

SCIENCE

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INDIVIDUALISM IN MEDICAL EDUCATION¹

IN human progress there are two fundamental processes which sometimes proceed equally, but usually one or the other is dominant,—these two processes are extension and consolidation. In the birth and growth of nations, there is first settlement in colonies due to community of thought and action; this expansion is followed by a union; national expansion leads to international alliances; the expansion of alliances leads to consolidation into world leagues. In the growth of religions many beliefs are unified by the Christian religion; then extension of doctrines leads to innumerable sects, followed by attempts at consolidation. In the more specialized fields of activity the same processes are observed. In celestial physics the theory of gravitation coordinated the scattered and divergent views; then a period of differentiation, followed by attempts at coordination in the theory of relativity. In the field of medical science there are many illustrations of the same procedure. Scattered observations on variations in the blood, phlegm, and bile, during illness were brought together in the humoral theory of disease; in like manner studies on bacteria were unified in the germ theory. Studies on heredity and environment found common expression in the theory of evolution. In the past, medicine was largely restricted to the diseases of mankind. At present she recognizes the intimate relationships of the diseases of plants and animals to those of mankind. In the near future she must take into consideration the diseases of metals; ultimately her domain will extend widely over both the organic and inorganic world. In the growth of knowledge in all of

¹ An address delivered before the Association of American Medical Colleges March 7, 1922.

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