

THE CANADIAN PRACTITIONER

FORMERLY "THE CANADIAN JOURNAL OF MEDICAL SCIENCE."

EDITORS:

A. H. WRIGHT, B.A., M.D. Tor., M.R.C.S. England. - J. E. GRAHAM, M.D. Tor., L.R.C.P. London.
W. H. B. AIKINS, M.B. Tor., L.R.C.P. London.

Business Management, - - THE J. E. BRYANT COMPANY (Limited), 58 Bay Street.

TORONTO, AUGUST 16, 1889.

Original Communications.

MISCELLANEOUS LAPAROTOMIES.*

BY DR. HOWITT, GUELPH.

In this paper it is my desire to record all the cases of surgery that have occurred in my practice, in which it was deemed expedient to open the peritoneal cavity, excepting those for the radical cure of ordinary hernia, and the removal of the uterine appendages and ovarian tumors.

So much has been said about the details of abdominal surgery, that it is not necessary to dwell on introductory remarks. However, there are a few points to which I wish to call attention.

(1.) *Spray*.—In England, I am told, "the spray bubble has exploded," and you are aware that Sir Jos. Lister has discarded it in favor of irrigation. Yet, notwithstanding the thunderbolts of the great surgeon, Tait, and what has been written by eminent and successful operators against its use, I still firmly believe, that when used with judgment, it is an agent for good. It is my opinion that carbolic acid is contra-indicated and that pure water is the only essential.

Experiments have convinced me, that when the spray is played for an hour under proper conditions and in a suitable apartment, it will so thoroughly cleanse the air of floating particles of dust, as to render invisible after the settling of the vapor—no matter how you may darken

the room—a ray of sunlight between the point of entrance and place of contact.

Furthermore, scientists have proved that rain purifies the air of deleterious gases, and can you doubt that pure-water spray does the same in its limited sphere?

Air deprived of all foreign substances is sterile; surely every operator would prefer such an environment. A wound made under this condition, with other details perfect, I have seen heal so kindly that not so much as a trace of stitch-hole irritation, nor a line of redness along the margin of the cut could be detected.

(2.) *Water*.—Water rendered aseptic by straining and repeated boilings is less irritating to the sensitive peritoneum than ordinary water. Let anyone drop a little aseptic water on the conjunctiva of one eye and a little ordinary water, at the same temperature; on that of the other, a marked difference in the irritation set up will be invariably noticed. No one will deny that it is also a better solvent.

(3.) *Aspirator*.—I have had made a strong tin cylinder, strengthened by ribs of iron, about fifteen inches in diameter and the height of an ordinary table, provided with an aperture at the top for a special aspirator cork with two stop-cocks, one to fit an ordinary aspirator attachment, the other much larger, for which a special rubber tube and trochar, which can be readily made to graduate a flow, from the smallest quantity to three or four gallons per minute. The bottom of the cork has a small hook, to which is attached a yard of lamp-wick, saturated

* Read before the Ontario Medical Association.