

All these are still questions on some of which the evidence is sufficiently positive to leave but little doubt, while on others there are so many theories that we are left to choose what may best suit the results of our own observations, if not, indeed, our caprice or fancy.

To the chemist and therapist these are certainly interesting and practical questions. Before the physiologist and pathologist still others of equal importance loom up. What are the different steps in the process by which an atom of iron, in either a food or drug, becomes ultimately an ingredient of the hemoglobin of a corpuscle, and what have been the dynamic processes with which it has associated itself up to this point? Again, what is its final destination and disposal? With what materials has it been combined, and what forces has it generated and modified by the time it has finished its course? What accounts for its disappearance under certain abnormal conditions, and why does the train of symptoms which we witness arise under these circumstances?

Again, these are facts, theories, hypotheses and speculations which we are bound to consider, and, in the light of our own reason and judgment, to determine.

But while we are thankful for all the light that can be shed on these problems, and, as members of a cultured profession, are impelled to continue their investigation, yet to the clinician their solution is not essential. Whether his path be flooded with the brightness of midday or shrouded in Egyptian darkness, he must still walk on in it. When, in the records of professional literature or in the acquirements of his own personal experience, certain means have associated themselves with consequent legitimate ends, it is his plain duty to adapt the one to the other. And, again, where the means have been to a degree inadequate, on the introduction of what appeals to his reason as of a higher probable power, he must determine the claim. The clinician must not allow himself to be diverted too far into the by-paths of knowledge, lest he become timorous and undecided. The locomotive engineer, who knows the management of his engine in such a way as to start it, regulate its speed and stop it, so that he will constantly carry his train to its destination on time and without accident, and with the accomplishment of all that is expected of him at the termini and at the way-stations, is but little the better for a complete knowledge of the country through which he travels; of the industries of the towns at which he stops; of the mechanical and physical forces which rule the movements of his engine; or of the mathematical rules which govern the construction of the road.