

expert specialists, to a mere display of manual dexterity." Such are the opinions of one of Germany's greatest surgeons. His warning note that surgery may degenerate into a mere display of manual dexterity is timely, for what strikes me most in reading the surgical literature of the day, is that it treats almost entirely of surgery in its operative aspects, and those departments of surgery which are not operative seem to be treated with but scant consideration. There is great danger of the surgeon becoming too limited; already there are men who profess to perform but one or two operations; they certainly do them well, but such limitation must induce a narrowness of mind which is detrimental to surgery in general, and will in the end have a dwarfing effect on the more scientific branches of surgery. It is to be hoped that this is merely a temporary condition which is induced by the novelty of invading territories hitherto but little known to the surgical traveller.

However, even if it must be admitted that surgery to-day is chiefly operative, still it is more conservative than formerly, as witness the great advance made in the surgery of the joints. Where formerly a limb was amputated, now the joint is excised and the diseased matter removed with scissors and a sharp spoon. How rarely is the foot now amputated for disease of the articulations. I have only once amputated a foot for tuberculous disease of the joints, and have always regretted it. Who would now amputate an arm for disease of the elbow, or a hand for wrist joint disease?

But, gentlemen, I fear I am tiring you with my platitudes and generalizations, so I shall pass on and give in as brief a manner as possible, an account of the recent advances in some of the more important departments of surgery. At the Toronto 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. (a) 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 surgeon may mean an elaborate ritual, and with another simple cleanliness. It would be a great improvement if, when reporting cases of remarkable recoveries from astonishing operations, the reporter would state exactly the method of treatment employed to which he attributes his great success. The patient gets but little credit for the part he plays in bringing about a favorable result, and nature gets still less.

In the *surgery of the abdomen* much progress has been made. In ovariectomies and extirpations of the uterus the mortality after the operation is being steadily diminished, chiefly by the simplifi-

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