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RESEARCH AS A METHOD OF EDUCATION¹

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THE following comments are based on some thinking as well as on some experimentation in a restricted field, but I claim no originality either in the analysis of the problem or in the remedy proposed. For many years I have practiced the principle that every medical student, at least, should do a bit of research in some one field as a part of his professional training, in order that the scientific method may, as a conditioned reflex, become a part of his daily thinking and behavior. I have urged this as an educational method making for saner men and not with the expectation that any considerable number of the students doing this as a matter of training will develop into professional investigators in the medical sciences. I have practiced the method, despite the fact that a conditioned reflex, however firmly fixed, is soon effaced when not in daily practice, largely on account of the additional fact that some kind of residual effects in the nervous system remain for a long time and render it easier to evoke the processes anew. The discussion is presented here because research as an educational method does not appear to be given universal consideration in the analysis of the educational problems of to-day as affecting primary, collegiate and professional schools.

There is some dissatisfaction with the results of present-day formal education, on the part of the educators, on the part of society, and possibly on the part of those in the process of being "educated." In consequence of this, our educational methods are being subjected to destructive and constructive analysis as never before. Notwithstanding the dissatisfaction, we have extension of formal education to more and more people; the period during which young men and young women are subjected to our formal educational processes is gradually lengthened, we are making increasing financial investments in educational institutions, and despite the criticism we still appear to have an abounding faith that education will somehow save society from many of its errors and follies. Funds—public and private—devoted to formal education in most countries in the world are increasing at a greater rate than the population; and, as an ex-

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