

SCIENCE

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THE FUTURE OF MEDICINE.¹

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The future occupations and interests of the medical profession are to be in some respects different from those of the past, and they are to be more various. The ordinary physician has for the last hundred years been almost exclusively a man devoted to the treatment of diseases already developed in human bodies or of injuries already incurred. He made his diagnosis, and then sought remedies and a cure. He was the sympathetic and skilful helper of sick or injured persons. Most of the cases that came under his care were cases considered plain as to symptoms, period and accepted treatment. The minority of cases were obscure, and called for unusual knowledge and skill in discerning the seat of the disorder, or the approximate cause of the bodily disturbance. Hence the special value of the experienced consultant, who was ordinarily a man of some peculiar natural gift of body, mind or temperament, possessing also in high degree the faculty of keen observation, and the habit of eliminating irrelevant considerations, and ultimately finding his way to the accurate, limited inference from the facts before him. Both the ordinary physician and the consultant have already been much helped by the extraordinary progress made in medical science during the last thirty years; but they have been helped chiefly to a surer recognition of diseases established in human

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¹ An address delivered by President Charles W. Eliot, on September 26, 1906, at the dedication of the Harvard Medical School.

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