

SCIENCE

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THE METHODS OF IMMUNOLOGY¹

DURING recent years your president has been denied the opportunity of continuing research work, by reason of constantly increasing administrative responsibility. Any one of you who has had similar experience will understand the sacrifice involved in being divorced from immediate participation in investigations. For the reason stated I am unable to present to you any piece of research, but in lieu of this I shall venture to tell you briefly of the great aid afforded by your own particular branch of biological science to those of us who are confronted with the responsibility for the final supervision of certain medicinal agents.

It is a fact that governments (and particularly our own) have singled out from the great list of remedial and prophylactic preparations those susceptible of examination by immunological methods, and have placed in the hands of certain agencies control procedures applicable to those agents and unthought of in connection with other groups of therapeutic preparations. Let me make this clear by an example:

At present no one may exploit in interstate traffic in the United States serums or vaccines for the treatment of cancer, but there is nothing to prevent any one from exploiting a treatment for cancer made of something other than a serum or vaccine, provided only that the labels on the preparation conform to the requirements of the food and drug enforcement officials.

In our country Congress in 1902 recognized the importance of, and the special dangers and needs in connection with, biologic products, and in the intervening period the hygienic laboratory of the United States Public Health Service has had exceptionally good opportunities of becoming familiar with the difficulties involved, as the control measures are exercised through that institution.

¹ Presidential address before The American Association of Immunologists, Boston, March 29 and 30, 1923.

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