

THE VALUE OF THE REFLEXES IN DIAGNOSIS.*

BY J. S. RISIEN RUSSELL, M.D., LONDON, ENG.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:—It has been my good fortune to receive many kindnesses from our profession, and it has been my privilege to address distinguished audiences. Fully as I appreciate the honors I have enjoyed, and grateful as I am of the consideration that has been extended to me in the past, I feel that the honor your Council has done me far exceeds anything that I have hitherto experienced.

I can imagine no greater compliment than to be entrusted with the delivery of the Address in Medicine at so important a meeting as the Canadian Medical Association is holding in Ottawa to-day, and I am confident that those who have been good enough to honor me in the past would be the first to admit that the position in which your Council has now placed me is the most honored I have ever filled.

There are, Sir, some moments that cannot find adequate expression in words. My gratitude is very sincere, but I am too conscious of my inability to find a portal sufficiently wide to convey the full depth of my feelings, to make me risk the attempt that would be sure to end in failure.

No words of mine can ever thank you enough for the great honor which you have done me.

When attempting to decide upon what subject to address you it naturally occurred to me that it must be on something of neurological interest, as it was improbable that any general survey of medicine would be expected from one who had devoted so much time to a special department.

On reviewing the neurological subjects that seemed most suitable, the usual difficulty was experienced in deciding which to select. It was not without many misgivings that the value of the reflexes in diagnosis was finally chosen as likely to be the most profitable, for I am very conscious of the large amount of work of the greatest possible excellence that has been done on this side of the Atlantic. Three considerations mainly encouraged me to adhere to my decision. One was that the same objection could be urged in regard to any subject I might choose. Another was that so much work has been done on the reflexes during recent years, and so much that is contradictory has been written about them, that there is a danger that the profession may become skeptical as to their value. The third consideration that influenced me was that

* Address in Medicine at the meeting of the Canadian Medical Association, Ottawa June, 1908.