

Dominion Medical Monthly

And Ontario Medical Journal

Vol. XL.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY, 1913.

No. 2

Original Articles

CESAREAN SECTION—WITH THE REPORT OF TWO SUCCESSFUL CASES*

BY J. P. KENNEDY, M.D., SURGEON TO THE WINGHAM GENERAL
HOSPITAL.

The first Cesarean section in America was performed by Dr. John L. Richmond, at Newtown, Ohio, on April 22nd, 1827. Dr. Richmond states he arrived late in the evening at a new, unfinished cabin, surrounded by flooded, low land, seven miles distant from his home. There was no floor nor chimney in this cabin, and the spaces between the logs had not been chinked, so that blankets had to be held up to keep the wind of the stormy night from blowing out the candle. Two midwives were present, ministering as best they could to a young woman who had been in active, but ineffectual, labor for thirty hours. Uterine contractions were frequent and forcible, each ending in a convulsion. Exhaustion and a failing heart were evident. From the scant stock of medicines which he had brought, and with such means as the cabin afforded, he at once set about to give relief from this condition. Examinations revealed a deformity of the soft tissues of the birth canal, which rendered delivery by the natural passage impossible. Distance, the storm of the night, the flooded country and the late hour made aid from other doctors unavailable. Thus alone, weighed down by the sense of such responsibility, as can be known only by experience, for the safety of the two lives entrusted to his keeping, he studied and mentally struggled and prayed, and finally decided that only immediate Cesarean section afforded any hope for either mother or

*Read before the Huron Medical Association, Dec. 12th, 1912.