

Miscellaneous.

"Don't Give Up the—Patient.

A strong, healthy optimism is the physician's greatest asset. We have always been advising the doctor to be exceedingly careful about giving gloomy, hopeless prognoses. We do not know it all, and occasionally an apparently hopeless patient does recover. We have given some examples in a previous editorial. A very striking example is given by Prof. W. S. Thayer, of Baltimore, in his oration on medicine at the recent meeting of the American Medical Association.

A few years ago he had under his care a patient who had one tuberculous kidney removed some years before. She had then *bilateral pulmonary tuberculosis, tuberculous pleurisy, tuberculous peritonitis* and *tuberculosis* of the *remaining kidney*. The temperature for weeks had been constantly elevated, the pulse rapid and feeble. She seemed *in extremis*. Had the doctor been asked, he would have said that she had probably a few weeks to live. She asked calmly if she were going to die or whether there was any chance of recovery. He answered her truly that she was very ill, that the outlook was not good, but that there was always a chance for an arrest of the disease, and that it would be wrong to even think of giving up the fight. For two years that patient has been free from fever, to all outward appearances well, and to-day she is actually working for her living.

Dr. Thayer is right in saying that truthfulness in medicine does not mean that it is always necessary to tell the patient that he has a fatal disease if he does not ask you the direct question. Nor does it forbid the physician to seek and keep his eye fixed on the cranny of hope, which may usually be found, as earnestly and sedulously as would the patient himself.

For nothing is certain in human life, and—*errare humanum est*.

At any event, in medicine it is always beter to be too optimistic than too pessimistic.—*Critic and Guide*.

Occupation and Mortality.*

The recent triennial report of Dr. Tatham, Registrar-General, for the three years ended 902, has furnished a blue-book of more than ordinary interest. For the first time for many years it gives a comprehensive official return of the particulars of occu-

* Read at the Annual Meeting of the American Hospital Association, Toronto. September 30th, 1908.