

Laboratory Work In Highland Park Hospital



(By George B. Lake, M.D.)

When the doctor called to see grandpa he deposited his stove-pipe hat on one chair and his gold-headed cane on another, unbuttoned his frock coat, seated himself by the bedside with a portentous frown, looked at the patient's tongue, felt of his pulse, pulled down his lower eyelid to take a squint at his eye and, if the case seemed serious, extracted his single-barrelled, wooden stethoscope from his hat and solemnly listened to the noises in the chest. Then he pronounced a diagnosis.

Sounds, funny, doesn't it? But those old "mossback" doctors saw, heard and smelled a lot of things that we have forgotten how to recognize, because we have leaned on mechanical crutches for so many years.

Permanent Place

But, for good or ill, the laboratory has now taken a permanent place among the facilities which a modern physician uses to find out what is the matter with sick folks, and any hospital which lacks the personnel and equipment necessary to do good and reliable laboratory work cannot be considered up-to-date. Our Highland Park hospital has the experts and the machinery to make these studies in a highly satisfactory manner.

We've had a reasonably good laboratory right along, but last year the hospital authorities decided that it wasn't good enough to render the kind of service they aspired to give to our neighborhood, so they overhauled the whole thing and re-organized it, at a cost of \$3,000.

They bought an incubator for growing bacteria (for these disastrous little vegetables have to be cared for like a frail baby, when they are being cultivated for purposes of study); a fine new refrigerator (because many specimens have to be handled as carefully as "Grade A" milk); a pair of analytical balances that will weight 1/1000 of a grain; a dozen or two of the newest books on laboratory technic; and many other interesting and expensive things, many of which are kept in convenient new cabinets and cupboards, where they are clean and safe, but readily accessible when needed.

Hospital Laboratory Complete

Our laboratory is now ready to do almost anything that any first-class laboratory can do—not merely studies of the urine and the ordinary examinations of the blood, but Wassermann and kidney function tests; blood chemistry and basal metabo-

lism estimations; and they even cut microscopically thin sections of tumors and other things removed at operations, to find out just what is the trouble. These, of course, require study by a physician who is an expert in the science of pathology, and are sent to a specialist in Chicago for his examination and report.

For other matters, our own Miss Isaacs, who is a Bachelor of Science and a trained laboratory technician, covers the ground excellently. Either she or her assistant (also a technician) is in the laboratory all day long; and at nights and on Sundays, the young doctors who are serving as interns in the institution do any such work as may be necessary, so laboratory service is available all the time, to any patients whose cases require such study.

Nor is this expert help reserved solely for those sick ones who are so fortunate as to be temporary residents of our hospital. Though many of our citizens (and, perhaps, some of our doctors) may not be aware of that fact, the hospital will, on the request of any medical man, send a technician to any patient's home to collect specimens for laboratory ex-

amination, and a report of the findings will be sent to the doctor promptly.

Blood Transfusion

Most of you have read about blood transfusions and realize that, when this operation is done, somebody must furnish the blood. Perhaps you have looked upon the people who do this (they are technically known as "donors") as being high-minded heroes. Sometimes they are. But transfusions, in these days, are many; while heroes, in any day, are few, so the sale of blood for transfusion purposes has become a regular business.

Here is a chance for anyone who has plenty of good, clean blood and not enough cash, to exchange a little of the former for a nice bunch of the latter. The regular donor's fee is \$50.

In this transfusion work there are several different types of blood, and these must be matched in the patient and the donor, so hospitals like to have a list of several donors of each of the various types of blood. Any one who has a desire to earn some money in this fashion should report at the hospital to have his blood examined (to be certain that it is entirely free from disease) and typed. Then, when a donor of his type is re-

quired, he will be sent for. The operation is nothing painful nor terrible.

Go over and see the laboratory at our hospital! It is full of interesting things and the folks in charge of it will be glad to answer all reasonable—and unreasonable—questions.

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