

Dr. Milne, the popular Registrar of the Council, entertained the members and a number of prominent gentlemen, practitioners, newspaper men, etc., at his palatial residence, "Pinchurst," on Wednesday evening, May 2nd. It was a great success, and will long be pleasantly remembered by those who participated in it.

## THEN AND NOW—A RIP VAN WINKLE EXPERIENCE.

*To the Associate Editor for British Columbia.*

SIR, You ask me to give you some account of my visit to the scenes of my childhood and youth in 1892-03. I have not thought that there was anything specially interesting in that trip except to myself. However, it is the individual experiences and inferences drawn from them that mould the sentiments of mankind. Besides, I do not like to refuse one whose uniform kindly deportment towards me has placed me under obligations, though I think you will be sorry you gave me the invitation.

It is necessary to state the fact that I have been engaged in the practice of medicine and surgery, barring interruptions, for nearly thirty-five years. The interruptions, however, run up into the millions, as I was a medical "misfit" from the start.

I soon discovered that the amount of business depended much more on matters outside of the profession than inside. Amongst these stand prominently, ability to run some organization, personal adaptation, skill in the confidence trick, etc., etc. So, after three years' experience in a town in Canada West, I resolved to try my luck in the gold mines of British Columbia.

I could give you an account of many adventures on the way to and all over this coast since '62—I came with an overland party through the wilds of British America—but this would be out of place in a medical journal.

When I commenced the practice of medicine, I need not tell the old practitioner that blood-letting, salivation and violent purgation were included in the means thought necessary in the battle with disease. Persons in health were being bled in the spring as a prophylactic.

When practising in Honolulu a few years ago, I complained of the frequent drenching rains,

when I would be informed that I was on the dry side of the island, and so I learned that the treatment mentioned was on the wane. What must it have been when it was at its height, when Washington and Byron were slaughtered? But notwithstanding the quite vigorous sentiment in favor of this sort of practice, I did not adopt it, and my patients did not die, as they should have done had they been more considerate and respectful towards the medical fashion. I always have thought it was very mean of them.

Neighboring doctors refused to consult with me on common grounds, such as surgery, because of my heterodoxy. But there is always danger of being run over when one places himself in opposition to current sentiment which, to this day, is considered to be the same thing as truth. It has never been considered right not to walk on an old and beaten path, no matter how many have been proven to lead in the wrong direction. It was not easy to make headway against the old family doctors who had such a good knowledge of their patrons' constitutions. This had special reference to the amount of medicine they could take without fatal results. Great attention was given to finding the maximum dose. My attention was directed in the opposite direction, and I had the idea, bad boy that I was, that it was bad enough for the patient to be attacked by the disease without being attacked by one or more doctors also.

Since then this pulling-down treatment has been largely superseded by the pulling-up treatment, of which a man by the name of Chambers was the greatest exponent. And now it is all germicidal, and instead of patients, the doctors are killing microbes.

As your space is limited, I must condense what I have to say of my visit.

The experience of Rip Van Winkle was repeated. Thirty years transformed the child into the middle-aged woman, who could not recollect me, and the middle-aged into the full of years. Many dead; everything changed; I was a stranger.

During my stay in Toronto, my native place, I visited the city hospital, and saw various operations under the antiseptic plan. I will only venture one criticism. I thought and think that the patients were kept unnecessarily long under the anesthetic. No attempt apparently was made to expedite matters.