

I must claim to a certain extent the indulgence of my fellow workers in Ophthalmology, who may be here, if I do not present them any thing very advanced. I would remind them of the fact that I am here to deliver an address to the profession as a whole, and that technical points which would be of interest to them might be far from interesting to the majority of my hearers. Yet what I have to say may not be lacking in interest for them.

I have chosen as the subject matter of my paper a few salient points in the diagnosis and treatment of the more common diseases of the eye. My communication will be almost entirely based upon my own experience drawn from the very large clinical material at my disposal in the Montreal General Hospital.

Conjunctivitis is one of the commonest eye diseases which confronts both specialists and general practitioners during their career; yet in no other ocular disease has there been more room for advance both in the matter of diagnosis and of treatment. Happily during the past few years great progress has been made in both these particulars and the results have been crowned with success. Looking back over my comparatively short career, well do I remember, how in the old hospital days in London there was a routine treatment for conjunctivitis; the diagnosis was strictly limited by the nature of the secretion and condition of the conjunctiva, and the treatment consisted in the use, or I might rather say the abuse of various astringents. In some cases this treatment happily hit the mark, but in others the result was a failure or else a prolonged chronicity. With the promulgation of the germ theory, there was an opportunity for advance, yet but little was done in this direction in eye diseases for some years. Astringents were at this time dropped to a certain extent, and antiseptic lotions took their place; yet a varying amount of empiricism persisted and results were not always so successful as one could wish. During the past few years, however, great strides have been made by Koch, Weeks, Morax and Axonfeld; new germs have been discovered; their relationships to certain forms of ocular disease have been worked out; the conditions especially favoring their development have been studied; the symptoms they give rise to have been noted; and lastly what is of most importance to the clinician, appropriate remedies are being discovered. There is, however, much left to be done, as evidenced, for example, by the uncertainty which overhangs the germ of that scourge trachoma.

To start with be it remembered the conjunctival sac in the new born is held to be free from bacteria, but immediately the infant has entered on its existence in this world, the conjunctiva is exposed to infection