

of so much earnest inquiry and study as tuberculosis. The distressing character of the disease, its fatality, the fact that it spread among all classes and orders of people, and spared neither age nor sex in its ravages, were powerful motives to urge the active practitioner, as well as the student of pathology, to make vigorous search into its true character.

We were thoroughly learned in all the phenomena of its slow but fatal course. Before the science of bacteriology laid the truth before us, we knew everything of tuberculosis except what it was. It remained for that science to find the true cause, the tubercle bacillus. It is true we have not yet reached the point of being able to cure, but we have made a long step in that direction. We have learned this important fact, that it is an infectious disease, and is as communicable from person to person as Asiatic cholera or typhoid fever. We have learned how it can be avoided and prevented.

Again, what a splendid triumph it is to be able to say that we have particularly met and conquered that dread disease, Asiatic cholera, the very name of which but a few years ago would send a thrill of fear and horror through the nations of the earth. As with these so it is with a long list of virulent diseases—typhoid fever, tetanus, diphtheria, erysipelas, glanders, and many others have been traced to the special form of micro-organism which produces them.

There is another disease the mortality from which is very great, and one which is dreaded alike by physician and patient, on account of the prolonged suffering which precedes its fatal issue; I refer to cancer. The cause of cancer still eludes our search, though we have reason to believe it is due to some form of micro-organism, animal or vegetable. At the present time many investigators are working faithfully to isolate the germ of this disease: we earnestly hope that success may soon be within their reach. Let us be thankful that, though our progress in this direction has been slow, we have learned enough to know, or at least believe, that cancer in its very earliest stages is a local disease, and that the system is infected from the first point of growth. This advance in our knowledge has taught us one valuable lesson—that is, that there is only one hope for the patient, and it is by attacking the disease in its very earliest stage. It would not be within the province of a paper on medicine to do more than mention the magnificent opportunities for successful work which the science of microbiology has given to the operating surgeon within the past twenty years.

I desire, however, to trespass upon your time for a few moments while I discuss the question: What share have the English-speaking