

Mr. Clellan (Gw.)

a cannulated needle + + +



A CANULATED NEEDLE

For Introducing Wire Sutures in Surgical Operations.

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Extract from the "London Medical Record."

"The annoyance caused by the wire suture catching in the tissues, on account of the doubling and twisting necessary to retain it in the eye of the ordinary needle, is often very great, and the excessive oozing caused by the procedure most injurious.

In order to overcome this difficulty, Dr. George McClellan of Philadelphia, had a little instrument constructed for him by Mr. Snowden, surgical cutler, No. 7 South 11th Street, which he has been constantly employing for several months in all operations where the approximation of the edges of the wounds required the introduction of wire sutures.

It consists of a long slender canulated needle, having a slit at the point, and another at the shoulder, where it joins the handle.

A and B indicate the two slits or openings in the needle through which the wire is passed. In introducing the canulated needle, the wire is of course either retracted or withdrawn; but, as soon as the point A issues at the desired place, the wire can be pushed forward, seized, and the needle withdrawn.

Although the idea of such a needle was entirely new to Dr. McClellan when he first had it constructed, he has since learned that it was suggested and used by several surgeons many years ago. Dr. W. L. Atlee used a needle on this principle in his operations for ovariotomy, and Dr. Paul B. Goddard had needles of various sizes and forms for the purpose of passing wire sutures; but neither of these surgeons appears to have encouraged their general use.

The ordinary forms of needle, including the 'screw-hole,' and the 'gutter-eyed,' as well as the more recent suggestion of Dr. Morgan of Baltimore, all require considerable time in their manipulation, and in many instances must be grasped by a holder, that they may be properly introduced. In all of them the wire is apt to become caught in the tissues, or dislodged from the eye or stylet, unless great care be taken to prevent it. The advantages of a canulated needle, such as is shown in the accompanying figure, will be apparent at a glance. The simple direct puncture of the needle will be found to occasion very little oozing; and, as the handle offers firm support in the hand of the operator, great accuracy in the introduction of the sutures and complete exactness in the apposition of the parts are attained, the needle being made to transfix both margins of the wound at the same time, and the wire, when passed through, taking its place.

The tearing of the knotted wire about the eye of a needle often causes a laceration instead of a puncture; and in some regions, as in the perineum or vagina, this minute rent is very apt to tear further when the sutures are tightened. The wire should always be carefully straightened by running it over the edge of the thumb-nail, to avoid any kinks which might interfere with its passage through the canulated needle. With this precaution, it may then be introduced with much greater rapidity and precision than in any other way.

Dr. McClellan has also found that this little instrument is very useful in taking the place of a tenaculum or artery-forceps, either of which often loosens or tears away the ligature when it is being removed. He simply passes the needle through a bleeding point, then forwards the wire and withdraws the needle, leaving the wire so that it can be doubled into a loop, traction upon which will enable an assistant to throw a ligature completely round the vessel or bleeding point, as readily as a tenaculum; with this advantage, that as soon as the vessel is secured the wire may be cut, thereby avoiding the danger of displacing the ligature. This form of needle may also be used for the purpose of exploring. Upon introducing the point into a part where blood, serum, or pus is suspected to have accumulated, the fluid, if any exist, will pass through the needle and appear at the slit near the shoulder.

Objection may be raised to this form of needle on the score of the possibility of its conveying septic matter, but the same fault may be found with the hypodermic syringe, and it can readily be remedied by always retaining a piece of wire within the canulated needle when out of use, and never forgetting to dip it in carbolized oil, both before and after it has been employed. The needle can readily be made straight or curved, as may be desired, but the form shown in the accompanying figure, which is designed for the pocket-case, will, the inventor thinks, answer most purposes."

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WILLIAM SNOWDEN,

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