

**THE CANADA MEDICAL RECORD.**

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**MONTREAL, JULY, 1892.****THE CAUSE OF APPENDICITIS.**

While all observers are agreed that appendicitis is a disease both apparently and really more frequent than formerly, no very good explanation has been given for the same. When we say that the disease is apparently on the increase, we mean that a great many more cases are recognized now than there used to be, while in former times a great many cases of appendicitis really occurred, and the patients recovered or died from it without the disease having been diagnosed as such. But apart from the greater modern skill in recognizing cases, which in former years would have been diagnosed as inflammation of the bowels, etc., it is generally admitted that the disease is really more frequent. For us a satisfactory explanation is easy to find. Inflammation of the appendix is due either to some cause from within or to some cause from without the intestines. Among the latter may be classed those cases in which the disease extends from a pustule or ovary out towards the right iliac fossa. In performing abdominal section for this condition it is no uncommon thing to find the appendix vermiformis closely adherent by inflammatory exuda-

tion to the pelvic viscera. But in the majority of cases the trouble arises from the interior of the intestinal tract. The appendix has been found to be much more frequently affected among the inhabitants of those countries where habitual constipation is very common. Small pieces of hardened faeces are forced into the diverticulum, from which there is no outlet, and the resulting irritation and pressure set up suppuration with possible rupture into the peritoneal cavity. As a rule, the pain of appendicitis is very much relieved by saline treatment which liquifies the hardened faecal masses, and by emptying the distended ascending colon also allows the appendix in turn to empty itself. A leading English surgeon during a recent visit to America was astonished at the number of cases of appendicitis encountered in every large centre; he actually saw more cases in three weeks on this continent than he had even heard of in Great Britain in all his experience. Owing to the peculiar diet and habits of the American people, living as so many of them do on rich food and taking little or no exercise, the number of people suffering from constipation is very large. This view is still farther borne out by the enormous sales in the United States of patent medicines which have a cathartic for their principal ingredient. In our opinion, the practitioner should pay more attention to the treatment of constipation as a disease of the greatest importance, instead of passing it over as a symptom hardly worth his notice; for, in our experience, both appendicitis and many diseases of the pelvic viscera, male and female, have their origin in habitual neglect to properly move the bowels.

**A NEW MEDICAL JOURNAL.**

We take pleasure in welcoming to the ranks of Canadian medical journalism a new candidate for professional favor, entitled The Ontario Medical Journal, the first issue of which is to appear about the 15th