

It is impossible for us to take note of all the advance of modern science; much is written, much forgotten, much disappears into the depths of the unheeded past. But progressive thought is moulded on thought that has gone before, and our present utterances may effect a perhaps imperceptible influence in moulding the thought of the future. In our department we set the measures of the march; let us see to it, then, that it is not too fast, heedless and rushing like a mountain torrent bursting from all control, but that it pursues a calm and even course like the navigable streams that bear the commerce of the busy world. Science must progress so that benefit to mankind ensues.

Some facts are facts, and some facts that we think are facts are not facts. The scientist gives forth to the world something that he claims is a scientific fact; another soon disproves the assertion, but the very discovery of the fallacy guides scientific thought into other channels, and we are brought thereby much nearer in our approach to the truth. How much sometimes depends on a simple truth! One of the best examples that we have of this is our knowledge that we are enabled to do much if we observe the "law of cleanliness" in its strictest sense. It should be a simple law, but we find it difficult to carry out in all the preciseness of detail required.

Asepticism was for a long time disguised and concealed by the mask and robes of antisepticism, until the hand of science robbed her of her mask, and tore away the robes and left her standing as a naked truth, *the greatest truism of the nineteenth century*. Lister will be looked upon as one of the greatest men of the nineteenth century.

In other avenues of thought we have been slothful. There are clouds floating about us that we cannot penetrate and depths that we cannot fathom with all our boasted wisdom. As in the days of Hippocrates, so now, tubercle, cancer and sepsis fill the tombs. We know that tubercle and sepsis are due to germ growth, but we are unable to prevent the ravages of these germs. Of cancer we know but little more than the ancients. We know what it looks like, but we do not know what it is. Surgery can carry us no further in the war we wage against these three dread scourges, and relief must come from some other quarter. The limit to which our knowledge may attain has not yet been defined, but it must have a limit, or we would be able eventually to prolong life indefinitely. We will never be able to prevent ultimate death. This is the one cloud that hangs over us that we can never dispel.

Our work in this Association is confined between the diaphragm, the perineum and the abdominal walls. We are met together to cultivate and promote a "knowledge of whatever relates to abdominal surgery, obstetrics, and gynecology." You will be called upon, during the session, to express your views and to criticise or support the views of others. We do not wish to deal with questions that are already settled, but with those that are unsettled.