

WHY NOT HOLD THESE CASES?

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Specialism is, within certain limitations, a necessary phase of medicine, but when carried to the extreme, aims at the ruin of the country practitioner. No better is this shown than in the tendency on the part of the latter to refer his patients to the hospital physician for a diagnosis by modern methods, after which he rarely ever sees these people again, or, when they return, hold a less exalted opinion of him. The word spreads around the neighborhood that he is a foguey, and the loss is great.

How much better it would be if samples of urine, pus, etc., were submitted to a medical expert and an opinion asked. And yet it would be best of all if the practitioner would inform himself upon the more simple analytical methods and apply these in his own office and send away such samples as lack of time, experience and equipment rendered impossible of completion. I am speaking only from the standpoint of the practitioner, being, as I am, one of the ninety-five per cent. of our profession located in towns where the family doctor serves the needs of the people.

Surely the family doctor cannot shut his eyes much longer to the fact that the laboratory methods threaten his very future if he does not properly inform himself in these. Our younger men are coming into our communities trained in these things and are able to convince the people that they are best fitted to do their medical work.

An ulcer which is refractory to all methods of treatment which you can devise is finally released by you to the larger hospital. It heals so quickly that you are astonished and chagrined. Still, with a twenty-five cent bottle of drawing ink you could have found the germs of syphilis and administered the salvarsan. The man with "nephritis," whom you have given up to die, returns to tell all his friends concerning the wonderful methods they use in town, when with but a simple staining process you might have seen the parasites in the blood which were causing the cachexia. One case of "dyspepsia" is given a blood count and a rotting appendix removed. The sputum of another is examined and a radical but scientific change made in the treatment. And so it goes down the line, these men doing just what you could have done.