

Preface

In view of the enormous advances made in the sciences formerly termed auxiliary to medicine, but now recognized as fundamental for all progress in the healing art, the time would seem ripe for a publication dealing in a simple, practical way with the clinical diagnosis of internal diseases.

In the last decade the viewpoint of internists has to a certain extent been shifted, in that they are now attempting to visualize clearly the functional pathological processes that are the essence of disease. They are studying, too, the causes—external and internal—of the deviations from the normal met with in disease; and they are no longer content merely with setting up clinical syndromes, or with attempting to prophesy, during life, the anatomical lesions that pathologists will find in the bodies of their patients after death. Control of clinical work by the methods of pathological anatomy and histology will always be highly desirable; but for the clinical diagnosis of internal diseases today, a knowledge of functional pathology and of its underlying sciences (biophysics and biochemistry) is quite as important as a knowledge of pathological anatomy. Indeed, this substitution of the viewpoint of functional pathology for that of structural pathology in discussions of the principles and in determining the practice of inner medicine represents the most radical departure in our science since Virchow so profoundly influenced it by the introduction of the conceptions of cellular pathology over fifty years ago.

The growth of the sciences underlying clinical work has been so rapid and the progress so great that an inner medicine can now be constructed that is very different in form, methods, and emphasis from the inner medicine of any previous period—so different, indeed, that of the men trained in the art and science of diagnosis a few years ago, only those that have had exceptional opportunities for keeping pace with changes can find their way in it without a special guide. To provide such an everyday guide for practitioners, and for students who are now entering upon the study of clinical medicine, this work has been planned and written. In it an attempt has been made to present in due proportion the methods and results of the science of medical diagnosis, in all its parts. The work has been written from the viewpoint of functional pathology, as far as this is possible at the present time, but the results of etiological and pathological-anatomical studies have been also regarded.