Reviews and Notices of Books.


No one is better qualified to write a book of this peculiarly informative and critical character than Dr. Abraham Flexner, who has visited officially all the chief schools in the Old World, and is equally conversant with the conditions of the New. Written largely from the viewpoint of internal medicine, it covers the whole field of medicine in the sense that the general tendencies and principles herein discussed are applicable to all departments of medical study and research.

The author sets out clearly the different lines along which medicine progresses; he compares the clinical type, the university type, and the proprietary type of medical school, assessing their respective advantages and disadvantages. His own penchant, undoubtedly, is for the university type, with whole-time professors, and he passes some very shrewd criticisms on the difficulties under which the clinical type, so called, labours. Many of his strictures contain profound truths, as far at least as Great Britain is concerned. For instance, he emphasizes the fact that most medical school teachers among us are medical men in practice; he points out how little of educational or scientific value there is in ordinary consulting practice, and roundly states that this 'double life' impedes rather than aids medical advance. "The physician, as such, has never been highly esteemed in England; the rank of his patients rather than the scientific value of his work gives him such social consideration as he obtains." He animadverts on the wretched system whereby many hospital staffs are recruited from those who have been there educated, to the exclusion of the 'best man,' wherever he is to be found. "There is on the Continent no such thing as a Berlin, a Tübingen, a Leiden or a Stockholm 'man'."

Cogent pleas are offered for the dissemination of the whole-time idea, although Dr. Flexner is candid enough to admit that while it is designed to lighten the burdens and to increase the efficiency of the clinician, "it will not produce ability and enthusiasm where they do not exist; it will not make the sterile clinician fertile."

All who have the welfare of British medicine at heart will do well to read and inwardly digest this valuable contribution to a problem which cannot much longer be quietly set on one side.

S. A. K. W.


Intended for beginners in neurology, this slender volume contains a succinct précis of the principles of neurological examination and diagnosis along
Comparative Study

Medical Education: A

S. A. K. W.

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