

Galileo, Kepler and Newton had their reflex on the sister science of medicine, and investigators made bold to pry into the secrets of life and learn her vital processes, to seek the true causes of disease and endeavor to find the cure. Relapses have occurred. As fanatics opposed the introduction of the fanning-mill because it infringed on the divine prerogative, which furnished the wind to winnow the wheat from the chaff, similarly opposition arose to the introduction of inoculation, vaccination and the use of anesthetics. And as supernatural agencies were invoked to cure diseases supposed to be of supernatural origin, so to-day we have the various sects of faith-healers, magnetic healers and what not.

But, as Carlyle says, "Only what is true will persist. Out of the merciless fire of modern criticism truth, like asbestos, will come forth purified; but vain theories, gaseous, will be dissipated among the waste winds forever."

But where do we stand to-day? Have the fogs all lifted and do we now see clearly? Unfortunately not. Investigators to-day are not numbered by tens but by hundreds, pursuing many diverse threads of thought, and giving to the world their conclusions, fully formed or immature, probable or fantastic, relevant or irrelevant.

The search for the causes of disease still continues as actively as ever, but disappointments are far more numerous than successes. Concerning sarcomata, Stimson, in this month's *Annals of Surgery*, says: "We are absolutely in the dark as to etiology, and no farther advanced in prognosis and treatment than were our colleagues a quarter of a century ago."

Dr. Snow, Chief of the London Cancer Research Committee, has come to almost identical conclusions regarding carcinoma. As regards these two classes of disease, we are, therefore, forced to be content, at present, with increased ability to diagnose them, and have to thank the surgeon largely for the groundwork of this advance.

In 1882 Koch proved tuberculosis to be due to a specific bacillus, and in 1890 startled the world with the announcement of a cure. We all remember the reaction, the tremendous disappointment felt not only by the laity but even more keenly by ourselves, when slowly, unwillingly, we were forced to admit that our expectations were not realized. Early in 1903, Behring delivered a lecture before the Vienna Medical Society, detailing his experiments on animals with his own special serum, and speaking very hopefully as to the future. Perhaps he, who with Roux, discovered in diphtheritic antitoxin the greatest remedial agent of recent times, will unravel the puzzle.

More recently Marmorek, of Paris, has staked his great reputation by giving to the world the results of his labors in a new