

We meet for the mutual exchange of practical ideas that may be of service to us in the discharge of the great trust that is committed to us ; that we may be the better equipped for fighting the great battle that we are waging against disease and suffering. We meet too that we may see old friends and make new ones. And as "iron sharpeneth steel," so we by rubbing against each other may sharpen our wits ; and by mutual contact with each other we may learn to love what is good and noble and manly in our fellow practitioners, and thus learn lessons that shall make us better men and better physicians.

Then again, it must not be forgotten that there is no professional man who so much needs and so rarely can take a holiday as the medical man. Even when we do succeed in getting away from home we are not free from fear of being summoned home to minister to the fears or necessities of some poor fellow mortal unless we can go where there are no means of communication which is a difficult matter in these days of telegraphs and telephones.

Then there are in the minds of the people misconceptions as to the nature and scope of the science of medicine. The public generally know less of this than of any other science. And this lack of knowledge is the origin of many superstitious notions, even among people who are otherwise well informed ; and is largely responsible for that unfortunate craze for quack medicine and quack doctors, which in our day has assumed the proportions of an epidemic. Anything partaking of the nature of humbug has a peculiar fascination for many people. A patent medicine advertisement surmounted by the picture of a Red Indian with feathers on his head, or that of a man with electric sparks radiating from various parts of his naked body has for some people an irresistible charm. The charlatan who talks mystery is to them the embodiment of wisdom.

There is no mystery in medicine. The mystery is in the mind of the man who arrogates to himself occult powers, who ignores the accumulated experience of an educated profession—who vaunts his remedies as "cure alls" and preys on the credulity of an afflicted public with no other object in view than how much money he can get out of them.

Time would fail to even enumerate the false notions in the minds of the people as to the scope, the aim and the objects of the science of medicine. Perhaps one of the most common and the most baneful in its effects is the idea that every disease has definite symptoms and is labelled with its antidote and that all the physician has to do is to find out the name of the disease, apply the antidote and cure the malady. Nothing can be further from the truth than this idea ; and the more enlightened the people become on this point the lighter will be the burden of the medical man. Let them learn that the great majority of diseases run their course and terminate by a natural process without