

# THE CANADA LANCET.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF

MEDICAL AND SURGICAL SCIENCE,  
CRITICISM AND NEWS.

VOL. XXI.] TORONTO, OCT., 1888. [No. 2.

## Original Communications.

### ADDRESS ON SOME OF THE RECENT ADVANCES IN SURGERY.\*

BY FRANCIS J. SHEPHERD, M.D.

*Mr. President and Gentleman,*—When informed by our worthy President that I was appointed to deliver the address on Surgery before this Association, I felt that the duty might have devolved on one much more competent of treating this great subject satisfactorily; one who had the faculty of making his address interesting to every one of you. When writing me, Dr. Graham said that the address should be limited to a period of—well, say that of an ordinary sermon, and hinted that the members of the Association did not want to be lectured to. I shall endeavor to the best of my ability to carry out these instructions.

It is not so many years ago that Boyer, after the French war, said that "Surgery seems to have attained the highest degree of perfection of which it is capable." The history of surgery, which during the past fifty years has been one of continuous advance, has proved the falsity of Boyer's opinion. During the last decade this advance has been almost phenomenal, and now scarcely a month passes without the introduction of some new operative procedure, or some daring operation in cavities and organs, which have from time immemorial been regarded as sacred. The causes of this advance have been two in number, the discovery of anæsthesia and the introduction of aseptic surgery, with which the name of Lister will ever be associated. Formerly, surgery was regarded as a mere mechanical art, and practitioners of medicine looked down upon the surgeon

as one who practised a trade. How different is the relationship now. Surgery now takes the lead, and the surgeon has wrested from the physician many regions which he thought to be essentially his own. The abdomen, for a long time the hunting ground of the physician, has been almost completely surrendered to the surgeon, and with what brilliant results you all know. Certain diseases of the kidney, liver, ovaries, lungs, brain, etc., which were formerly purely medical, have become chiefly surgical; and owing to modern methods of operative treatment, many lives have been saved which heretofore the physicians let slip through their fingers as being beyond their skill to cure, though they endeavored by a copious, and it is to be hoped, judicious use of the various preparations in the pharmacopœia to alleviate the sufferings of their unfortunate patients. The brain, within the last few years, has yielded not a few results to surgery, which medicine has striven for in vain. The victorious advance of surgery has been positive, and the success which follows its onward course stimulates to further exertions. Still medicine and surgery are not opposed to one another, and should go hand in hand. Without the aid of the physician, many cases would escape the beneficent treatment of the surgeon; and one cannot afford to do without the other. In an address given by Prof. Bergmann before the German Scientific Medical Association in 1887, he says, "There is more or less rivalry between medicine and surgery in the cure of disease, but further progress in surgery can only take place through an increased knowledge of internal medicine. Surgeons must now avail themselves more of the accurate means of investigation which we owe to physicians; auscultation and percussion, thermometry, chemical, microscopical, and electrical investigation. As long as internal medicine remains the guardian of scientific methods and scientific principles, so long will it remain the parent tree of which surgery is only a branch." Again, "It follows from what has been said, that surgery owes all its recent development to clinical medicine, and just as antiseptic treatment is the product of careful observation in etiology, so the energetic procedures of internal surgery will have successful results only when firmly established by the methods of clinical medicine; otherwise surgery will sink, in the hands of

\* Read before the Surgical Section of the Canadian Medical Association, at Ottawa, September 12th, 1888.