

humbly, that it might be well for the farmers to devote a little of their great and versatile ability to the study of agriculture, and to the commonplace but somewhat necessary art of making ends meet, before they attempt to practise medicine and to reconstruct everything in sight.

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### Diphtheria.

THIS is not a modern disease. It was known to the ancients. Its study, however, dates back to Bretonneau. He gave the first account of the disease that really separated it from other conditions.

As to the origin of diphtheria there is now no doubt. The Klebs-Loeffler bacilli are the *fons et origo malorum* of this dread disease.

Is the disease local or constitutional? All good pathological teaching at the present goes to prove that it is a local disease. The germs attack some broken cutaneous or mucous surface, and there multiply and manufacture their deadly toxins.

Then, again, there is some dispute as to the existence of a membranous croup that is not diphtheria. That there is a laryngitis that is not diphtheritic there can be no two opinions, but that there is a membranous croup without the specific bacilli is still a contested point.

The poison is a toxine of great virulency, and possesses extremely depressing powers on the living tissues of the body. This toxine enters the system at the seat of infection. On nerve-matter its action is specially potent.

The question of immunity is now to the front. The work of Behring, Aronson and others have given the profession the anti-toxin. By such efforts the time may not be far distant when perfect immunity may be produced through these culture methods. Hydrophobia, tetanus and anthrax are good examples of the work so far done.

This whole problem is in its infancy. Much may yet be expected. As our knowledge of the life-habits of the bacilli increases, and further experiments are made with culture preparations, the laws that govern immunity will no doubt be discovered.

It is clear from the local origin of the disease that its local treatment ought to be most painstaking and thorough. To destroy the bacilli is to lessen the toxins and improve the chance for recovery.