

## Reports of Societies

### PATHOLOGY AND MEDICINE

#### Presidential Address to Medical Society of London

Dr. G. W. GOODHART was installed as president of the Medical Society of London on October 14 and proceeded to give his presidential address entitled "Stray Thoughts on Pathology and Medicine."

A very desirable change (said Dr. Goodhart) had taken place during recent years in the teaching of pathology to medical students—a change which he could best describe by contrast. When he first entered the hospital wards there were two chairs of pathology in London, both of which were held by physicians, and at his own school there was no chair. To-day in the schools attached to the University of London there were between twenty and thirty chairs in pathology and allied subjects. Nowadays when a pathologist was mentioned one thought at once of a man working in a laboratory, and the last place in which one would look for him would be the wards of a hospital. A correspondent in the medical press had stated recently that pathologists were like dictators: they dealt with human material but their contact with human beings was less than that of the local dustman. The human held some truth in that pathologists were being created who knew very little of clinical medicine.

#### The Science of Pathology

The science of pathology received impetus from the easier isolation of bacteria. Many problems which had no immediate relation to practical medicine were investigated, and it had come to be realized that pathology must be studied for its own sake. No one realized this, said Dr. Goodhart, more fully than himself, but unfortunately some pathologists in their struggle to obtain a status for pathology went further and said that it must be studied for its own sake alone, and that to be a good pathologist one must cast away any idea that one's work might be of any value to clinical medicine. His own view was that pathologists of that kind should find their opportunities in other spheres than medical schools or teaching hospitals. At the same time as academic pathology was raising its head therapeutic procedures such as vaccine treatment were introduced, demanding a technique to be found only among laboratory workers.

Those who followed clinical practice were faced with a position of considerable difficulty. Some studied bacteriology and became experts in that subject; others struck out in new ways based on physiology, but many pathologists failed to appreciate that their predecessors got their knowledge by diligent work and patient observation. How to obtain clinical experience was a problem which called for genius to solve, and, moreover, a problem which became more difficult with further advances in bacteriological technique. The increase in the mass of laboratory work was part of the post-war demand for reconstruction and research, but the idea found currency that research was necessarily something done in a laboratory, whereas research could be done in any place—ward, operating theatre, library; even in several places at once.

#### The Laboratory and Research

It was this association of the laboratory with research which widened the gulf already separating the practice of medicine from the laboratory. After a good deal of discussion teaching units were formed, the function of which was laid down in a memorandum by Sir George Newman, where it was postulated as essential that some of the teaching in the schools should be in the hands of those engaged in research and that the posts should be whole-time ones. Thus research laboratories with a whole-time staff came to be regarded as necessary to successful teaching. These units had made a great contribution to progress, though not the expected contribution. In some of them teaching was the main activity, in others research, and very often the definite statement was forthcoming, "If we are to succeed we must

be relieved from teaching." On the top of the units another department of medicine had been developed called "clinical science," and thus medicine was divided up into pigeon-holes when what was wanted was not division but unification. Such unification was not attainable so long as the idea persisted that pathology was not the province of the clinician. The idea must be recovered that pathology was the very foundation of the clinician's house.

What was the meaning of the word "clinical"? Clinical observation was made at the bedside, and "clinical" was thus used merely as an adjective of place. Clinical investigation was contrasted with laboratory investigation. To use the term "clinical" in that way was not only meaningless but misleading. Many of the usual tests carried out in the laboratory could be done at the bedside, but to do them in the laboratory was more convenient. The information furnished by the laboratory was sought in order to obtain some definite fact about a particular patient in order to treat him rightly. These reflections invited the further question: What is clinical medicine? All those engaged in the practice of medicine were driven by two distinct impulses: to do all they could in the interests of their patients, and to probe into the secrets of Nature, meaning life and disease. He was impatient at any attempt to separate the art and science of medicine. It was possible for some people to engage in the science of medicine and pay little heed to the art, but he could not conceive any intelligent person engaging in the art of medicine without being brought to its science. He refused to subscribe to some of these subdivisions. He divided people into groups according as to which impulse dominated them. One group were clinicians, the other academicians, and for him there was no question of superiority of one over the other, except that when he was sick he wanted the cleverest doctor he could find, and he sought him among the "artists."

#### The Scientific Method in Clinical Medicine

Clinical medicine must itself be a pathology. To it was brought all the knowledge that academic study had made available, and an endeavour was made to get as clear a picture as possible of the disease processes. In the practice of clinical medicine they adhered to scientific method, collecting facts with accuracy, arranging them in orderly fashion, and making logical deductions. The data collected might be insufficient to enable conclusions to be drawn, but if this were recognized they could content themselves with probability rather than certainty and hope that experience and judgment would in time bridge the gap. He objected only to the name "clinical science," which Sir Thomas Lewis had given to one branch of medicine. It conveyed the suggestion that ordinary clinical medicine was not science. He never understood why Sir Thomas Lewis had not chosen the good old name "pathology." Both clinical and academic medicine must be regarded as using in an equal degree the methods of scientific inquiry, and both should be equally concerned with research.

Except in the case of a few, Dr. Goodhart said in conclusion, it was impossible for the modern clinician to master all the science he wished to call to his aid, and the laboratory worker would go far to supply the need—he said "laboratory worker," not "laboratory," for there was a vast difference. Specimens should be sent to the pathologist with all the available facts so that he could do his best to throw light upon the pathological process. But this was never the same in any two people; it was always the result of many factors, and the pathological finding would vary with those factors. If co-operation could be secured between the clinician and the laboratory worker the desired unity between medicine and pathology would be ensured. He added that it was the glory of the Medical Society of London that it had never permitted any separation between the integral parts of medicine. Changes more radical than any hitherto seen might come about, but one fundamental article of faith should remain—namely, the indissoluble union of medicine and pathology.

The forty-eight States, four Territories, and the District of Columbia, U.S.A., have been allotted \$5,672,388 in Federal funds to aid in controlling syphilis and gonorrhoea during the coming year.