

them making observations and not giving inference—usually from insufficient observations, if from any at all. No pains are too great to hammer home into the mind of every student the importance of keeping these two processes separate and not taking up the second until the first is as complete as he can make it. It is just as important for the practitioner as for the student, except that in the latter we are trying to form correct habits; the practitioner should have them. Some teachers are to blame in this regard. The writer once listened to a clinic in which a patient with a retracted chest following empyema was brought in. To the teacher's enquiry of "What do we see here?" the student made no answer. The professor answered his own question with "Fibroid lung." Well, perhaps he did see it—with the eye of faith, but that is not a good eye to use alone in diagnosis—and the student, if he saw with the same eye, could not give reasons for the faith that was in him.

It is an interesting subject of discussion as to whether, having made a mistake, there is any choice between the first and second division. Which is the worse error, to fail to observe certain conditions, or to observe them and interpret them incorrectly? In the writer's opinion the first is much the worse error. Observation is a matter of patience, training and thoroughness, in all of which a man may improve himself, but the use which he makes of his observations is partly a matter of his mental equipment. True he can train his powers of thought and judgment to some extent, but we vary greatly in the quality of our cerebral cells, and the saying of the father of medicine, "Experience is fallacious and judgment difficult," is always true. To observe correctly and decide wrongly is sure to happen to the best of us, but to observe carelessly happens only when we permit it. Perhaps it is not entirely within our power always to prevent this. There are times when the keenest mind seems to miss what may be obvious. The routine of seeing a patient every day may dull the perceptions and what is startlingly obvious to a fresh eye may have escaped observation entirely. Yet here sometimes, perhaps often, it is because there has been a lack of searching rather than a lack of reflection. It is evident that if the first stage—the collection of the facts—is improperly done, we have not the basis for the second and it is bound to be wrong. The game is hopelessly lost from the start. How important, therefore, to give every effort to the collection of our facts.

It is essential, as already said, to keep in mind the two stages of the process—the collection of the facts and the inferences to