THE PAST AND THE FUTURE OF THE MEDICAL SCIENCES IN THE UNITED STATES

At the 1919 meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, held in St. Louis, the association adopted a new constitution which included among other modifications a change in the name of this section from "Physiology and Experimental Medicine" to "Medical Sciences." In the same year, the National Research Council of the United States in effecting its "permanent organization" on a peace time basis changed the name of its "Medical Division" to "Division of the Medical Sciences." Thus in a single year the term "Medicine" disappears as the substantive from the titles of what may fairly be regarded as the two most important organizations on the continent whose main function it is to further the interests of science in general and to stimulate research, to yield up its primary position to one secondary in importance to the term science. There can be no doubt but that these changed designations are indicative of a changed attitude in the United States toward medicine as a science, and it therefore seemed fitting that the first chairman of the section thus newly designated upon retiring from office should essay an analysis of the factors that seem to him to be responsible for the change, in an effort to ascertain the significance of the implied trend.

An additional reason for selecting this general topic for discussion is the rather unusual and intimate insight into the conditions at present prevailing in the departments of the medical sciences in the United States which the speaker was enabled to gain through his connection with a study of the supply of assistants in pre-

1 Address of the vice-president and chairman of Section N—Medical Sciences, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Toronto, December, 1921.