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OF

DR. HENRY O. MARCY.

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HENRY O. MARCY.

MARCY, Henry Orlando, Boston, Mass., was born June 23, 1837, in Otis, Mass.; the son of S. Marcy, who was a soldier in the War of 1812 and a teacher by profession, and Fanny (Gibbs) Marcy; grandson of Thomas Marcy, a pioneer of Northern Ohio, having settled the town of Freedom, Portage county, with a colony of his eastern neighbors and friends; grandson and great-grandson of Elijah and Israel Gibbs, respectively, both of whom served in the American Revolution and were with General Gates at the surrender of General Burgoyne.

Henry Orlando Marcy received a preliminary and classical education at Wilbraham Academy and Amherst College, and was graduated from the Medical School of Harvard University in 1863. In April of the same year he was commissioned assisttant surgeon of the Forty-third Massachusetts Volunteers, and in the following November, was commissioned surgeon of the First Regiment of Colored Troops, recruited in North Carolina. In 1864 he was appointed medical director of Florida, and served on the staffs of Generals Van Wyck, Potter, and Hatch, resigning his commission in June, 1865, his last special service being the sanitary renovation of Charleston, S. C.

After the close of the war, Dr. Marcy returned to Cambridge, Mass., and entered upon the practice of medicine. In the spring of 1869 he went to Europe for further study, entering the University of Berlin and remaining there one year, as a special student of Professors Martin and Virchow. After this he familiarized himself with the hospital service of the different European cities, spending the summer in London and Edinburgh, and then became the first American pupil of Professor Lister, of the last named city. Convinced of the correctness of the, then, new teaching of this great master, he immediately, upon returning to this country, devoted himself to the introduction of the antiseptic methods of wound treatment; equipped a laboratory; obtained the services of competent

assistants; and devoted ten years to the continuous study of the micro-organisms found in wounds; their cultivation in various media; their reproduction in animals, etc., publishing, from time to time, the results of these observations. He made a series of investigations upon the repair processes of osseous structures, extending over a period of two years. Rabbits were used for experimental study, the animals being injected at selected dates, until a complete series was secured, showing the intermediate processes of repair. He was assisted by Surgeon-General Holt, and after many experiments, the injection apparatus now generally used was devised, in 1878. Under the continuous pressure of half an atmosphere, it was found that the finest capillary loops in the newly formed tissue could be filled without breaking. The decalcified specimens were sectioned and mounted. Projected upon a screen, they easily taught the large audiences before whom they were presented, that the repair processes in the long bones were due chiefly to a new periosteum, profilerated from either side of the injured, often times devitalized, structures.

In 1870, Dr. Marcy familiarized himself with the practice of Mr. Lister in the ligation of arteries in continuity, by the use of the buried catgut-ligature. In the autumn of that year he modified their use for the purpose of closing, subcutaneously, wounds made for the radical cure of hernia. Finding that primary union supervened and that the cicatrices were strong and not painful, Dr. Marcy instituted a series of laboratory studies, burying sutures in various animals and studying the resulting histological conditions, He demonstrated that aseptic connective-tissue material, *e. g.*, catgut and the tendons of animals aseptically buried in aseptic wounds, were invariably followed by primary union; that the foreign material thus buried was surrounded with leucocytes and invaded by them; that little by little, vascularity followed, thus the suture being replaced in large degree by a band of

living connective-tissue. The importance of such discoveries was at once appreciated and the aseptic buried animal-suture was applied for the closure of every aseptic wound, the skin included, the latter by a light running suture taken from side to side, through the deeper layer of the skin only. Traction upon it, evenly, coapts the divided edges, which are hermetically sealed with iodoform collodion without drainage. Dr. Marcy published the result of these investigations, and a considerable number of new operations were devised, as the result of such suturing.

Having demonstrated the inherent defects of catgut as a suture material in 1880, after a careful study of the connective-tissue structures of a large number of animals, his researches in comparative anatomy led to the examination of the tendons of the tail of the kangaroo. These have been found superior to any other material for sutures and are in general use.

In 1880, Dr. Marcy established a private hospital in Cambridge for the treatment of the surgical diseases of women, in order to demonstrate the value of the modern surgical technique. This is continued to the present, and it is here that he has worked out in the larger share the methods of wound treatment contributed to the profession.

In 1863, Dr. Marcy married Miss Sarah E. Wendell, of Somersworth, N. H. They reside at 180 Commonwealth avenue, Boston. Henry O. Marcy, Jr., is a student of medicine.

To Dr. Marcy is undoubtedly due the credit of introducing into America the methods of antiseptic wound treatment; his original studies greatly improved upon the same and contributed largely in placing them upon their present scientific basis. The introduction and establishment of the value of the buried animal-suture is doubtless Dr. Marcy's best contribution to surgery, the importance of which is appreciated by every aseptic operator.

The operations most generally accepted, of his especial teaching, are the closure of all aseptic

wounds in layers without drainage, and the reconstruction of the inguinal canal for the cure of hernia, which latter operation was not possible until the introduction of the buried suture.

Dr. Marcy participated in the Seventh International Medical Congress, London, 1881, and was president of the section in gynecology, of the Ninth International Medical Congress, Washington, D. C., 1887; is a member of the American Medical Association, vice-president in 1879, chairman of the section in obstetrics in 1882, a member of the judicial council 1886–'89, was elected president in 1891, and presided over the Detroit meeting, June, 1892; is a member of the American Academy of Medicine, president in 1884; also of various other medical and scientific organizations both in Europe and in America.

The Wesleyan University conferred upon Dr. Marcy the honorary degree of LL. D., in 1887. In 1884 he published, in two volumes, a translation of the works of Prof. G. B. Ercolani, of Bologna, Italy, upon the "Reproductive Processes," besides which he has published his own special studies of the uterine mucosa during pregnancy. During the past twenty years he has written extensively for the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, *Annals of Anatomy and Surgery*, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, and other periodicals. His best-known publications are: "Carbolized Cat-Gut Sutures (buried in the tissues,) for the Cure of Hernia," 1871; "Fracture of the Patella," 1876; "Plastic Splints in Surgery," 1877; "Cure of Hernia by the Antiseptic Use of Animal Sutures," 1878; "Aspiration of the Knee-Joint," 1879; "The Comparative Value of Germicides," 1880; "Histological Studies of the Development of the Osseous Callous in Man and Animals," 1881; "The Best Methods of Operative Wound Treatment," "Fibroid Tumors of the Uterus," their histology illustrated by many sections projected upon the screen, annual address in obstetrics and gynecology, St. Paul, Minn., June,

1882, American Medical Association; "The Relation of Micro-Organisms to Sanitary Science," "The Restoration of the Perineum by a New Method," 1883; "The Relation of Micro-Organisms to Surgical Lesions," "The Rôle of Bacteria in Parturition," "The Climatic Treatment of Disease," 1885; "The Histology and Surgical Treatment of Uterine Myoma," president's address, section on gynecology, Ninth International Medical Congress, Washington, 1887; "The Climate of the Southern Appalachians," Ninth International Medical Congress, 1887; "The Surgical Advantages of the Buried Animal-Suture," "The Perineum: Its Anatomy, Physiology, and Methods of Restoration after Injury," 1888; "Chronic Inversion of the Uterus: Reduction by a New Method;" "Exploratory Laparotomy;" "General Treatise on Hernia;" "The Animal-Suture: Its Place in Surgery;" "The Cure of Hemorrhoids by Excision and Closure with the Buried Animal-Suture," 1889; "The Surgical Treatment of Non-Pedunculated Abdominal Tumors," "Surgical Relief for Biliary Obstruction," "Plastic Surgery of the Pelvic Structures," Transactions of the International Medical Congress, Berlin, 1890; "The Scientific Rationale of Modern Wound Treatment," 1891; "Femoral and Ventral Hernia in Woman;" "Evolution of Medicine," president's address before the American Medical Association, Detroit, June, 1892; "Inguinal Hernia in the Male," Transactions of the Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association, Louisville, November, 1892; "The Anatomy and Surgical Treatment of Hernia," large quarto, fully illustrated, D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1892; "The Reconstruction of the Pelvic Structures in Woman;" "The Surgical Treatment of Inguinal Hernia," annual address delivered before the South Carolina State Medical Society, April, 1893; "Ventral Hernia following Laparotomy: Its Cause and Means of Prevention;" "Analysis of One Hundred Thirty-six Cases of Hernia Operated on for the Purpose of Radical Cure," American Medical

Association, 1893; "In What Class of Wounds Shall We Use Drainage?" surgical section of the First Pan-American Medical Congress, Washington, D. C., 1893; "Inguinal Hernia in the Mole," address before the New York State Medical Association, 1894; "Modern Wound Technique," Mississippi Valley Medical Association, *Medical Record*, March, 1895; "The Surgical Treatment of Spina Bifida," Southern Surgical Association, *The Annals of Surgery*, February, 1895.