

plete. As a matter of fact we are still far from recognizing, let alone understanding, a great variety of signs and symptoms that arise in the slow progress of this affection. The changes are so gradual and so varied that the connecting links between the early rheumatic attack and the subsequent heart failure have never been recognized. This is simply due to the fact that those who write about and study heart affections only see the patient when the breakdown takes place, the whole train of events that led up to the breakdown being absolutely lost. The family physician, on the other hand, has the opportunity of seeing the trouble begin, and, if he cares to keep his eye on the patient, by periodic examinations he can note the changes that are generally taking place.

The changes that are revealed by this continuous examination are more varied than any one suspects, and the light they throw upon the subject of the action of the heart is almost incredible even to physiologists accustomed to experiment upon the heart. In fact, to a great extent the careful observation of the changes in the heart due to disease is opening up to physiologists and pharmacologists new fields of research and giving them new conceptions of the heart's action.

The whole study of heart disease has yet to be written, and it never will be done until the general practitioner joins systematically in the work. Not only in heart affection is the time waiting for the general practitioner to participate in the research, but in all other ailments that run a protracted course, as arteriosclerosis, renal disease, chronic pulmonary and digestive disease, and so forth.

Another field that waits the general practitioner to explore is the recognition of that stage of disease when the prospect of a cure has passed. When text books are consulted, directions are generally given for treatment. That a stage is reached in every disease when recovery cannot be looked for, is generally ignored, and from some writer's statements one would fancy that his patients never die. If the advice of a consultant be sought, energetic means are too often recommended in the vain hope that recovery may follow. These being unsuccessful, the patient wanders from doctor to doctor, trying methods and remedies for