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THE HABIT OF GROWTH.

AN INTRODUCTION TO A DISCUSSION UPON CARCINOMA AT THE MONTREAL MEDICO-CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY, DECEMBER 13TH, 1895.

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Frankly, gentlemen, it is impossible to do anything approaching to a discussion of the cause, progress and histological characters of cancerous growths in the time allotted to each of this evening's speakers, and I am bound, therefore, to select one single aspect of the subject for treatment, and even then can at the most touch rather than treat it.

Perhaps that which is of most general and present interest in connection with cancer, both from the point of the pure pathologist and from the standpoint also of the practical man, is the question of the causation of cancer. I say from the point of view of the man in practice, because once the cause of cancer is surely established it is generally held that prevention will be possible. This is the general hope, but for myself I am a little doubtful as to whether this really follows. I am not quite sure that when we establish satisfactorily the ætiology we shall find matters so simple that we can readily abolish or prevent the cause. Even if the condition be of a parasitic development, even if we are able to cultivate the parasite outside the body, and thus gain an intimate knowledge of its life history, I am not wholly hopeful that we can assume upon the analogy of modern bacteriological achievements and feel assured that eventually we can find means of arresting the growth of the parasite, and so of arresting the cancerous process, for, as I shall proceed to show, the *modus*