

comprehends planning experiments, you get him some time to follow up these generalities of mine with an intensive discussion of that special statistical subject?

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WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH A HARVEY OR A LAËNNEC?¹

DURING the greater part of the year most of the members of our society are integral parts of various medical schools. Our chief interests are devoted to academic medicine. To-day, however, we meet in a city which is far from all medical schools and our thoughts properly turn to the larger problems connected with research in clinical medicine. The American Society for Clinical Investigation is composed of clinicians who have been selected because they have shown ability in the fields of research. We have as our chief concern and as our chief responsibility the perpetuation of the research spirit in clinical medicine. Therefore it is our duty to sound a note of warning whenever we believe this spirit to be in danger.

With the tremendous growth of our medical clinics and medical schools we are in danger of being swamped in this process of expansion. There is a great demand for young men to fill the various positions in these large clinics and the demand falls chiefly on the membership of this society. Almost every man here is planning a career of academic medicine in which he hopes to be able to continue that scientific work which alone qualified him for membership. What are his chances of success?

Suppose we had in this country a young William Harvey and a young René Theophile Laënnec. What would we do with them? We would certainly give them a good training in their medical schools and hospitals and we would provide them with fellowships or minor teaching positions which would allow them to devote most of their time to research work until they reached their early thirties. Then would begin the critical period. If they showed aptitude for executive work they would be given increasing responsibilities in the management of the clinic and medical school. If they showed aptitude for teaching they would have to spend more and more time with the students. If they were successful as clinicians they would have to look after not only their ward patients but also an increasing number of friends, nurses, and doctors' wives. They might in addition have private patients. Having already attained distinction in research they would be con-

sulted by younger men seeking advice and many visitors seeking instruction.

At this stage Harvey and Laënnec would be put in charge of departments of medicine. With it would come an increased amount of paper work, budgets, schedules, and numerous committee meetings. I do not wish to discuss the question of full time versus part time, but it is quite possible that the university might stop their private practices which brought them in contact with instructive manifestations of disease in order that more time might be devoted to budgets and committee meetings.

From now on Harvey and Laënnec would be penalized for each new success in administrative, clinical or pedagogical ability. If they were really able administrators their departments would be increased in size and embellished with sub-departments until they were running an almost complete medical faculty with anatomists, physiologists, bacteriologists, etc., all under the department of medicine. If they were really distinguished clinicians great pressure would be brought to bear until they were taking care of many persons who had influence with the university. If they were public-spirited men desirous of advancing the cause of scientific medicine and public health they would be placed upon numberless committees in the county or national medical societies.

What would become of the discoveries that made Harvey the founder of modern physiology or the pathological studies that made Laënnec the founder of modern clinical medicine? How much time would be left for quiet work and contemplation?

You may answer that these men would have to take care of themselves and reserve a fair proportion of their time for their own work. How can a man best do this? A clever man would take care to make himself stupid at executive work and tardy at all committee meetings but what sensible man with the instincts of a doctor allows himself to be clever? A logical man would set aside a certain portion of each day and steel his heart against all interruptions; but what thoughtful doctor is ever logical with regard to his own time? Suppose he did reserve a morning for himself and in the midst of it a resident came to him saying that they were about to perform an autopsy on that interesting case with the big spleen, or an assistant blew in full of excitement with the result of his *experimentum crucis* or suppose there came with many bows that distinguished visitor from Germany or Japan.

The situation would not be serious if it only meant the loss of the original investigations of a few such men. There is a more serious loss; that is the gradual atrophy of the research spirit through disuse. The true research spirit can be maintained only by means

¹ President's address, American Society for Clinical Investigation, Atlantic City, May 2, 1927.

of personal contact and participation in the experiments. The head of the clinic is seldom allowed enough time for that study and work which alone will keep him the best informed man in his own particular field. The university scatters his energies over a broad expanse, part of which is as sterile as the Desert of Sahara. If we accept the recent definition of the specialist as the man who knows more and more about less and less we can define the chief of the large clinic as the man who is in danger of knowing less and less about more and more. Do we want our leaders in medicine to be transformed into deans or even college presidents?

The matter will become still more serious when the younger men begin to realize all this. It is quite conceivable that some of the most promising, those who are most devoted to research, may forsake the paths of academic medicine. They may sincerely believe that they can learn more medicine, support their families in more comfort and accomplish more in research if they devote half the day to private practice and the other half to the laboratory.

What remedies are possible? One makeshift remedy would be to have the men in charge of clinics go to other institutions for a certain portion of each year in order to segregate themselves from domestic cares. This would be a frank acknowledgment of the ineffectiveness of the home conditions. The only logical method would seem to be a diminution of the executive work thrown on one man's shoulders. The problem of simplification must be handled by the men in charge of our medical schools. They must realize that the head of a department can not always protect himself but that they must protect him just as he protects his younger associates. The prime case of the trouble is the desire for bigness on the part of our universities. Our great American sins are efficiency and bigness. About the time we achieve one hundred per cent. efficiency we succeed in eliminating everything except the empty shell of efficiency itself, and about the time we achieve the desired bigness we eliminate the last trace of greatness.

This still leaves us with the problem of what to do with Harvey and Laënnec. I am afraid that these worthies would settle the question themselves. After a good look at the present conditions they would realize that they would be happier in their own small inefficient but comfortable centuries. Harvey would beg to be returned to the England of James the First, Laënnec to the France of Louis the Eighteenth.

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CHARLES WESLEY HARGITT

CHARLES WESLEY HARGITT was born at Lawrenceburg, Indiana, on March 28, 1862, and died at Syracuse on June 11, 1927. He graduated from Moores Hill in 1877, took his Ph.D. at Ohio University, 1890, and was awarded an honorary degree doctorate of science by Moores Hill in 1908, by Evansville College in 1920 and by Syracuse University in 1922. Dr. Hargitt was professor of natural sciences at Moores Hill College from 1885 to 1888; professor of biology and geology at Miami University from 1888 to 1901; professor of biology from 1891 to 1921 in Syracuse University; professor of embryology in the college of medicine from 1898 to 1912, and research professor of zoology from 1921. Dr. Hargitt was assistant director of the Cold Spring Harbor Biological Laboratory from 1891 to 1903 and a trustee of the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole from 1900 to 1921. When Professor Hargitt came to Syracuse, he immediately set about introducing the laboratory method into the introductory biology, and this course soon became one of the strong courses in the university. During these early years he taught geology and botany, as well as courses in geology, and later that in botany was placed in separate departments. Although he looked after these related subjects at first, he gave without assistance courses in general biology, invertebrate zoology, vertebrate zoology, histology and embryology. Seminar work was also included.

Professor Hargitt took an active part in educational organization, and early in his residence at Syracuse began urging a more liberal curriculum and in 1895 was instrumental in introducing the major and minor system, thus replacing the required courses of the last two years. He continued to be one of the leaders in faculty meetings up to the time of his retirement from active teaching.

But this diversified teaching and active part in educational reform did not hinder him from carrying on his research. Professor E. B. Wilson started him out as a graduate student on coelenterate development in 1884, and he continued to do research in this group for forty-three years. His contributions are too numerous to list, as they constitute a large part of the seven volumes of proceedings from the Department of Zoology.

Professor Hargitt studied at the Naples Biological Station in 1894, 1903 and 1910. He was vice-president in 1902 of section F of the American Association for the Advancement of Science; president of the New York State Science Teachers Association, 1898, and of Syracuse Academy of Science, 1896; member of the American Society of Zoologists; the American