

Director of Research

Title 32

Whereas it was easy to explain why the Bags were so efficient in promoting the healing process, to find the scientific reasons for their success, would require much biochemical research. Contrary to all previous treatment of burn wounds, which covered the affected areas with chemical ointments and immobilised the respective limb, particularly the hands and fingers, the Bags allowed free movements, while enclosed in a sterile envelope. As the oil silk was semi-transparent, the progress of healing could be watched. The irrigation could be automatic for a few hours.

It was not the only research problem that awaited solution. It had been known for some time, but by observation only, that if any burn of the human skin was immediately treated with undiluted Milton, no blister of the skin would form, and healing was again quick and clean. This empirical fact was never published as it was rightly felt that the biochemical basis for it should be known first. I have often used this first-aid myself, found it highly effective and recommended it to friends.

My first appointment for the new laboratory was a bacteriologist and again I was grateful to find Mr Wolf who previously had worked at Reading University. He was of course full of up-to-date knowledge how a modern bacteriological laboratory should be equipped, an autoclave for sterilisation, numerous Petri dishes and an incubator in which bacteria could be grown at any desired temperature. These were obtained, as well as an assistant, to reign over the large range of clean glassware and to keep it sterile.

For biochemistry I had a colleague, Malcolm Manifold, who at that time was still studying medicine, partly at Oxford, partly doing practical work at Guys Hospital in London. He was extremely gifted and full of good ideas, not all of which could be used in practice. He acted as a junior consultant, while the senior consultant for biochemistry was Professor Gibson also of Guys Hospital. The practical laboratory work, following joint decisions by the two consultants and myself, was carried out by a junior but highly competent scientist.

A considerable investment had been made by the Milton Company and all was ready to engage in a few years of basic research. Most unfortunately the death of Mr Edgware occurred at this time, 1947, and Mr Berry of Deosan, was appointed as his successor by the owner, Mr Clough of Yorkshire. He came from the old school who believed that "Where there is muck, there is money" and he found in Mr Berry just the right commercial man to share his views. To both of them the research Laboratory contained no 'muck' and could therefore not generate any money. It was closed, I gave my notice and left.

Back to Synopsis

To ... Wartime Employment - Subject Index of Scientists. Title 33.