

with our own eyes, as we have, this actual development in one whose age exceeds by thirteen years the traditional span of human life, we should have doubted the possibility of its occurrence.—*Med. Record.*

THE Canadian Practitioner

A SEMI-MONTHLY REVIEW OF THE PROGRESS
OF THE MEDICAL SCIENCES.

Contributions of various descriptions are invited. We shall be glad to receive from our friends everywhere current medical news of general interest.

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BACTERIOLOGY.

The treatment of tuberculous disease in the manner recommended by Koch has fallen into disfavor, but the grand work done by him, and his attempt to adapt the facts known of the physiology and chemistry of bacteria and their products to the uses of practical medicine, has initiated a vast amount of work along definite lines, which will undoubtedly be productive of valuable results. We have, even now, only a very limited amount of knowledge concerning one of the most important factors in the production of disease; the science of bacteriology is only in its infancy, and the developments which will yet be forthcoming may, and probably will, completely revolutionize our ideas concerning the etiology and pathology of many of the morbid conditions met with in our practice. It seems imperative that every medical practitioner should make himself thoroughly conversant with the advances made in this branch of medicine, and we are glad to know that an opportunity for a course in the practical study of bacteriology will be afforded the practitioners in this province, at the close of the present session, when Professor Rainsay Wright will conduct a series of demonstrations on the subject at the Biological Department of Toronto University.

Our knowledge of micro-organisms is becoming

more definite and more complete. Not only is the morphology studied, but of late greater attention has been paid to the physiology of bacteria and their effect upon the living tissues of the human body. We have now to deal with hard facts when we attempt to value the influence of micro-organisms in disease; formerly, *facts* were few and *theory* prevailed. Lister, when he first introduced the antiseptic system into the practice of surgery, had discovered most important facts, but many of his deductions were, at that time, from pure theory, and this gave such practical men as James Spence an opportunity to scoff, and, by contrasting the results of the two systems, Spence attempted to prove that antiseptic methods were not called for. When, however, more knowledge was gained, and facts began to displace theory, Lister and his pupils were able to bring their methods to greater perfection, until now very few men of thorough education and insight dare deny the necessity for antiseptic methods. Of the opponents of the antiseptic system, Lawson Tait may be looked upon as the most influential. For some years he fought well; he is naturally a practical man and prefers fact to theory. Whilst the antiseptic system was founded chiefly on theory, Tait made a brilliant fight, but he has been driven from corner to corner, as facts have been unearthed, until now his attempts to keep above water are pitiable. He has now solid facts to deal with, and his recent attempts to combat irresistible facts are comparable to a man battering his head against a stone wall—the process will surely result in the utter annihilation of Tait, so far as his competency to judge of the merits of the use of antiseptics in surgery is concerned.

THE TORONTO GENERAL HOSPITAL.

The equipment of this institution is becoming more complete year by year. Fifteen years ago, when the demand for hospital accommodation in Toronto was not very great, the hospital was a very unpretentious institution, and consisted of a building in which patients suffering from all classes of disease, medical and surgical, were admitted. In 1878 the eye and ear infirmary was built, and in the same year the Burnside lying-in hospital. A few