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## THE REPUTED CONFLICT BETWEEN THE LABORATORIES AND CLINICAL MEDICINE<sup>1</sup>

By the late Dr. C. F. HOOVER

WITHIN the past few years the idea has frequently been expressed that there is a conflict between the "laboratories" and the practice of medicine. Just how this impression has gained currency is difficult to express in a few words because any particular conflict may start from so many different causes and may come from either side. We should not wonder at this conflict, because it is only in the past thirty-five years that the laboratory has shared much in clinical diagnosis. Formerly chemistry and microscopy contributed only to post-mortem studies, and instruments of precision that can be used in clinical studies are very new. Like the art of medicine, the merits of laboratory devices depend on a directing

intelligence, and no kind of contention is inspired by such a warm spring of egotism as the defense of one's intellectual self-esteem. Until very modern times, laboratory work was the avocation of practitioners, but now the laboratory methods have grown so much in importance and in variety that their employment has attained the dignity of a vocation. Naturally want of knowledge, prejudice and professional vanity may lead one side to belittle the other's importance. Nothing so readily stirs the vanity of a member of any of the learned professions as an attempt to dim the light of which he is conscious. So we have not far to seek for the reason why we should occasionally meet with champions of contending views who resent either the tyranny or obstinacy of their opponents.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was read by Dr. Hoover before the Cleveland Academy of Medicine. It is presented for publication by his wife, Katherine Fraser Hoover.

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