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## BIOLOGICAL RESEARCH AFTER A CENTURY OF DENTISTRY<sup>1</sup>

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PHYSICIANS who do not practice medicine, but devote all their working time to research and teaching in a field of medical science, are numerous enough nowadays to be taken for granted. Dentists in parallel circumstances, however, are still extraordinary. Research on problems of disease of the mouth and teeth is still a neglected field; and in view of the prevalence of such disease and its great economic importance our ignorance of it is even more extraordinary. This year marks the centennial of the establishment of the first dental school and the first dental journal, which signaled the emergence of dentistry as a profession. After one hundred years the dental profession points

<sup>1</sup> Prepared by invitation of the American Dental Association's Committee for the Dental Centenary Celebration, 1940.

with justified pride to its many noteworthy contributions to human welfare and comfort, but these achievements do not include very much positive advancement in knowledge of the diseases which determine dentistry's existence. Physicians and dentists generally appreciate this fact, and many feel capable of offering an explanation of it, often to the discredit of dentistry. Since I am one of the rare birds alluded to—a dentist who devotes all his time to research and teaching—my opinion on this subject may be of interest. For 12 years, working in the environment of a large medical school which is an active center of medical research, I have given all my research time to problems of dental disease. During much of this period I have taught one of the basic sciences and its

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