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APPENDICITIS: SOME POINTS IN DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT BASED ON OVER 600 OPERATIONS.*

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My excuse for taking up such a common malady is simply that it is so common and even yet so imperfectly understood. There is, perhaps, no disease which a surgeon is so frequently called upon to see, and in which he must act with more promptness, than appendicitis. It is therefore desirable that not only the surgeon, but the general practitioner should have clear-cut views as to its treatment. I thought this a most favorable opportunity for getting the views first hand, of British and American, as well as our Canadian surgeons, and I hope that we shall have a free expression of opinion on the various points raised.

I think we are all of one opinion in regard to the important point of its treatment, namely, that the appendix should be removed. There will probably be a difference of opinion as to the best time to accomplish this. My own opinion is that in all cases of acute appendicitis the operation should be undertaken at the earliest possible moment. If this is the correct plan of treatment it is of the highest importance that the physician should make a very early diagnosis, for the responsibility of quick action rests upon him. Unfortunately, all of us have had the sad experience of being called too late, when twenty-four or thirty-six hours earlier would have saved a valuable life. It is highly important also that

* Read before meeting of the British Medical Association, Toronto, August, 1906.