

movements—was splendid in its simplicity, and magnificent in its littleness. To the surgeon's craft it was the one thing needful. With it came the promise of a wonderful future; without it was the hopelessness of an impotent past."

We find that a certain amount of confusion has arisen in regard to the terms antiseptis and asepsis, and also in regard to antiseptic and aseptic methods. A writer on this side of the Atlantic, voicing the opinions of a certain number, says: "The theory and practice of what is known as antiseptic surgery are rapidly giving place to the more rational science and art of aseptic surgery." A writer in Great Britain says: "Antiseptic surgery was the forerunner of aseptic surgery. It was found that it was unnecessary to attempt the continual destruction of germs if there were no germs to destroy. Hence arose the present aseptic system."

Another writer in Great Britain (Sir Hector Cameron), says: "Every treatment which is directed against sepsis, no matter what the means be which are employed, is surely antiseptic treatment." He also tells us that the word asepsis was devised by Lister to denote the condition of a wound from which sepsis is absent. In the early days of Lister's treatment some surgeons spoke of a wound as being "in an antiseptic condition"—and of an operation as being followed by "a thoroughly antiseptic result." It was to avoid such awkward phraseology that Lister suggested the adoption of the word aseptic, a word which he afterwards found had been used by Hippocrates. Sir Hector adds: "To speak of the aseptic treatment of wounds is clearly as confusing and inelegant as to speak of the antiseptic condition of wounds." (*British Medical Journal*. April 6th, 1907.)

Many (I hope most) of us concur in Sir Hector's opinion that the word aseptic has been sadly misapplied, but we must recognize the fact that the terms antiseptic and aseptic are now applied to surgical methods in a somewhat definite way. The antiseptic treatment of wounds includes preliminary disinfection of skin, hands, instruments, etc., the use of antiseptic solutions during the operation, and subsequent dressings. The aseptic treatment of wounds includes also preliminary disinfection of skin, hands, instruments, etc., but not the use of antiseptic substances during the operation nor in the subsequent dressings.

Professor Kocher, of Berne, may be cited as one who has been much misunderstood. He himself is partly responsible for such misunderstanding, because he uses the terms aseptic