
S. Weir Mitchell—Instruments, 1887

Within but a few years the instruments of precision have so multiplied that a well-trained consultant may be called on to know and handle as many tools as a mechanic. Their use, the exactness they teach and demand, the increasing refinement in drugs, and our ability to give them in condensed forms, all tend towards making the physician more accurate, and by overtaxing him, owing to the time all such methodical studies require, have made his work such that only the patient and the dutiful can do it justice.—S. Weir Mitchell: Doctor and Patient, ed. 4. Philadelphia and London, J. B. Lippincott Company, 1904, p. 36.


Thrombosis 1686
Malpighi

Remarkable morbid states commonly arise in animals, through the caprices of Nature or the vagaries of disease. These states I have always considered as shedding much light on the investigation of Nature's ways of acting; they indicate the capacities and tendencies of the material which stands revealed in the construction of the animal body. And so monsters, and other anomalies dissipate our ignorance more easily and reliably than the \textit{chefs d'oeuvre} of Nature.

Among these morbid states, brought about quite commonly by disease in the cadaver, not the least noteworthy is the Polyp. For it is found in the most deadly diseases, occupying the body's inmost citadel; and research into it can illuminate problems previously baffling.

The cause of Polyps ought not to be restricted to the conditions already mentioned. For Polyps are found to occur when certain poisons are drunk, and in the mortal fevers due particularly to contamination of the air, and in the plague and other illnesses due to harmful contagion. In these cases it is likely that vapours, or abnormal juices, from perverted ferments in the organs, find entry to the blood, tamper with its structure, and rearrange its particles. They can remove the bonds by which the tiny fragments of white fibres are held in place and linked to the rest. Or else, as if they had hooks, they bind the suspended fibers together into a fine network which precipitates.

On the topic of Polyps, my pen has outrun my original intention; for it is long established that stored blood is always a fertile producer, yet wearsies the human mind by the inadequacy of human knowledge.—Marcello Malpighi: \textit{De Polypo Cordis Dissertatio} with English translation by J. M. Forrester. (Extract from \textit{Opera Omnia} by Marcello Malpighi, 1686.) Uppsala, Almqvist & Wiksells, 1956, pp. 3 and 12.


Group Ethics

If the services of the group organization are on the level of self-interest and economic and material advantage to its members, it is not and cannot be a learned profession in any proper sense. Each group, whatever its qualifications for membership, can in the long run maintain its independence and liberty of self-direction only at the price of showing constantly its freedom from selfish group interests. The wise response of any profession to social change, its loyalty to the general welfare, and the clarity with which it makes its professional codes comprehensible to the public that it claims to serve through and by such codes, constitute the best bulwark for its cherished historic liberties.—Guy Stanton Ford: On and Off the Campus. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1938, p. 152.
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References


The Historian Speaks

... I rank among the noblest of men the open-minded, cautious scientist, uninfluenced by preconceived ideas, critical of his own work, ruthless in casting aside a theory that does not square with his observations, willing to work unrewarded and unknown in his generation if by his labors men may someday understand better and master more completely the universe about them.—Guy Stanton Ford: On and Off the Campus. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1938, p. 117.


