are much more septic than any well-cleaned instrument, and there would seem to be no ground for doubting that it will do equally well for any solid instrument to the whole surface of which it can be directly applied. Spirits of soap, it may be added, is merely hard soap dissolved in dilute alcohol. It is essential