

cement it to the skin like a surgeon's adhesive plaster. I have used various cements; simple bisulphide of carbon will dissolve the rubber and cause a sheet of rubber to adhere to the skin. I have had several special cements made for the purpose. A thin rubber cement is useful. I have tried a cement made of galvanum. Rubber and balsam, when sterilized, forms a firm adhesive sterile plaster to fix the rubber to the skin. It can be easily removed. When the artificial skin is thus cemented, over the skin of the abdomen or any other operation area, it forms a perfect protection from infection and lessens the danger of shock that may result partly from the evaporation of the wet skin." Yours truly,

FENTON B. TURCK, M.D.

Priority in Forward Dislocation of Mobilized Urethra.

NEW YORK CITY, May 1, 1901.

To the Editor:—Dr. C. H. Mayo's admirable article in THE JOURNAL of April 27, contains a most practical and concise review of the several operative methods of dealing with hypospadias. The Doctor gives me full credit for my new method of forward dislocation of the mobilized urethra, but he also lays himself liable to misinterpretations when he says that "Professor von Hacker devised the new method shortly afterward."

With no desire to appear as criticising Dr. Mayo's brilliant work, I avail myself of it to clear up any possible misunderstanding, and incidentally emphasize the greater sense of justice we, in America, manifest toward each other.

Literature clearly shows that I reported my first operation Oct. 4, 1897, (see Reports of the *New York Deutsche Medicinische Gesellschaft* for that date). My first article describing my operation was published in the *New Yorker Medicinische Wochenschrift* for November, 1897. My second article on the subject (illustrated), containing some minor modifications, was printed in the *New York Medical Journal*, Jan. 29, 1898. Von Hacker described my operation, as his own of course, nearly, one year after he had learned of my first publication and six months after he had received from me a reprint of my second article. That he could, and did, completely ignore the published work of a mere humble American surgeon like me is comprehensible, for there are many in Europe who "perfume" their intellect by not grasping that anything good can come from our far-off land. And when they borrow it, hide, bone, and hoofs, then they have discovered it. It seems singular, however, that no heed was paid to my operation in this country until it came back trade-marked as "made in Europe," with von Hacker's name.

That my reclamations in Germany did not bear much fruit is evident by the fact that the leading German text-books on surgery show that they were kept ignorant of the true state of affairs. One of the authors, however, wrote me that he will remedy the error. Zuckerkandl, for instance, calls the method the "Hacker-Beck," and Tillmanns brings von Hacker to the foreground, showing at the same time four illustrations of Bardenheuer, who—admirable dictu—devised the modification of using a trocar to tunnel the glans, instead of a bistoury, as advised by me. Koenig says that "Beck advised the method first," but creates the impression that von Hacker had suggested it at about the same time. But this is not all.

How American inventions are sometimes treated abroad is best illustrated by the "Jahresbericht ueber die Fortschritte auf dem Gebiete der Chirurgie," edited by Hildebrand (page 901, 1899), where H. J. von Bonsdorff exploits this most miraculous logic: "Von Hacker and Bardenheuer invented the method of forward dislocation of the mobilized urethra, etc., at the same time Beck of New York, used a similar method. But his being published in the *New York Medical Journal*, which is nearly inaccessible to us, we must assume that von Hacker, Bardenheuer, and Beck (Beck always figures as a kind of tolerated appendix) invented the same method at the same time. Similar remarks were found in the *Centralblatt f. Chirurgie*, by a Russian surgeon, which, however, were refuted in this country by Fowler.

It has touched me deeply to see that my American confrères stood up against these careless statements, Fowler, Valentine,

and Parham taking energetic steps, for which I take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude. That their efforts had a retrograde effect became evident by the fact that Marwedel, of Czerny's clinic at Heidelberg, followed their examples by giving an exhaustive description of my method (Ueber die Beck'sche Methode der Hypospadiæ-operation) in the same *Klinische Beitræge* where von Hacker made his remarkable publication. I am indebted to the author for giving me fullest credit for my method, and especially for setting down the facts about von Hacker, as they are evident from literature. From this essay it may also be seen that Czerny had performed my operation a whole month before von Hacker did it, according to the latter's own statement. If von Hacker's principles as to the rights of an inventor would be introduced in general, namely that the first imitator of the invention should be credited with it, then there would be no reason, why my method should not be properly called Czerny's or Marwedel's. Yours very respectfully,

CARL BECK, M.D.

Antiseptic Treatment of Smallpox.

DETROIT, MICH, May 2, 1901.

To the Editor:—In THE JOURNAL of March 16, page 771, there is an abstract of a paper of mine. If the abstract is allowed to stand without further comment it will injure me in my claim to priority in the antiseptic treatment of smallpox. By it the medical profession might infer that I had only suggested a "local (antiseptic) method treatment," whereas the whole burthen of my endeavor as to treatment since January 14, 1895, at which time I delivered an original paper on the pathology and antiseptic treatment of smallpox, before the Detroit Medical and Library Association—has been to induce medical men to evolve a complete and perfect treatment in which antiseptic baths should be the principal and effective part employed in the management of variola.

On the same date, 1895, I originally announced the principle that the true smallpox only extends so far as the vesicular stage, and that the vesicles are simply infection-atria through which pus germs and saprophytes are intromitted to the structure of the true skin and to the general system, thereby causing septicemia and death. I then affirmed that a sepsis and antiseptics of the epidermis, especially by means of antiseptic baths, would avert such calamitous results. It is my opinion that I was the first to announce this theory.

I assumed charge of the smallpox hospital at Detroit on Jan. 22, 1895, with the intention of demonstrating my theory as to the pathology and treatment of smallpox, but I found myself grievously handicapped by the assaults of the whole newspaper press in the city, and by fierce political rancor in which I was innocently but unfortunately involved. Finally I retired from my hospital position on March 10, having been legislated out of office by an act of the state legislature.

While in the hospital the demonstration of my proposed antiseptic treatment by baths was obviously impossible. I was compelled to limit myself to the treatment of a patient by only applying antiseptics—in the fluid form—to the hands and forearms, and subsequently wrapping them with borated cotton, all the particulars of which have been repeatedly published. The result of this experiment confirmed the truth of my theory.

On the subject of my theory and its practical demonstration, I presented a paper to the Michigan State Medical Society in 1896, and it was published in the *Medical Record*, July 18, of the same year.

A re-affirmation of my theory of the pathology and the antiseptic treatment of smallpox, together with an account of my practical work, was read before the Detroit Medical Society on November 7, 1900, and published in *The Physician and Surgeon* for January, 1901, from which your abstract was made.

It is clear to me that my avowal of my theory and of the exemplification of it, in 1895 and in 1896—and later—gives me priority as elucidating the true pathology of smallpox, and makes me the original author of what may aptly be termed the antiseptic treatment of the disease. Yours very respectfully,

ALONZO BRYAN, M.D.