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PROGRESS OF MEDICINE DURING THE PAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE HARVEY SOCIETY LECTURES¹

By RUFUS COLE, M.D.

THE HOSPITAL OF THE ROCKEFELLER INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

THE constitution of this society states its object to be the diffusion of knowledge of the medical sciences, or, more specifically, "the diffusion of scientific knowledge in selected chapters in anatomy, physiology, pathology, bacteriology, pharmacology and physiological and pathological chemistry." This statement implies that these sciences form the foundation on which the superstructure of medicine is built. That medicine itself is omitted from this catalogue of sciences suggests that medicine is something different, that as an independent branch of human knowledge it does not exist, or, if so, that its content and the methods for its pursuit are not of a character

to justify its inclusion in this family of sciences. Time would not permit me, even if it were profitable, to discuss the justification for this attitude, but I may point out the great and important change that has taken place in the past twenty-five years toward this point of view. The independent position which this discipline now occupies in certain universities, its elevation to a rank equivalent to that of the other sciences mentioned and its disinterested pursuit by men whose chief object is its advancement indicate one of the most striking changes which has occurred in medicine, and to-day, if the constitution of this society were to be written, its object would probably be stated to be the diffusion of scientific knowledge in medicine and related sciences.

¹ Address given at the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Harvey Society, at the Academy of Medicine, New York City, May 15, 1930.

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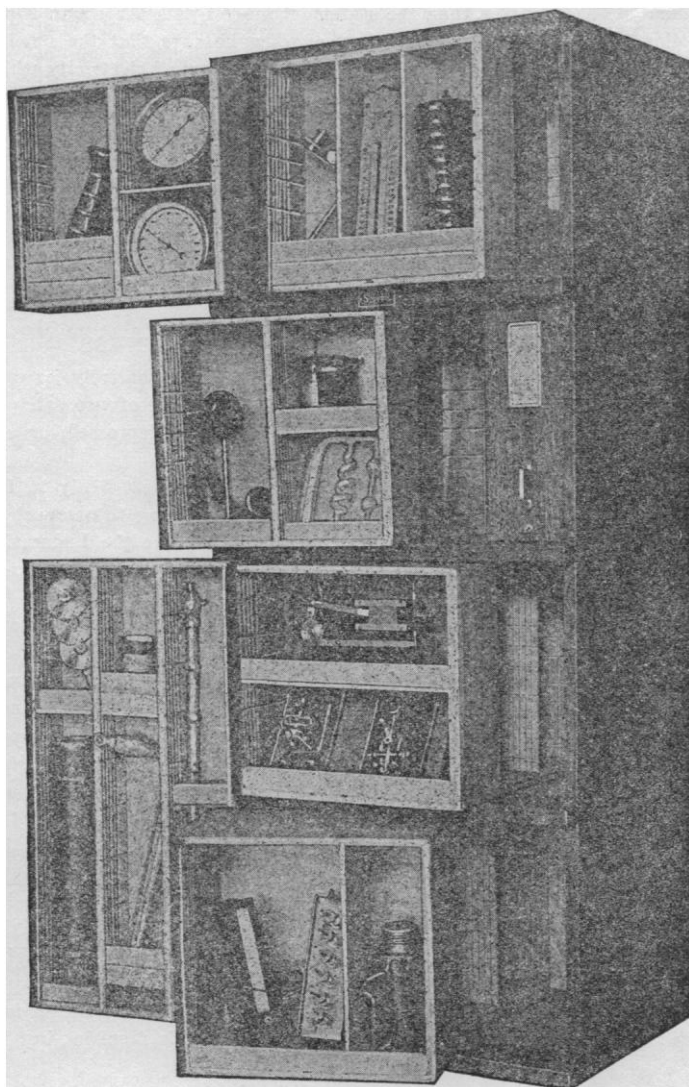
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