

endowed with life, and, as it were, acting instinctively. If atoms, and such atoms exist, the structures composed of collections of atoms must possess properties similar to the atoms. What is life? Is it a cause or consequence of change? There are millions of changes constantly going on in the body; the normal <sup>system</sup> ~~system~~ of which constitute health; given the contrary, what is termed illness ensues. Knowledge of these laws are of the utmost importance to medical and surgical science and nursing. What the nature or source of the law may be, how or whether it had a beginning, is the problem, the mystery which mankind has from the earliest to the present day been endeavoring to discover and solve; thus far the solution has eluded their grasp. Of conceptions and theories there have been a superabundance, those of one period being supplanted by those of a later time, as though one generation lived to correct the errors of its predecessors, and these to make others for successors to examine and quarrel about with a similar result. The origin of medicine, surgery and nursing must at least have been coeval with the human race, instinctive. Are not <sup>these</sup> the result of instinctive atoms? Whence the instincts, whence the transition? <sup>to the discovery of life</sup> When we know that we know nothing of this, we know the most. The tremendous advances made in medicine and surgery during the past half century, are in a great measure due to the discovery of anaesthetics and antiseptics, greatly assisted by chemistry, improved microscopes, and of course, intellectual growth. During the early days of my student life, pretty nearly half a century ago, all operations, great or small, on children or adults, were performed without the use of anything "to deaden pain." The patient would be brought into the theatre; with anxious and beseeching eye he beheld the surgeon, the numerous students, and the surgical instruments ready on an uncovered tray; placed on the table, the operation performed as quickly as possible and then back to bed, very often faint and ghastly from shock or loss of blood. Esmarcks' bandages unknown, but ordinary bandages used to force as much blood into the body as possible. In those days, rapidity in operating was of the utmost importance; so, occasionally sporting students noted the time, "that leg came off in one minute and forty seconds, but did