

what it was that he had mistaken for an enlargement of the pancreas? No; he evidently thought it was his duty to cut and not to think. It is an extraordinary thing that the fact that the muscles of the abdominal wall have the faculty of contracting and of remaining contracted in small sections, has never been recognized by any surgeon or physician as far as I know. This faculty is evidently due to a reflex stimulation from viscus that is irritated or inflamed. The semblance of these portions of contracted musculature to an intra abdominal tumour is so great that, although I have been familiar with the fact for many years, I am constantly meeting cases where I cannot be sure of distinguishing between muscular contraction and abdominal tumour. In passing I may remark that the patient observation of areas of tenderness and of muscle contractions is one essentially for the investigation of the general practitioner. The connection with the viscera is so definite that there is an admirable field for accurate observation waiting exploration. The requisites are simply careful observation, the noting of all associated phenomena and patient watching, for it may be years before the real meaning of the symptoms is revealed.

I may point out that it is not only clinical observers that go astray in these matters. We find in physiological text books continuous reference to certain visceral nerves as "sensory" nerves. I once asked an eminent physiologist what proof he had that these nerves were sensory in function. "Oh," he replied, "they are afferent nerves." "Admitting they are afferent, what proof have you that their function is to convey sensation?" He pondered for a short time, and looked up surprised and said, "I have no proof." It is a very curious fact that one physiologist has followed another and described the sympathetic nerves that pass from the viscera to the spinal cord as sensory in function, while there has not been a single fact recorded to support the assertion. When this matter is strictly enquired into it will be found that the manner in which sensations are produced by the viscera is by a totally different method from that employed in producing cutaneous sensation.

The necessity for accurate observation will help the general practitioner to determine the real cause of many obscure symp-