

talented Sydenham, who wrote and practised from 1660 to 1680, that the six most fatal diseases prevailing in the city of London, were the plague, ague, dysentery, scurvy, child-birth, and small-pox. He was the first physician who originated the idea and carried the principle into practice, expressed in the phrase *vis medicatrix nature*, that this force in nature should be aided, nor thwarted. About the middle of the seventeenth century, or just before the time of Sydenham, the mortality of parturient women in London was about two per cent., including after consequences, while at the time these statistics were taken (1885) it was reduced to one-half per cent., and since the introduction of antiseptics into obstetric practice the mortality rate will probably be diminished to about one-fourth of one per cent. One death in every 400 may be an under-estimate of the mortality from child-birth and after consequences at the present time, but since obstetric practice has been based upon a belief in the germ theory results have been much better. He referred to the probable discoveries in scientific medicine, which they might expect to be greater in future than in the past. Ague was now almost entirely disappearing. Scurvy was likely to be little more than mentioned in the text books of the future; and with reference to the small-pox, of which the learned and accomplished Dr. Mead, the first London physician of the day, wrote in 1747 as impossible to vanquish, vaccination was introduced in 1798, which had successfully battled with the disease. Referring to fever, the President said Boerhaave (1701 to 1731) held a theory of fever peculiarly his own, which was that the blood was the cause, the explanation being that the blood was in a thick, viscid condition, leading him to advise and insist on warm drinks being given during fevers, and that much danger was present if cold drinks were used. He (the speaker) could well remember when a child, some sixty years ago, his aunt begging for a drink of cold water, during an attack of what he presumed was typhoid fever, and was refused, the doctor saying it was dangerous to give it. To Boerhaave then must be ascribed the untold misery of thousands who have died, famished or starved, for cold water. Most unfortunately his theory has been handed down even to the present, and it might be questioned if the idea was yet obliterated from the minds of some of the profession. He then alluded to the use of cold water affusions

in fevers by Currie, and stated that there was no question of their efficacy in scarlatina in every form. He also pointed out the fact that the use of the thermometer under the tongue and in the axilla was introduced half a century ago. In conclusion, he expressed a hope that the brief review of medical science one hundred years ago would be considered worthy of some thought, as indicating the progress which might be looked for in the next century.

There being none of the members of the Special Committee, appointed in 1884, to report on the communication from the Women's Christian Temperance Union, present, Dr. Fulton moved, seconded by Dr. Bray, that a special committee be appointed, consisting of Drs. Holmes, of Chatham; Rosebrugh, Hamilton, Geikie, Toronto; Brouse, Brockville, and the President, to bring in a report on the following morning, which was carried.

A motion expressive of condolence with Dr. Workman, in his recent bereavement, was passed, and a committee appointed to prepare a suitable memorial to be transmitted to him.

The report of the Committee on Ethics was laid over for another year.

A telegram from the Wisconsin Medical Society, in session in Milwaukee, sending greetings, was received with applause, and the Secretary was instructed to telegraph a reply expressing similar well-wishes. Dr. J. L. Bray, of Chatham, read a short paper on "Cæsarian Section," giving the history of a case in which Dr. Jenks, of Detroit, assisted him; the woman died. Dr. Jenks gave a graphic description of the operation, and stating in conclusion that he was opposed to craniotomy.

An interesting discussion on medicine was opened by Dr. Tye, of Chatham, who read an able paper on "Diphtheria." The paper and discussion will appear in the LANCET in due course, so that we shall not attempt to give any epitome.

Dr. Fraser, of Sarnia, next read a very interesting paper on "Continued Fevers." •

In the evening session the Secretary read a communication from Dr. McLean, of Detroit, wishing the Society every success, and inviting the members to Port Huron at the annual session of the state medical association. The Secretary was requested to write, thanking Dr. McLean for his kind invitation.

The discussion in surgery was then opened by