

SCIENCE

VOL. 76

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1932

No. 1972

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SCIENCE: A Weekly Journal devoted to the Advancement of Science, edited by J. McKEEN CATTELL and published every Friday by

THE SCIENCE PRESS

New York City: Grand Central Terminal

Lancaster, Pa.

Garrison, N. Y.

Annual Subscription, \$6.00

Single Copies, 15 Cts.

SCIENCE is the official organ of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Information regarding membership in the Association may be secured from the office of the permanent secretary, in the Smithsonian Institution Building, Washington, D. C.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CLINICAL PATHOLOGY TO MODERN MEDICINE¹

By Dr. THOMAS B. MAGATH

SECTION ON CLINICAL PATHOLOGY, THE MAYO CLINIC, ROCHESTER, MINNESOTA

BEFORE an audience composed of members and friends of the American Society of Clinical Pathologists, it would indeed be like carrying "owls to Athens" to pay a tribute to the subject of clinical pathology. In this day and time one may take for granted that all realize and appreciate somewhat the value of clinical pathology to the science of medicine. The subject which will be taught in these magnificent laboratories erected by the Louisiana State University is not only important to medicine but is at least of sufficient importance to mankind to have justified the expenditure of the large sum it represents to provide suitable rooms for the courses of study that will be given here.

¹ Read at the dedication of the new clinical pathological laboratory of the Medical Center of the Louisiana State University and Charity Hospital, New Orleans, Louisiana, May 9, 1932.

At the outset one must make clear what is meant by clinical pathology, for even now divergent ideas are held as to the limits of the field.

From time to time some difference of opinion arises among laboratory men as to the definition of "clinical pathologist" as distinct from "pathologist," or shall we say, "common pathologist." No one has furnished us with a satisfactory distinction between these specialists, which leads one to suspect that they belong to the same brood, and for my part I am quite willing to include in this brood any one with a medical degree, whose subsequent training and practice make him proficient in any medical laboratory specialty. Every one who studies or investigates materials derived from patients deals with clinical material, and if he be qualified in any of the several fields of pathology he is a clinical pathologist. Therefore, what I have to

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