

partly responsible for the symptom. Hay has especially devoted attention to this aspect of the subject.

Is it possible to get beyond this point? Can we peer further into the darkness which surrounds the real cause of these varied appearances? In other words, are we able to say how the heart is endowed with such functions, and in what way they are disturbed?

We may fearlessly assume that the entire realm of nature is freely open to our enquiries. The Venusian bard, whose verses have, ever since the revival of learning, been the solace of such a multitude as no man can number, is assuredly astray when he sings:—"Nec scire fas est omnia." But while we claim the right to examine every natural phenomenon, we are led to acknowledge that some facts are within our reach, while others are beyond our ken. In the quest of truth it is wise to bethink ourselves of this distinction between the attainable and the unattainable. Above all, it is our duty not to be dogmatic as regards matters which we cannot know. It was Huxley who said that "the assertion which outstrips evidence is not only a blunder, but a crime." Some of the appearances which have been brought before you to-day have furnished an example of speculation in the region of the unattainable; of playing with words rather than working with things. Within recent years much time has been wasted in futile assertions that the five great functions of cardiac activity, recognized by Gaskell, are entirely due to inherent properties of the heart muscle, or, as it put, are of myogenetic origin. According to this view, or, as it would be better to put it, according to these views—for the opinions of the myogenetic school are often so contradictory as to cancel each other—the heart lives and moves and has its being independent of the wonderful and beautiful arrangement of nerve ganglia and nerve fibres, as also with their intimate connexions with the central nervous system. To suit these hypotheses the nervous system is allowed to interfere with, but has no part in, the production of, cardiac action. Is this not a strange departure from the deep saying of Galen, that "Nature does nothing imperfectly or vainly"? But this is a matter with which on the present occasion there is no time to deal. Suffice it to say that there is no proof of these assertions. Last year the subject occupied my attention in the Oration of the Medical Society of London, and it was a sincere pleasure to be able to range myself beside your Professor of Physiology, who, a few weeks before, in an eloquent address, gave a powerful indictment of the fallacies of the myogenesists. It is unlikely that any man of science with balanced mind will commit himself to the tenets, either of the myogenetic or of the neurogenetic school. We must wait for more light before we are in a position to