

Indeed the highest success of such a meeting as this can only be attained when every member feels it his duty to contribute what he can to the discussions. Innate modesty is all very well, but here we are a band of searchers after truth, burning with desire to know all that can be known as to the best methods of battling with disease, of relieving suffering, and of saving human life. It is not much short of a crime if any member through modesty keep silent if he has any knowledge to impart. It may not be necessary thus to encourage our brethren from the larger centres to speak in the discussions—they are accustomed, as teachers in the schools or members of the various Medical Societies to discuss any subject. But I do wish that the members from the country be not too modest. Their isolation compels them to be keen observers and necessarily self-reliant, and I am quite sure the discussions will gain in interest if they take a fair share in them.

We have entered a new century. Contrasted with the state of Medicine at the beginning of last century what vast advantages we possess. The discovery of anæsthesia about the middle of the last century and of the proper use of antiseptics twenty years later, and of the real meaning of surgical cleanliness at a still later period, have opened a wide field for advancement in which this century has grand opportunities to make medical history. If we fail to make even greater progress than ever yet made we must consider ourselves less studious, less observant and less capable than our predecessors.

Surgery is now almost wholly different from what it was twenty years ago. There are prominent and successful surgeons who affect to despise the great attention given to antiseptic details which others think essential. But this much is true of all—every surgeon aims at being aseptic, if not antiseptic, in his methods. The man who is faithful to the idea of asepsis, even if he laughs at the use of rubber gloves in operations and makes light of other details, is still influenced unconsciously by the teaching of the great Lister. It is true that although the ritual which was once thought essential is fast disappearing the results obtained under present methods are equally good.

In Medicine the immense benefit to the human race by the discovery of vaccination at the beginning of the last century has been almost equalled by the discovery of antitoxin for diphtheria in its closing years. As to tuberculosis although, the bacillus which is looked upon as its cause has been successfully isolated, we are still without an antitoxin for it. Cancer and other forms of malignant disease from year to year cause much suffering to the human race and claim many victims. From the vast amounts of profound study devoted to these diseases I am sanguine enough to hope that the dawn is not far distant of that grand and glorious day when we can say to the world that tuberculosis and cancer can both be cured. Is it a dream? Not more than it would have been twenty years ago to say that a cretin could be cured. Anything more absolutely hopeless than the state of the unfortunate cretin till the use of thyroid extract was discovered could not be. Then let us hope that soon a great discovery will enable us to deal with cancer and tuberculosis with the same success that has crowned the use of thyroid extract.