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## EDITORIALS

### Institutes and Bureaus

**D**URING the past few years there has been a tendency for the organization of institutes and bureaus in the medical and dental profession, supposedly for the purpose of rendering a superior service to the public. Up to the present time these organizations, in our minds, have failed to demonstrate their superiority, and we believe some of the most widely advertised institutions which are supposed to give out health information are misleading the public and in some cases cause more harm than good. We realize that an institute which is successful will undoubtedly be copied by men whose motives are "financial" rather than altruistic. They will not be permeated by a desire to render superior service, neither will they care to serve a certain class of people who cannot avail themselves of the superior knowledge

and service that can be derived from an intelligent general or special practitioner.

We do not say that all institutes or health bureaus are not living up to their standards of organization, but we do believe, from examples which have come to our notice, that in many instances misleading information is given out by these institutions or bureaus that will have a detrimental effect on the public and which often reacts upon the medical and dental profession as a whole.

As an example of this, we shall quote in full a diagnosis which was made at one of the health institutes. This institute has had wide publicity through journals and is quite well known to the public. After the patient was examined, the following report was mailed to him under date of July 1, 1924.

"Saliva examination reveals the fact that you do not have either sufficient quantity of saliva or the proper ingredients. To help you until such time as you make a decision, we would advise you to double the amount of water you are now drinking. Would also advise the increased attention to capacity breathing so as to more completely oxidize your blood. Your lung capacity is not sufficient for your body.

"The examination of your oral x-rays taken in 1919, the transillumination of your head and the history of your posterior teeth and your various angles of health, cause us to say that you undoubtedly have both antra infected. There is undoubtedly some residual infection in the superior maxillary bone.

"You undoubtedly have a hereditary lymph glandular insufficiency. To overcome this condition, you need the cooperation and the coordination of the scientific elimination of the vicious bacterial cycle which has overcome some of your internal glands.

"The probable expense of this would be between \$400.00 and \$500.00. It would require your daily presence at the Institute for at least six or seven hours each day for ten or fourteen days and occasional treatments running over a period of two weeks further.

"If we can be of further assistance to you, kindly let us know."

(Signed.)

You can very easily imagine the "nervous condition" of the patient after receiving a letter clothed in words that would confuse a learned medical practitioner. Conditions are cited which are not described in modern works on pathology. X-rays taken in 1919 as well as "transillumination of the head" and the "history of the posterior teeth" lead the institute to believe the patient is suffering from defective antra! In following up the work and diagnosis of this institute, we find that almost every patient who goes to it for examination, if examined by a certain individual, is informed that the maxillary antra are infected and operation will be necessary. It is rather a surprising thing that this institute is able to get evidence of infected maxillary sinuses, when other men of prominence in the profession are unable to so diagnose the condition. After perusing the third paragraph

relating to the "hereditary lymph glandular insufficiency" and the "cooperation and the coordination of the scientific elimination of the vicious bacterial cycle which has overcome some of your internal glands," we can readily imagine the horror and mental agony of the patient who is informed by men whom he believes to be learned that he is the victim of such things. In fact we should hate to be suffering from such ailments ourselves, although in reading the many works on pathology we are unable to understand exactly what was the matter with the patient and why the third paragraph was written. Undoubtedly, when a patient has so many things wrong with him as has been outlined in the above mentioned letter, the mild sum of four or five hundred dollars for treatment does not seem too much, regardless of the fact that we have no knowledge of what the treatment would be. However, from information which we have gained, the treatment would undoubtedly include the opening up of both maxillary sinuses and the irrigation of these cavities. After ten or fourteen days' time, undoubtedly, the maxillary sinuses would be pronounced cured of the vicious cooperation and the coordination of the bacterial cycle would be eliminated.

The patient upon receiving this diagnosis consults other men who are unable to find any such condition as the patient was supposed to be suffering from as outlined in the diagnosis of the institute. This patient has avoided the long treatment of ten or fourteen days which would take six or seven hours a day, but a great many other patients would unquestionably follow the advice given by the institute, because of their belief that it is everything that it claims to be.

That this is not an isolated case is proved by the fact that we have had two other instances referred to us in which dental examinations have been made by medical bureaus, and information given out which is absolutely misleading. One bureau, which is widely advertised and which contains the names of some international men on its stationery, is noted for making dental examinations of the teeth and giving advice on dental subjects. The radiographic examinations of the teeth are made by an M.D. who knows nothing about dentistry, and but little more about radiography. A case came to our attention of a dentist of international reputation, who at the suggestion of an insurance company had an examination by this bureau. After an examination by the radiographic department the "dental" (?) examiner informed him that he had some very bad crowns and bridges which would have to be removed. You can imagine the surprise of the dentist upon getting such information, owing to the fact that he did not have a crown or a bridge in his mouth. After calling the attention of the radiographer to the fact that he was mistaken, the man who makes the diagnosis for the bureau admitted that he knew nothing about dentistry and was simply employed as a technician. However, the public is unaware of these facts and if the information had been given to someone besides a dentist, he might have considered it as authentic and acted upon the advice of the diagnostician.

The same bureau made an examination of another patient who was wearing a regulating appliance consisting of two soldered lingual alignment wires

with bands on the molars. The diagnostician informed the orthodontic patient that the bridges were very poorly constructed and the teeth carrying crowns would have to be removed; also that the incisors showed a very bad pathologic condition. As a matter of fact there was no infection around the teeth whatsoever. The usual change which may be seen was that accomplishing the orthodontic tooth movement. The patient was very much alarmed over the work of the orthodontist, but after considerable difficulty we convinced him that nothing unusual was wrong and that the diagnostician did not know what an orthodontic appliance was and probably he did not know very much about dentistry.

These instances which we have cited undoubtedly are occurring over and over and very often the patient will take the advice of an institute or bureau in preference to the advice of the family physician or dentist.

We are willing to admit that an organization properly conducted by qualified men and utilizing proper equipment and scientific knowledge may be able to make a satisfactory diagnosis and possibly render a service to a patient which will be equal to that rendered by the family physician or dentist. However, from examples which we have cited, we believe that in a great many instances a bureau tries to get by upon a reputation rather than upon the service rendered. The salaries paid to assistants are so small that the services of competent men cannot be obtained, consequently medical diagnoses are given out which are just as misleading as the dental diagnoses.

We would sound a warning to the individual practitioner to be on the lookout for diagnoses made by institutes and bureaus, because certain patients seem to think they can get a superior service to that obtained from an individual practitioner. Until such a time as these medical and dental institutes and bureaus demonstrate their value to a greater extent than they have, we shall be inclined to believe the general practitioner is the most reliable source from which the public can get dependable information.

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### The Common Ancestor of Man and Apes\*

**D**ISCOVERY of three fossil jaws of a primitive creature that is believed to be an ancestor to both man and the apes has been made in the Siwalik Hills of India by Dr. Barnum Brown, scientist and explorer for the American Museum of Natural History. The first announcement of this important anthropologic event was made on April 14, by Dr. William K. Gregory, of the American Museum of Natural History, at a meeting of the New York Academy of Sciences at which many other evidences for human evolution were reported.

This common ancestor of human beings and chimpanzees and gorillas is called *Dryopithecus*. The specimens secured by Dr. Brown and sent to the museum for study are remarkable in that they show three different stages of the evolution of *Dryopithecus* and come from three successive periods of time or "horizons" as the geologist calls them. Each of the jaws lacks some

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