

SCIENCE

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THE TEACHING OF CLINICAL MEDICINE¹

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THE SCIENCE OF CLINICAL MEDICINE

CLINICAL medicine is the most complex of all the natural sciences, for successfully to study it one needs to be more or less familiar with the content and the methods of investigation of a whole series of ancillary natural sciences (physics, chemistry, biology, anatomy, physiology, psychology, physiologic chemistry, pharmacology, pathologic anatomy, pathologic physiology, bacteriology and parasitology, immunology, etc.). Like other natural sciences, clinical medicine consists of a growing accumulation of truths that make up a more or less distinct body of knowledge. In order that this body may be conveniently organized, the facts of the science have to be collected, compared with one another, arranged in logical sequence, and, as far as possible, summarized in the form of generalizations known as laws or principles. The many ways of accumulating and organizing the facts pertaining to the sick constitute the scientific method of internal medicine.

Studies of patients have shown us that the transformations of matter and energy in the bodies of the sick, though conforming to natural law, deviate to a certain extent either qualitatively or quantitatively from the transformations in health. Workers in clinical medicine are gradually finding out how to detect these deviations from the normal by systematic inquisition of the minds and bodies of their patients. They

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