

having been present at the meeting held in Washington, September 24, 1886, it was voted that the report be accepted and the incoming President, Dr. Atkinson and the Secretary, Dr. Tilden, were appointed delegate and alternate, respectively, to the executive committee of the Congress.

On September 18-20, 1888, the twelfth annual meeting and first conjoint one, was held at Willard's Hotel, Washington, Dr. Atkinson presiding. Eighteen members were present, and sixteen papers were read, besides the President's opening address.

The thirteenth meeting was held in Boston, in the hall of the Medical Library Association, in September, 1889, Dr. Graham, president, who read an address, after which seventeen papers were read and discussed. A case of prurigo was shown, and called forth a very interesting discussion.

Last year, in the early part of September, the fourteenth meeting took place under the presidency of Dr. Morrow, at the new Bath-House, Richfield Springs. Sixteen members attended, and, after the President's address, fourteen papers were read. The meeting was a very successful one, the members having enjoyed the natural advantages of the place, and been interested in the communication made by Dr. Ransom (director of baths) on the subject of the use of the water in skin diseases. The Association adjourned, to meet in Washington in September, 1891, in conjoint session with the American Association of Physicians and Surgeons.

Such, gentlemen, is the record of our meetings during the past fifteen years, condensed as much as I have been able to do it. In looking over these records, there are many points that are interesting and instructive, but I will only detain you to refer to one. The Association started with a nominal membership of twenty-nine. Some of these members never qualified, others have resigned and dropped out; but to-day, or rather at the time the Transactions for 1890 were published, our membership was thirty-four. This means that we have had the honor and pleasure of having new members join us, who are interested in the same subject that we are. A most superficial running over of our records cannot fail to draw one's attention to the fact, that during the past fifteen years certain names appear constantly as attending, reading papers, and in discussions, and certainly all honor should be given to them for the interest they have taken in our Association and the work they have done. But, gentlemen, fifteen years added on to the life of a man between the ages of thirty and forty is a long period of time, and I trust that our comparatively new members will follow in the footsteps of the older ones, and do all in their power to carry on our Association successfully.

It is not only in a scientific sense that we have accomplished something. The meeting of members interested in the same subject from all parts of the country has been productive of friendship, and pleasant personal relations between men who otherwise would know each other only by name. I think we can congratulate ourselves, on the whole, on our harmonious meetings, and absence of the rivalry and competition which even professional men are not exempt from. As a matter of course we differ in our ideas on many points; and it is this very fact that gives a great value to our meetings, where we can discuss our differences, and have our angles smoothed down by contact with

others. If everybody thought alike, this world would be a very stupid one to live in, and all progress and advancement in knowledge and science would cease.

#### THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE AMERICAN PEDIATRIC SOCIETY, WASHINGTON, SEPT. 22, 1891.

BY T. M. ROTCH, M.D., OF BOSTON.

GENTLEMEN, FELLOW-MEMBERS of the AMERICAN PEDIATRIC SOCIETY:—Three years have passed by since in this very city we crystallized into being and became an entity. Again we gather together to emphasize our individuality as a recognized Society. Now, however, as a part of a national organization, ourselves national in every sense of the word, with our members enrolled from the shores of the Pacific, from the South, from what was formerly the West, now the great centre of our Commonwealth, from the Atlantic coast, and then stretching still farther to the North, from our sister country Canada.

I bid you welcome to our National Capital! I congratulate you on the progress which every year is being made in the study of a most interesting as well as important branch of Medical Science; in the branch which is to help make the people of the future in our great Republic worthy of the responsibilities which such a Republic brings with it; which is to make our American citizens both physically and mentally, year by year, decade by decade, superior to their forefathers, and thus enable them to develop their country and its vast resources; thus make her stand shoulder to shoulder, neck to neck, in the race for supremacy which is going on all the world over. A young country in comparison with our medical competitors in the old world, well fitting is it that our Society should devote itself to a subject essentially young not only in years, but young in the knowledge which up to the present time has been acquired concerning it. So much less has been done in the proper and scientific study of children than at other periods of life, that it is no wonder we have entered upon the especial investigation of and research in this branch of anthropology, with the keen interest of explorers in an almost unknown country. Of still further interest, also, when we discover not only that there is a vast expanse of unknown, but that much which was supposed to be known is, in reality, a poor subterfuge of unreal facts forming structures of misleading results, which in the scientific medicine of adults would not for a second be tolerated: in fact, would be laughed to scorn as relics of the dark ages of necromancy. This same misnamed medical knowledge, however, when representing the infant and child, has been accepted with but little question. What our Society was needed for, what it was formed for, what it intends to do, is to place the study of Pediatrics on the same elevated plane that has been established for the diseases of adult life.

To accomplish this, it must in the early years of its existence be iconoclastic. It must break down and sweep away these misleading structures; clear the ground of these undesirable remnants of the past; get down to the virgin soil, and then by original research build up our new fabric on a stable basis.

Wise Iconoclasm and Patient Originality must be the weapons by which we shall fight our way to the

front and place the standard of Pediatrics where it ought to be. Place it side by side with the already perfected anatomical and physiological investigations, which have become the true basis for the enlightened clinical study of human beings.

To intelligently understand the fully-developed man in health and disease, it seems self-evident that the anatomy and physiology not only of the final state of growth should be studied, but also that the various stages of development, from embryo to infant, and infant to child, and child to adult, should successively be dealt with. This in the past, however, has been but little done. On the contrary, the very opposite method has been adopted; the most careful attention being paid to adult anatomy and physiology, and then deductions made backward from adult to child; a retrograde means of acquiring knowledge which has proved eminently unsuccessful.

In the old world as well as in the new we find that these false methods have been pursued. What little has by more rational methods of study been accomplished in the investigation of infants and children, has as large a place in America as in Europe. Here, then, is our opportunity for original research, for we have a branch of medicine which universally is new.

We have the same advantages in clinical material, in well equipped laboratories, in special hospitals as are to be found anywhere. Let us be sure that we give as much if not more to the savants of Europe as we receive from them.

As I look upon the members of our Pediatric Society and see how well fitted they are to be leaders in the several communities wherein their lot is cast, it is impressed upon me that, when meeting as a whole, our Society should represent advanced and general ideas; should deal with living questions of the day; and, that the results of our deliberations should authoritatively be promulgated by our individual representatives far and wide throughout our whole country.

Thus only can the unenlightened influence of the profession at large on the laity be curbed in the harm which it is continually doing to scientific medicine; thus only can the self-sufficient ignorance regarding the most critical period of human existence be properly combated, and the general physician be forced to understand that he has but a limited knowledge of what he has been in the habit of considering simple questions; of what he has been accustomed to give off-hand opinions and advice on, to the credulous mother of the suffering child.

You probably all have met with the same experience as mine, not only among the poorer class of physicians, but, astonishing as it still seems to me, among the highly educated and distinguished members of our profession.

Among men who are recognized leaders; men who have done much for humanity in other branches of medicine, and yet with dignified authority continue to utter dead platitudes concerning children — platitudes which have been handed down from their forefathers or copied from the already cumbersome literature of Pediatrics and again enunciated by themselves in their own writings.

It is no exaggeration to state that a large number of sick infants and young children throughout the land are suffering from the vigorous treatment of their zealous medical attendants, rather than from the disease with which they started. This should be stopped.

This it is the mission of our own Society to put an end to.

I ask you to carefully consider this vital question. I ask you to attack it with Iconoclasm and Original Thought, for I assure you it will repay you, by opening up vast fields of intensely interesting brain work.

It is not difficult to pick out instance after instance of the truth of what I have just said. The therapeutics of infancy and childhood, as understood by thousands of practitioners in Germany and France, in England and in America, is a wonderful exhibition of what vagaries the human mind, sound on other subjects, can be induced to indulge in. A total disregard of natural processes; an over-exaggeration of symptoms, which in the adult mean danger and require active treatment, while in the child, they are but simple and harmless manifestations of an over-excited nervous system. Such is the "Ignis Fatuus," so misleading, not only to those who have not especially studied the early stages of life, but also to those who have seen much of it, but with eyes blinded by traditions of the past. It would seem as though in this age of rapid discovery, of quick change and interchange of ideas — in an age when the precision of our investigators in all branches of research has almost placed the much abused profession of medicine on a level with the exact sciences — it would seem, I say, that we, who are endeavoring to place our especial branch of study on firmer ground, should consider with unusual care the opinions which we express to the profession at large and to the laity; that our writings should be founded on principles as accurate as the science of the day can make them. This, however, in the past has been but little done, and consequently we have amassed volumes of most unreliable pediatric literature. I honestly believe that there is reason for saying this. I truly think that it is one of the vital living questions of the day which we should appreciate and grapple with.

What we need to aid us in this reform, for a reform it must be in every sense of the word, is a fitting humility as to the degree of our knowledge; a proper sense of how small has been the true working capital which we have had at our command in the study of Pediatrics.

We must confess, and by so doing we certainly add new strength to our writings, that the medical science of the present day is too vast for one mind to master as a whole; for one man to attempt to be an expert in.

We must make use of the experts in their several branches, whether it be chemistry or physiology, anatomy or bacteriology, to strengthen and make stable our general deductions as clinical investigators. In this way only can we, in an age essentially one of progress in details, prepare ourselves to produce work of true original thought, of real intrinsic value.

Work which, with its lustre of matured and well proved thought, spreading far into the future, will be deemed worthy to be placed with the other records of a lasting literature.

The literature of a society gives evidence of the work which has been done by its members long after their individual labors have ceased and their places have been filled by a younger generation. If that literature is well considered and shows evidence of representing not the hasty judgment of the day, but of being built on the broad foundation of exact science, it will be worthy of the study of our descendants. As a sound unquestioned nucleus, it will give encourage-

ment to broaden the field of inquiry and to add fresh knowledge year by year.

Let us then see that the circumference of our literary circle, small as it now is, shall spread wider and wider, honestly fitting itself for the far-outstretching eternal criticism which will judge our work long ages after we are dead and gone.

Let us leave to the coming ages a fitting centre for that scientific, human, eternal progress spoken of in the old hymn which says,

"Eternity, Eternity!  
How long art thou, Eternity!  
A ring whose orbit still extends,  
And ne'er beginning, never ends,  
Always thy centre, ring immense,  
And never thy circumference,  
Mark well, O man, Eternity!"

It should be our aim that a lasting literature of this kind, ever young and fresh in the truths which it enunciates, ever presenting a solid centre for more extended investigations, should emanate from members of our own Society.

Again then, let us see that what we write, that what we publish, not only in our transactions, but in our books and in the medical journals of the day, shall form volumes worthy of the admiration, and not of the derision of our successors. Let our books so teem with unquestioned truths, with pages recording facts and finding no place for theories, that on their face they will prove the truth, and not the fallacy of the lines, which in the present age of unbridled literature might well be questioned; lines which read:

"Give books: they live when you are dead;  
Light on the darkened mind they shed:  
Good seed they sow from age to age,  
Through all this mortal pilgrimage.  
They nurse the germ of holy trust;  
They wake untired when you are dust."

### Original Articles.

#### THE CONDITION AND PROSPECTS OF THE LIBRARY OF THE SURGEON-GENERAL'S OFFICE, AND ITS INDEX CATALOGUE.<sup>1</sup>

BY JOHN S. BILLINGS, M.D., *Surgeon United States Army.*

Of late years those physicians in this country who make use of medical literature in connection with their investigations or writings, have, for the most part, become acquainted with the resources of the "Library of the Surgeon-General's Office," as it is officially designated, and many of them are much interested in its progress and prospects. I am often asked how the collection is progressing, how near it is to completion, what it is most in need of, when the "Index Catalogue" will be done, whether it will be followed by a supplement, whether there is danger that the work of the library may be checked in the future through changes in administration, and so on.

These manifestations of interest are, of course, very gratifying, and when the Chairman of your Programme Committee demanded a ten-minute paper from me on this occasion, it occurred to me that I would try to answer some of the foregoing questions so far as I am able to do so.

The present condition of the library is fairly satis-

factory. It now contains 102,000 volumes and 152,000 pamphlets, counting as pamphlets all octavos and smaller sizes having less than 100 pages, and all quartos of less than 50 pages. During the last five years, that is, from July 1, 1886, to June 30, 1891, the additions to it have included 25,237 volumes and 55,900 pamphlets, or an average of 5,000 volumes and nearly 12,000 pamphlets yearly. Of this annual increase, about 2,000 volumes and 4,000 pamphlets have been of new or current literature, and the remainder have been publications of previous years or centuries. About one-fifth of these accessions, of both new and old literature, have been presented, the remainder have been purchased. So far as mere size goes, it is the largest collection of medical literature in the world, and for the last five years has been increasing more rapidly than any other similar library containing 25,000 volumes and upward. It is especially rich in medical periodicals and transactions of societies, of which classes it now contains about 34,350 volumes. The American, English, French and German literature in all branches of medicine which has appeared during the present century is very fully represented, and over 90 per cent. of all the medical literature of the world for the last ten years is in the library. The whole is conveniently arranged in a fireproof building, and is catalogued.

So much for the favorable side of the situation; now for a statement of some of the principal defects and deficiencies. Of medical incunabula, it contains 140 volumes, or about one-eighth of the medical works published prior to 1500. Of the published works of the ancient Greek, Roman, Arab and Hebrew medical authors, it has one or more editions of nearly all, but these editions are not in every instance the best. Of the early Spanish and Portuguese medical literature, it has almost nothing; of French medical works of the sixteenth century, but little; of French medical theses prior to 1800, very few. Of the English, French and German medical books of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, which are of any importance historically or practically, it has about 75 per cent.; of the Italian, about 50 per cent.; and of Spanish, about 25 per cent. In its periodical literature it is especially deficient in the Spanish and Italian prior to about 1850, in the French prior to 1780, and in the Russian prior to 1860. If I could add to it about ten thousand volumes of my own selection, it would, I think, contain at least one edition of every medical work of any practical use or importance which has ever been published, although it would still not possess some 50,000 pamphlets and theses, each of which might be of some historical interest.

These deficiencies in the library are being gradually supplied, but the acquisition of the older books and pamphlets which are still wanted is becoming every year a slower, more difficult, and more costly process. This is due to the fact that the books still wanted are many of them rare, and only appear in the market at intervals of from five to fifty years; to the fact that the number of competitors for such books is increasing, and, above all, to the fact that the expenditure of time required for the examination of the numerous catalogues and lists received at the library in order to select those books which are still wanted is becoming very great in proportion to the results obtained. To check off a catalogue of a thousand medical books with the result of finding about four which are really

<sup>1</sup> Read before the Association of American Physicians, at its Sixth Annual Session, Washington, September 25, 1891.