

SCIENCE

VOL. LXI

MAY 15, 1925

No. 1585

THE OPPORTUNITY OF ANATOMY¹

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SCIENCE: A Weekly Journal devoted to the Advancement of Science, edited by J. McKeen Cattell and published every Friday by

THE SCIENCE PRESS

Lancaster, Pa. Garrison, N. Y.
New York City: Grand Central Terminal.

Annual Subscription, \$6.00. Single Copies, 15 Cts.

SCIENCE is the official organ of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Information regarding membership in the association may be secured from the office of the permanent secretary, in the Smithsonian Institution Building, Washington, D. C.

Entered as second-class matter July 15, 1923, at the Post Office at Lancaster, Pa., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

It has been the custom of the past few years for the person whom you have chosen as your presiding officer to give in this hour some comprehensive survey of his own research. But last year you gave a generous allotment of your time to a symposium on the subject in which I am especially interested. At that time I presented the work of my colleagues and myself, it is true in an incomplete form, but as our experiments have since been analyzed and published, I propose, with your permission, to speak on a more general topic. I wish to return to an earlier custom of this society and consider the general subject of teaching. This year marks the end of my career as a teacher: I have taught my last class, I have ceased to be a professional teacher, but remain a professional student; but I have taught for twenty-six years, twenty-three years in a medical school, with such pleasure that I wish to record some of the changes which I have personally lived through in the teaching of anatomy.

The relation of anatomy to medical research is to be my special topic, for both in its position at the beginning of the medical course and in the nature of its subject-matter, anatomy has facilities unsurpassed for turning the minds of students toward research. From the programs of our meetings it is clear that gross anatomy is enlarging its field for research into the domain of anthropology, that neurology is at the present time one of the most brilliant subjects for research, in its almost untrodden field for the correlation of structure and function, but it is specifically of histology that I wish to speak this morning, to the thesis, that, in histology, one has a rare opportunity to teach knowledge in its growing zone. That is the definition with which Havelock Ellis in his most fascinating new book, "The Dance of Life," has illuminated the relation of science to modern education.

When I began the teaching of histology, twenty-three years ago, the subject was a minor discipline. Histology began with the discovery of the cell, and through its early period it was the isolated cell that dominated its subject-matter; but the cell, isolated by methods of maceration, dilute alcohol for the epithelial cells and weak acids for muscle, had been dead long before it was studied and so we had only general concepts concerning its form and its relation-

¹Presidential address given before the American Association of Anatomists, 1925.

Science

61 (1585)

Science 61 (1585), x-524.

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