

## Editorial

In the metamorphosis of knowledge, the careful observation of the minutest objects occasionally leads the scientist to an understanding of the cause of their production, and a knowledge of the organization of the masses of matter to which they may belong. Likewise in morals the contemplation of relatively small evils forces an authority to investigate them to their proper source. As the spider, "living along the line", feels at every point of his extended being the disturbance that threatens him with harm, or promises satiation, the medical man today, with perhaps equal sensitiveness, united with reflection, perceives the insidious, deleterious effect of a spectacular depredator being thrown across his path — the lay press. As a depredator, the danger of spoiling is not meant to refer to the progress of medical science and medicine per se, but to the unwholesome effects on the intimate relationship between doctor and patient. Looking on man as, in great measure, the architect of his own conditions in this world, it can be said that the profession, in the greater majority, has admirably preserved the elevated status of its human, as well as professional, relationship with the patient, and today this desirable architecture is facing the impatient, "streamlined", elements of the lay press.

The recent advent of such mass printing of medical topics in lay papers had introduced as many problems, most of which are obvious: the appearance of inaccurate reports of new medical or surgical wonders often deceives the hopeful sufferer of a chronic disease, who forthwith, in keeping with the impatience of the times, harasses his personal physician to arrange for this new "cure". A recent glaring example of this was the "hurrah" by the presses, *reductio ad absurdum*, over the surgical procedure for "the cure of heart trouble"—the internal mammary transplant operation. The impression made was profound and resulted in fruitless, expensive trips to the area of the accorded doctor. Fruitless, because in the true analysis, the phrase "selected patients" was not stressed. Another obvious problem is referable to the patients awaiting certain therapy who are often discouraged by misinterpreted accounts in the press of the specific new therapy they are to receive. Even the student finds it perplexing when asked what they think of so and so, and his new drug for arthritis, cancer or what have you.

Modern medicine and its rapid strides of development is news and since it is natural that the public wants to know it, the diligent editor strives to serve this desire. Furthermore, operations of a matter of life or death captures the "human interest angle". Since the reporting correspondent relies chiefly on scientific and medical journals for the information his paper prints, it is obvious that he is not able to be as critical an evaluator as the medical man, and will print not yet established claims by well-meaning researchers of medicine or surgery. Therein lies the problem and its possible solution: a closer cooperation between reporters and the editorial boards of medical journals or with a local medical board, whereby the accuracy of the accounts written for newspapers may be ensured.

What is usually associated with the back pages of detective, western and pornographic magazines has made a debut recently in nearby areas—the hair restorer and the multiplicity of claims attached. We

**Hair —** wonder from what ancient potion or romantic root have these **To Stay?** farmers of the scalp derived their remarkable fertilizer and its effects, even without “scalp rotation” and the contributions of Burbank? And how has this formula for the rejuvenation of retired hair follicles eluded the books of materia medica, the Merck Manual or, even more profoundly, the dashing hounds of Hollywood? In speculation, perhaps the technique entails more than the mere application of material things and attaches with it the metaphysical, reemphasizing Plato’s words, “For this is the great error of our day in the treatment of the human body, that the physicians separate the soul from the body.” And besides in the earliest phases of history there was an association between the anointing of the head with oil, and the driving out of evil influences, the conferring of divine grace and blessing. Thus these ancient ones today would point, (to verify their beliefs), to that row of bald-headed gentlemen in the front seats of the burlesque house. The progress of this hairy safari will be watched, and we shake with delight to think that we might belong to the age when bald-headed men will be as rare as a unanimous vote in the United Nations Assembly.

D. T. J.

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