

Selections.

THE RETIREMENT OF SIR JOSEPH LISTER.—The move upon the subject of a testimonial to Sir Joseph Lister, was started by his former pupils and colleagues, but it is hoped to interest all surgeons.

Having relinquished active work in college and hospital, Mr. Lister is enjoying a well merited rest.

His real memorial is that he has rendered it possible for surgeons to safely open any of the closed cavities of the body, the synovial sacs, the peritoneum, the cranium, etc., depriving of their septic risks all surgical procedures. In short, inflammation after surgical operation has been prevented, thus greatly enlarging the surgeon's field of operations and incalculably augmenting the results of his labor and skill. Operations which formerly were confined to hospitals and the most favorable surroundings, now are done everywhere. Hence surgeons have multiplied them by the hundred-fold. The fact that operations may be done with little danger of inflammation, through simple asepsis, has made surgery invade the domain of medicine. Appendicitis, tubercular peritonitis, and other diseases, are now claimed by the surgeons as their exclusive property.

To the pauper as well as the millionaire, Lister has made surgical relief possible, by enabling even the humblest doctor in the most out-of-the-way location, with the poorest tools, to do excellent surgery. Well appointed hospitals, trained nurses, perfect appliances for surgical technique, are still most desirable, but they are no longer indispensable.

So common have become the actual workings of the surgical methods introduced by Mr. Lister, that we seem to have known them always. The doctrine of Listerism has cleansed every dirty hospital in the world, transformed

every surgeon, and made careless doctors a byword and disgrace.

The same principle has entered into the studies of all vital processes, whether morbid or physiological. If microbes make inflammation in wounds and after surgical operations, what may they not do in the several diseases infecting the human body? Hence the study of these diseases from the standpoint of Lister—the action of germs upon the vital processes. Pathology is growing richer daily by the studies thus stimulated, and it is hoped that therapeutics will evolve some method of checking the devastation of these myriads of germs.

In its details, Lister's work has been greatly modified by himself and his fellow-workers, but its general principles seemed rooted in genuine truth, destined to remain while present laws, forces and germs remain as now. Medicine has enrolled among its worthies many who have contributed greatly to its advancement; but among them all, Lister occupies a proud position, and as passing years make more and more available his work for suffering humanity, so will increasing honor crown his memory. This is Lister's monument, "that in the hands of every surgeon he multiplied many fold the power of his art."

Had Mr. Lister, when the great truth of aseptic surgery dawned upon him, opened a small hospital and done his work by himself, what enormous financial rewards might not have been his! His work would have demonstrated to the laity that he possessed a power which all other surgeons lacked. Those suffering from grave surgical affections would have sought relief at his hands. Money to them would have been no object, and the results would have sent others similarly afflicted. So without any effort his little hospital would have grown to a large one, the large one been doubled or quadrupled, until no group of hospitals would have contained so many patients