

# THE CANADA LANCET.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF

MEDICAL AND SURGICAL SCIENCE,  
CRITICISM AND NEWS.

VOL. XVII. TORONTO, JAN., 1885. No. 5.

## Original Communications.

### ADDRESS ON MEDICINE AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEDICO-CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY, OTTAWA.

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GENTLEMEN,—Thirty years have just passed since I had the pleasure and good fortune to become a member of the profession in this city. Our number was then small; we had neither telegraphs, telephones, nor electric lights, all of which have since been added, and in the immediate domain of the profession, vast strides have been made in every department, indicating alike the march of scientific advance in the field of labor in which we are called to duty. Let me thank you for the honor you have now conferred, in electing me President, and my son, Secretary-Treasurer of the Medico-Chirurgical Society for the ensuing year. I have on various occasions experienced your thoughtful consideration, and to be again honored, after so many years spent with you, is an evidence of your continued confidence, at a time when the termination of my professional career cannot be very far off, under ordinary circumstances. The life so far has been an exceedingly happy one, and my earnest desire has been to promote a mutual regard and self respect amongst our brethren, and thus unite our efforts in the discharge of the varied responsibilities entrusted to our care. The success of the medical profession depends greatly on close and continued observation, in order to eliminate the practical issues of bed-side experience, which after all is the light and lamp which cheers us on in our work. The efforts of a single individual can accomplish but little, compared with the combined exertions of various laborers in the same line of research. Each medical society should be a centre of intellectual co-operation, comparing, strengthen-

ing and fortifying, each new idea, each ray of light, which may be thrown on any obscure point, until it intensifies and grows, so as to be worthy of the recognition of science. No man is perfect, and each day proves the vast importance of ascertaining carefully our facts, their mutual relations, and the deductions to be drawn therefrom. During this coming year let me invite your hearty co-operation and assistance. Our country is comparatively new, and our scientific societies and institutions, are gradually budding into practical usefulness. Canada and the Canadian medical profession are now better known in transatlantic centres of learning than at any previous period in our history, and all we desire is an honorable record. Each medical society is a parent cell of the intellectual medical structure, as a whole, of our Dominion, the reflex influence of which, for good, will greatly depend on united intellectual co-operation. Thus we will attain the esteem and good will of those at home and abroad and strengthen the ties which unite us together as a working body, working to make "our lives sublime," by the relief of suffering humanity. The march of progress in medical science we have evidence of in every department of the profession, and on this present occasion I shall invite your attention to a few lines of thought, now being thoroughly traversed, particularly in medicine, physiology, pathology, and therapeutics. The relationship of disease to minute forms of life is attracting the most careful enquiry in the field of microscopic research. Until recently, large bodies, rather than small, have engaged the chief share of attention. To-day however, we note that the small things of creation, such as fungi, blights, mildews, moulds and bacteria, so intimately associated with life and death, have aroused more than an ordinary degree of interest. By the aid of the microscope we can demonstrate those minute forms, rod-shaped, spiral, globular, filamentous, and termed bacteria, classed as vegetable parasites and capable of promoting general systemic disturbance. Earth, air and water contain these minute forms, and their mission is so directed as to manipulate the elements of disintegration and decay, and institute a purifying process. Bacteria may prove harmless or otherwise, in accordance with their peculiarity of action. In the performance of the various functions of life, thousands of these bodies enter the system, largely