

to any war activity, he can surely turn part of his attention to some of the many other necessary things that any educated person can do.

Of course this is not a suggestion that all scientific work which is not directly connected with the war should be even temporarily abandoned. There are some investigations under way which may be important later on and which if not finished now will be entirely fruitless. There are certain projects that must be executed now or never, such as the geological survey in the valley of the Colorado River, that was made a few years ago before the rising waters of

Lake Meade covered the scene forever. There may also be a few scientists who would be of so little value in any other occupation that they might as well continue at their usual work.

When allowances have been made for such exceptions, there still remains a large fraction of the available energy of the scientists of the country that could and ought to be diverted to the main purpose of saving the only type of civilization in which science can flourish and human happiness be widely attained.

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QUOTATIONS

SOCIAL MEDICINE

THE history of medicine is the story of a discontent which, from age to age, has infected the minds of practising physicians. One of the earliest manifestations of this discontent was the theory of the "four humours" enunciated by Hippocrates of Cos, in an attempt to explain the phenomena of disease and so to effect an improvement in therapy. Hippocrates made cure his measure of the understanding of cause and thus set the doctor upon the long way which, at this hour, he is still diligently treading. Those who followed have not at any time abandoned the Hippocratic outlook; but they have enlarged and broadened it so that the ideal of cure has become associated in their minds with the higher ideal of prevention. The names of Harvey, Sydenham, Jenner, the Hunters, Pasteur and Lister are held in honor as the architects of a world delivered from disease rather than of a world in which sick men can be restored to health. In the field of tropical medicine prevention has already so far eclipsed cure as to present a dazzling prospect of achievement; in the other fields the study of sources is reaching out towards a new vision of the doctor and his work. As the causes of disease are more precisely determined, it is seen that removal of these causes is the concern not of doctors only but also of all their patients, actual and prospective, that is to say of Government and the community.

It is this view of the matter which endows the great scheme of research founded by Lord Nuffield at Oxford six years ago with its peculiar interest and importance. Lord Nuffield, by establishing a new study of the causes of disease in surroundings calculated to stimulate the imagination and whet the edge of curiosity, effected such a welding of science and sociology as even the most optimistic had not dared to hope for within the compass of a generation. The Oxford school began to express the view, illustrated in a recent Harveian oration by Sir Farquhar Buzzard, that social medicine has been and is being neglected

in this country, and that the time has come for an organized investigation of the social factors in many obscure problems of causation by a force of doctors specially trained for the purpose. Action has now followed. With the cordial approval of Lord Nuffield, the Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust has decided to devote the sum of £10,000 a year, for ten years in the first instance, to the creation of a university professorship of social medicine in Oxford University, and to the foundation of an institute in which the professor will work.

The purposes of the new institute are three-fold—to investigate the influence of social, genetic, environmental and domestic factors on the incidence of human disease and disability; to seek and promote measures, other than those usually employed in the practice of remedial medicine, for the protection of the individual and of the community against such forces as interfere with the full development and maintenance of man's mental and physical capacity; and, if required by the university to do so, to make provision in the institute for the instruction in social medicine of students and practitioners approved by the board of the faculty of medicine in the university. A chief merit of this plan is the promise which it affords of a solid foundation for future legislative action. For the truth must be faced that such a foundation does not exist at present and can not be attained except by diligent work. Schemes of reform or coordination are likely to fail of their object if initiated hastily without a true understanding of the issues involved and the difficulties certain to be encountered. Social medicine is not an exclusive province of government; it belongs also to all the local areas and even to all the workers in these areas. Only experience can direct the march of a progress which must in present conditions be pioneering work. The trail must be blazed. Upon the new institute at Oxford University will devolve the heavy responsibility and the high honor of blazing it.—*The Times, London.*