

science, quite independently of any practical or useful applications whatever, is as legitimate and worthy an object of pursuit as any of the natural sciences. In and for itself alone it deserves to be studied. Its methods are those of observation and experiment as in other biological sciences. Its subject matter is any living thing which deviates from the normal condition. It is not less interesting and important to learn the nature and causes of abnormalities in form and function than it is to become familiar with the normal, and when this knowledge may aid in the prevention and relief of suffering, added dignity and interest are imparted to the study.

As there comes a line where the distinction between the normal and the abnormal is shadowy and uncertain, so the separation between normal and pathological biology is not sharp. The province of the one encroaches at many points upon that of the other. Mutual aid is to be derived from a closer union between normal and pathological biology. The pathologist should not be content with methods of research less perfect than those employed in normal biology. He should not rest satisfied with results which stop at the mere description and classification of morbid processes. To be able to give a name to some pathological lesion, and to make it fit into some accepted scheme of classification, should not be the sole aim of pathological study. Pathological processes should be studied with the aim of elucidating their real nature, development and causes, their mutual relations and their dependence upon underlying laws. The purely descriptive phase of development of any natural science can be only temporary and unsatisfactory. The more a pathologist is imbued with the spirit of modern biology, the less content will he be to stop at this descriptive phase.

In the next place it can be justly claimed that the study of pathology as a science without immediate reference to practical results is in reality the method which is most likely to yield these results as well as to bear fruit in other directions. Experience has shown that the most important discoveries in science, come not from those who make utility their guiding principle, but from the investigators of truth for its own sake, wherever and however they can attain it.

It is short sighted to fail to see that the surest way to advance pathology, even in its relations to practical medicine, is to cultivate it as a science from all points of view. It is impossible to foresee what may be the practical application to-morrow of any pathological fact discovered in the laboratory, no matter how remote from practical bearing it may seem to-day.

The experiments upon animals and other investigations which have led to the present accuracy in the localized diagnosis of lesions of the central nervous system, and have rendered possible the surgical treatment of many of these lesions we owe in large part to physiologists and pathologists who had little thought of the practical applications of the results of their researches. The instrument and methods which have enabled ophthalmology to attain such perfection in diagnosis and treatment rest upon researches in physiological optics belonging to the domain of pure science. It could not have been anticipated by those who began the study of the microscopic organisms which cause fermentations and infectious diseases, that their study would lead to a revolution in surgical treatment, and would open prospects which it would now be hazardous to specify as to the prevention and cure of infectious diseases. Did time permit, and were it necessary, much more evidence of similar character could be brought forward to show that those who work in laboratories, it may be without a thought as to the practical utility of their investigations, are no less genuine contributors to the science and art of medicine, than those who study diseases by the bedside.

As has already been mentioned, pathology has to do with abnormalities, not in man alone, but in all living things, both animal and vegetable. The points of contact between animal and vegetable pathology are more numerous than might at first glance appear. The student of animal pathology can draw many instructive lessons from such subjects as the behavior of wounds and the parasitic affections in plants. We are most of us probably inclined to think too much of the separation between the pathology of man and that of the lower animals. While there is a wide distinction in the dignity of the object of study, yet from a scientific point of view this separation is of little account.