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SOME PROBLEMS OF MEDICAL INVESTIGATION AND MEDICAL EDUCATION¹

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THE laying of a corner-stone is an occasion on which one's imagination as to the future is stimulated to activity and one's thoughts naturally turn toward consideration of the probable future activity of the building whose erection is to proceed. This structure, whose corner-stone we lay to-day, is to be a hospital for the clinical activities of a graduate school of medicine, and it is a memorial to perpetuate for all time a name—Albert Merritt Billings. Broadly speaking, herein lie the purposes of the structure to be erected on this corner-stone. The corner-stone itself, architecturally considered, is an entirely dispensable feature of a building and in no wise determines the character of the structure to be built in due season, following its laying. However, about a corner-stone center the ideas and sentiments which in future years will be the real expression of the purposes of the structure and constitute an undying memorial to the name honored by the donors of the building.

On such an occasion it may not be inappropriate to devote a little time to the consideration of some problems of medical investigation and medical education. It is recognized very generally to-day that all great hospitals have three functions, care of the sick, investigation of disease and education of all patients, nurses, physicians and surgeons, that pass its portals. Different institutions may stress in particular some one of these functions; no hospital, worthy of the name, may neglect entirely any of this triad. A hospital is an indispensable unit in a school of medicine, be that school intended primarily for investigation or to educate practitioners or teachers and investigators.

The hospital constitutes a fundamental difference between a graduate school of medicine and all other graduate schools, inasmuch as it introduces into the problem the care of sentient human beings in the guise of patients. It is an inescapable fact that the first concern of every hospital is the best possible care of its patients, whatever of the three great functions of a hospital is to be stressed by the particular

¹ Address delivered at the laying of the corner-stone of the Albert Merritt Billings Hospital of the University of Chicago, at Chicago, Illinois, on October 2, 1925.

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