

Many other novelties and wonders are daily being made known, such as serum therapy, etc. What the future will bring forth one cannot say, but if the next twenty-five years are as rich in discoveries and the practical applications thereof, you will have much to interest you in your future careers. At the beginning of this century, medical men thought they had reached the end of their advancement, and, in fact, Boyer, after the French war, said "Surgery seems to have attained the highest degree of perfection of which it is capable." How false his estimate was, the record of advance since then has fully shown. Cordocret at the end of the last century, when being hunted to death by a vindictive council was nearer the mark when he said that improvement in the practice of medicine must in the end put a period to transmissible or contagious diseases, and he goes on to say that death will be nothing more than the effect either of extraordinary accidents or of the slow and gradual decay of the vital powers. At the time this was written, small-pox devastated the nation, and there was hardly a person, high or low, not marked with the disease. Jenner's discovery has altered this, and on the same lines many other improvements have been introduced and the virulence of epidemics much abated. It has been prophesied that in the future there will be but little work for the surgeon except to attend to accidents, for the three conditions which call for surgical interference are, general sepsis, tubercle, and cancer; and it is asserted that in the near future a toxin will be discovered which will as surely destroy the micro-organisms of these affections as now those of diphtheria and tetanus are destroyed. If the future of surgery is so bright, what about the past? Before the discovery of anæsthesia, surgery had a very limited scope, but anæsthesia paved the way for the brilliant results achieved by modern aseptic surgery, which without anæsthesia would have been impossible. I have heard many of the surgeons, who practiced before the discovery of anæsthesia in 1847, tell of the horrors of the operating room; rapidity of operation was their one aim. Surgeons with ordinary bowels of compassion dreaded the coming operation as much as did the patient. Abernethy said he felt as if he were going to be hanged. Liston lay awake in mental anxiety the night before, and Cheselden turned sick at the thought of the pain he was going to inflict. Some one, speaking of the patient, said "his progress might be traced by frightful yellings, or, at least, by sobs of deep distress, and occasionally a number of stout assistants were scarcely sufficient to prevent a self effected rescue and escape." Nelson, when his arm was amputated after the action of Teneriffe, manifested his usual courage and firmness, yet so painfully did the coldness of the surgeon's knife affect him, that, when going into action at the famous battle of the Nile, he gave standing orders that the amputating knives should be left in hot water.