

tied, the conjoined tendon is brought down to the ligament across the posterior wall of the canal. The cord is now replaced, traction being made on the testicle, if necessary, for this purpose.

If the aponeurosis of the external oblique is thinned and stretched, the margins of the incision may be overlapped.

Another method of strengthening a weakened condition of the aponeurosis is the "Darn and Stay-lace Method," independently suggested by Mr. Sampson Handley * and Mr. Charles Bennett.† Though I have no practical experience of this method, it would appear to be of service in these cases.

If the external abdominal ring is abnormally large, the continuous suture closing the opening in the aponeurosis may be continued downwards, approximating the pillars until the ring is of about the normal size (Fig. 12). As the intercolumnar ligament is not divided, this, even if it should do no ultimate good, cannot weaken the ring, and it is possible, if the pillars are thus held together, that the fibres of the intercolumnar ligament may contract or that they may be reinforced by the development of some new fibres. This approximation of the pillars may be carried out in cases where, though the aponeurosis is not thinned and the internal oblique is well developed, yet the external ring appears to be unduly large. It must be remembered that a large external ring alone does not predispose to recurrence, unless there is also weakness of the internal and the external oblique. In any case the ring must not be so diminished in size by the sutures as to cause any constriction of the vessels of the spermatic cord.

Though any operation for the radical cure of hernia is generally straightforward, yet occasionally cases are met with where unexpected difficulties, usually connected with thinness of the sac, intimate connection of this with the vas, or unusual or adherent contents, arise, and call for considerable patience and trouble in overcoming them. In the operations which have been described above, the most important stage is the initial separation of the sac from the spermatic cord. Before and

* W. Sampson Handley, "The Darn and Stay-lace Method for the Radical Cure of Inguinal Hernia," *Practitioner*, June, 1918.

† Charles Bennett, "Inguinal Hernia," *Glasgow Medical Journal*, September, 1917.