

probably refer with becoming reserve and caution, and perhaps with some sarcasm, to the startling assertion of a country practitioner—one Edward Jenner by name—that he had discovered a cure for the greatest scourge of the age—small-pox. But granted that this eminent lecturer was endowed with the most vivid imagination, and permitted his mind to soar in the highest flights of theory and speculation, he could have related but a fractional part of the triumphs the historian of medicine is called upon to record to-day as the outcome of the progress of the past century, and more particularly the latter half. It may be likened to the Renaissance in the age of Augustus, or in the “spacious times of great Elizabeth.” Virgil, the elect poet of Augustan Rome, contains an excellent text for a discourse in its praise:—

*Redeunt saturnia regna;*

*Jam nova progenies cælo demittitur alto.*

While our imaginary lecturer was relating with befitting pride the advances of his time, were he given a glimpse of the present golden age, and of the resources of to-day, he either would have been confounded with surprise or consumed with envy.

He knew nothing of chloroform or ether, he never heard of antiseptic surgery, he would expect nearly every wound, including those made by the surgeon, to heal by suppuration, and would express his approval of “healthy” and “true and laudable pus.” If a wound healed by primary union he would exhibit it as something out of the common, a sort of freak of nature. He did not know typhus from typhoid fever, nor scarlet fever from diphtheria. He had no stethoscope, and never heard of auscultation. He knew of opium and quinine but never heard of the blessings of the hypodermic syringe. He never saw a lithotrite. He never counted the corpuscles in the blood, or inspected a skiagraph of the bones of his hand or of the vertebral column.

When reviewing the medical literature of the past one is attracted by the story related that when Boerhave, the most accomplished and celebrated physician of the eighteenth century, died, he left behind him an elegant volume, the title page of which declared that it contained all the secrets of medicine. On opening the volume every page except one was blank, and on that was written his legacy to suffering humanity. It was, in affect, to