

rather lost sight of the poor public and its right to a share in the general progress. We have been inclined to let the people discover for themselves the immense amount of time, money and suffering that can be saved to them, and yet we are in the position of placing before them a host of well-established facts on which we base our advice as regards surgical treatment. More and more have surgery and medicine grown to be scientific and accurate. To a greater and greater extent can surgeons promise definite results. The changes in technique and operative principles that are constantly taking place lead steadily to better results because they tend ever to greater simplicity.

Is it not a good time to stop and view ourselves from the standpoint of the lay public—a public that in the main is intelligent, progressive and full of common sense?

However much we may deplore the fact that surgery is necessary, that it may be an opprobrium—which I doubt very much—we must be willing to admit that, given ideal conditions, enormous temporary and permanent benefit can in numerous instances be vouchsafed by operations, and by operations alone. Surgery has its own field. It readily yields to other and simpler therapeutic measures when satisfied that it itself is without avail. At the same time it is keenly alert to invade the vast field of internal medicine when the latter fails to accomplish the ideal; ready to retire at once if some new discovery demonstrates that disease can be conquered by means other than surgical. What surgeon is there who would not gladly throw down the knife if a serum or any simple remedy were discovered that would definitely cure malignant disease? Some such remedy is bound to come in the course of time; slowly, it may be, but none the less surely. In the meantime innumerable types of disease are safely and happily treated by the mechanics of surgery, and it ill becomes us as surgeons to belittle the aid that we can give, for the mere reason that at some future time surgery may become obsolete.

Every year I am told that we have attained the highest limit in technique. This is far from the truth, because hardly a week passes without a surgeon somewhere in the world demonstrating a discovery or reviving some long-forgotten fact that reduces mortality, shortens convalescence, or aids in the restoration of normal functions.

It should be made clear at the outset that the public must expect of surgeons not absolute efficiency, but a reasonable degree of it. Such a degree can be acquired by any surgeon who has aptitude, a love for constant self-improvement, and a readiness to make sacrifices to his ideals. Of this type there are many in your country as well as mine. The masters of surgery, on the other hand, are few in number. It is to them that we of the rank and file must look for the instruction and inspiration which should constitute a large and by no means unimportant part of their work.