

of disease you must thoroughly understand the condition in health. Physiological changes take place slowly, pathological more generally rapid with a tendency to early decay. The researches made in this line has cleared up much that was formerly obscure in disease, and has placed medicine upon a scientific basis. By freely examining the dead we are enabled to foretell the history of the living, and thus mark the course of disease, foresee probable emergencies, and observe the effect of treatment. For instance, in Bright's disease of the kidney we are aware of the secondary lesions which are apt to occur in the lungs, heart, brain, &c., and, by anticipation, can adopt a scientific mode of treatment which will aid the "*vis medicatrix naturæ*" in prolonging the life of the individual. Medicine, in this way, becomes emancipated from empiricism, and a better understanding of the object of our remedies and their mode of action is obtained. All this is modern, but the practice of medicine is ancient. In the earliest periods of human existence medicine must have been more or less instinctive in its character; but, so far as history relates, it had become artificial, diseases being ascribed to supernatural causes and their cure forming part of religious superstition. Medicine thus became a mystery, such as we have it among the savage tribes of this continent at the present time. Amulets, necromancy, and the belief in omens, have each held their reign over the minds of men, and even to this day among ourselves we find many who still believe in supernatural agencies. Medicine thus cradled in mystery, has gradually been emancipated from such thralldom, and though not perfect, the gradual accumulation of truths is preparing it for a high standard in the future. Probably you will often be perplexed by the present diversities of thought and practice; but such differences must always exist until the truth is established, and are necessary for the exercise of that freedom of thought which keeps us from being the slaves of routine. The differences in the treatment adopted by physicians are often of less importance than they seem, for there are more ways than one of curing a disease, and each may prove equally successful. Fifty years ago, bleeding, purging, and salivation, was the routine. To-day that treatment is discountenanced and has but few followers. Homœopathy has done this much for mankind, for, by letting diseases run their course, it has brought about the discovery that in many acute cases the natural tendency is towards recovery. At the present day heroic measures are seldom resorted to, the rule being

to watch the tendency of the disease and by gentler means assist nature in a cure. The fact that the treatment of disease has undergone change does not prove that our predecessors were in the wrong; there may be cycles in disease calling for different treatment as time rolls on. The constitution of man, under the varying phases of our civilization, may undergo a change, requiring a change in our remedies. All, however, is not changed; we retain many valuable practices derived from the ancients. Possibly the greatest modern change is in the treatment of fevers. For instance, in scarlatina, the mode some twenty or thirty years ago, was to keep the patient as hot as possible, with the idea of favoring elimination by the skin, even cool drinks being forbidden, and if any one had suggested the cold douche or wet-pack he would likely have been scouted as a murderer. Now these latter means are used as a valuable auxiliary in reducing the temperature, and when judiciously applied have the effect of increasing instead of diminishing the eruption.

In Surgery also changes have occurred in our ideas: cavities are now freely opened and organs manipulated or removed, which would a few years ago be supposed to ensure death, and cures are obtained which formerly were thought to be without the reach of human skill. Whether the non-success of former times was due to the entrance of atmospheric germs into these cavities is a question we cannot answer, for their existence is not yet fully proved. Probably there are such germs, for since the antiseptic properties of carbolic acid have become available a lower rate of mortality has been obtained in operations. This with the more common use of stitches favoring an early and perfect union in incisions of considerable length, have increased the chances of success. From the short experience I have had in surgical operations I am inclined to give a very high ranking to carbolic acid, and coupling it with chloroform believe that we have now the very best means of obtaining success. The conservative surgery of the present day is also worthy of remark. The preservation of useful members by the removal of diseased parts and the treatment of distortions by the division of tendons, mark an advance in the art of surgery.

Plastic operations where, by the transplanting of skin, deformities are improved, is also another. The delicate operations in ophthalmia again display the skill attained and the perfection of the instruments employed.

Lithotomy in many cases has been superseded by