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THE ROLE OF THE GENERAL PRACTITIONER IN THE ADVANCEMENT OF MEDICAL SCIENCE.

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When a young man qualifies and enters into general practice, as most graduates do, he starts his work with a profound belief in the authority and knowledge of his teachers and text books. He is not very long in finding out that disease very frequently does not accord with text book description, and presents itself in very different aspects from what it did in hospital practice. To begin with, he finds that his work and livelihood depend not in the unravelling of obscure and rare diseases, but in the treatment of ailments so slight that no self-respecting student would waste his time over them. He may be able to locate the precise spot of a degenerative lesion in an obscure strand in the spinal cord, but he cannot tell the cause or cure of the simple aches and pains which constitute the bulk of his practice. In course of time he acquires a certain ability in treating these simple ailments, though in many instances the causes remain obscure. The majority of illnesses he has to treat rarely end in being of a serious nature, so that, accurate diagnosis not being called for,