

WILLIAM GORDON LENNOX

AB (1900 Col.) M.D. (1913 Harvard) D. Sc. (Hon. Col. 1929, Boston, 1948)

No physician, known to me in history or in life, has more successfully dedicated himself to the study of one disease than has Dr. Lennox. Returning from China in 1922 he found me starting a laboratory for experimental neuropathology at Harvard. I had just begun work on epilepsy when Lennox quietly and effectively moved in to help and eventually to lead. It was characteristic of him to be thorough, courageous and persistent. As he said in his introduction to our monograph *Epilepsy* published in 1928: "As a preliminary to a study of the question, it is essential that there should be a survey of our present knowledge. We should be in possession of all the facts, positive and negative, concerning the bodies and minds of persons subject to convulsions." To this end he spent 5 years of his life, and when the manuscript was completed in 1927 Lennox probably knew as much about the field as any man alive. True, the book is so full of negatives that it is quite dull, but the spade work was done and he moved on to more original and exciting fields.

First he took up the study of cerebral circulation, and then in 1934 he saw the promise of electroencephalography and began work in Hallowell Davis' laboratory across the courtyard. The story of this scientific stride is told by Dr. Brazier elsewhere in this volume (see p. 328ff). With the help of the new techniques of EEG the whole field of research in epilepsy moved ahead rapidly. Collaborating with Gibbs and many other colleagues, important contributions were made in therapy, genetics, etiology and social work. In twenty years the treatment of the epileptic patient and the understanding of his problems were miraculously improved.

Dr. Lennox was president of the Association for Research in Nervous and Mental Disease in 1946. Hundreds of letters came in congratulating him and sending financial aid to his work. At the December meeting Wilder Penfield truly said: "This is a spontaneous, enthusiastic tribute from epileptics and from members of his own profession; a tribute to a physician who is a scientist, a scholar, an historian and organizer; a man, above all, whose unflinching kindness has endeared him to his fellow man, to his colleagues and to the sufferers in his chosen field."

April 1, 1960

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stanley Cobb". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

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