

or definite, and much is left to the decision of the judge and jury. No one questions the sacredness of married life, and the divulging of information obtained by a physician in his professional capacity would certainly be considered as contrary to all good morals and unbecoming the conduct of a physician and gentleman. It is to be regretted and severely deprecated that some medical men are overfond of retailing their professional experiences—some from the mere love of gossip, others from a desire to advertise themselves as something unusual. All such conduct is inexcusable, and I am glad that it is condemned by the majority of the profession, as well as by the more thinking public. It is when a medical man is brought into a court of law that his position is somewhat altered. As I have already intimated, in some countries all professional information is considered sacred, and must not be divulged voluntarily, nor can the physician be compelled to reveal it. From a careful study of cases in Great Britain and other English-speaking countries, I learn the decision of judges in general is to make it compulsory on a medical man to tell under oath, like any other witness, all that he may know, whether his knowledge has been obtained in a medical capacity or otherwise. If, however, the knowledge involves the witness, he need not incriminate himself. I think this ruling is of doubtful expediency; its tendency is to disturb the mutual confidence that exists between the patient and the physician—that honorable, sacred feeling so healthful to both parties. There are, I must confess, so many circumstances connected with individual cases that a fixed rule is not always possible. Speech is silver, but silence is golden.

In view of the wonderful discoveries of modern days, especially in reference to mechanical appliances, one should hesitate before pronouncing emphatically against the possibility of almost any discovery. The uses of electricity are so varied and well established that we should not ignore any statement as to its results without investigation. It was only the other day that a message was sent around the civilized world in a space of time not greater than I am occupying in speaking to you now. Electricity has also been recognized as a very important therapeutical agent in the treatment of diseases. One of the most recent discoveries, known as the Roentgen X rays, is the skiagraphing or photographing of the shadows of internal parts through dense structures, muscles, and bones. This must prove of great assistance in the diagnosing of many diseases hitherto obscure, and must also prove of great service to the surgeon in locating the presence of bullets, needles, and other substances that have entered the body, as well as indicating the presence of disease, for example, in cases of injuries to the vertebræ, stone in the gall bladder, kidney, and vesical bladder, the position of the fœtus in utero—in fact, gentlemen, I have no doubt but that the uses of the instrument will become most frequent as improvements are made upon it.