



CHEYNE M. R.

ANTISEPTIC

SURGERY

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ANTISEPTIC SURGERY

ITS PRINCIPLES, PRACTICE, HISTORY

AND RESULTS

BY

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With Illustration



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TO

JOSEPH LISTER

TO WHOM ANY WORK ON ANTISEPTIC SURGERY

OWES ITS EXISTENCE

This Book is Dedicated

AS A MARK OF

THE AUTHOR'S ADMIRATION AND GRATITUDE

P R E F A C E.

THE interest which Antiseptic Surgery has awakened throughout the profession has led to many public debates and to the accumulation of a great mass of literature on the subject. The time seems now to have come for a detailed account and discussion of the whole matter, and it is with the view of furnishing such an account that the present volume has been published. The question might have been dealt with in two ways ; either by the discussion of the present standpoint of the principles and practice of Antiseptic Surgery, with but little reference to former literature ; or, as I have attempted to do, by tracing in addition the development of its theory and practice, and following out and criticising the various steps by which the present state of knowledge on the subject has been reached. The former mode might no doubt have produced a shorter work, but it could not have been made complete in the present transitory state of our knowledge, and, taken alone, it would have necessarily raised side issues confusing to readers unacquainted with the earlier literature. I have therefore, in addition to the discussion of the present state of knowledge on the subject, tried to trace out its development, and I have done this the more readily because it seems to me that when an attempt is made, almost for the first time, to

discuss fully a new department of science, the work of those who have chiefly helped by experiment or criticism to build it up should be acknowledged and properly estimated. Such a way of treating the subject will perhaps also supply a want to those who have not the time nor the opportunity of searching out the literature for themselves. Among other facts which have been brought forward here I may draw special attention to the following, which I think have been now made certain:— Fermentations in wounds occur as the result of the entrance of particles—micro-organisms—from without; a variety of methods of treatment may be grouped under the heading 'Antiseptic treatment'; lives are saved in proportion to the asepticity of the wound, and, when the wound is kept aseptic, infective diseases more especially are avoided; the aseptic or Listerian method prevents the development of micro-organisms and the occurrence of fermentation in wounds.

Portions of this work have been previously published. Some investigations on micro-organisms in wounds and on temperature after operations formed part of my essay which gained the Syme Surgical Fellowship of the University of Edinburgh in 1877. I have since that time repeated and extended these investigations. In the essay to which was awarded the Boylston Medical Prize and the Boylston Gold Medal¹ of the Harvard

¹ By an order adopted in 1826 the Secretary of the Boylston Prize Committee was directed to publish annually the following votes:—

1st. That the Board do not consider themselves as approving the doctrines contained in any of the dissertations to which premiums may be adjudged.

2nd. That in case of publication of a successful dissertation, the author be considered bound to print the above vote in connection therewith.

University, United States, in 1880, I discussed the various methods of Antiseptic Surgery and the best modes of applying them to practice. And, in 1881, the council of the College of Surgeons of England awarded me the Jacksonian prize for a discussion of the history, principles, practice, and results of Antiseptic Surgery. This work is the outcome and development of these essays.

The drawings in this book (both the woodcuts and the plates) have been made by Mr. Edgar Thurston, to whom I am much indebted for the great pains which he has bestowed in their preparation. Mr. Groves also kindly took some photographs, from which certain of the woodcuts have been drawn. Dr. Heron has rendered me great assistance in revising the proof-sheets and in preparing the Index.

In dedicating this work to Mr. Lister I have attempted to acknowledge my great indebtedness to him.

W. WATSON CHEYNE.

6 OLD CAVENDISH ST., W.
October 1881.