

meeting of the Association in 1882 it was my privilege to read the report on surgery. At that time, among other subjects, I discussed the modern treatment of wounds; since then, not much progress has been made in the treatment of wounds. The same principles laid down then are still in force—cleanliness, rest and asepticity. The dressings applied to wounds have become much simpler, and the antiseptics most relied on are soap, water and a good nail brush. Not only should the hands of the operator be cleansed with soap and water, but the parts operated on and their vicinity should also be similarly treated. Faith in germicides is being lost, and although irrigation has supplanted the spray, the solutions used have become weaker and weaker, until some surgeons use water only, especially in operations on the abdomen and thorax, where antiseptics have been proved to be absolutely injurious and often dangerous.\* Sponges have become objects of suspicion; their place is now taken by the irrigator, linen, or pieces of washed gauze. The spray, which formerly was a trusted friend, a valued ally, and with some the sheet-anchor of antiseptic surgery, has been all but abandoned, and is now seen as a mere survival of a past condition. Whilst in Germany last summer, I saw in every surgical klinik the magnificent ruins of the spray-producer, looking like some old castle which marked the customs and conditions of other days. Lister himself was one of the first to give it up, and last summer at King's College Hospital he spent some time in explaining to me how especially useless the spray was in those operations on the thorax and abdomen, where it is still retained in a sort of superstitious way by some enthusiastic men. Whilst on the subject of the treatment of wounds, I might allude to one point where it seems to me practitioners in reporting cases might be more explicit. We read of a successful case of abdominal or other operation where the result was, of course, a brilliant success (how few unsuccessful cases do we read of), and the author states that the operation was performed with full antiseptic precautions. Now, what does this mean? "Full antiseptic precautions," with one

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\* See Senger's paper read at a recent meeting of the Berliner Medicinischer Gesellschaft.