

**JAMES LAWDER GAMBLE—1883-1959**

*J Clin Invest.* 1960;**39**(5):i-iii. <https://doi.org/10.1172/JCI104099>.

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James Lawder Gamble, formerly Editor-in-Chief of *The Journal of Clinical Investigation* and a member of its Editorial Board, died in Boston on May 28, 1959, in his seventy-sixth year. Born in Millersburg, Bourbon County, Kentucky on July 18, 1883, he received his schooling there, his college education at Leland Stanford University (A. B. 1906) and attended Harvard Medical School, graduating M. D. *cum laude* in 1910. Following a two year internship in medicine at the Massachusetts General Hospital and six months in pediatrics at the Children's Hospital, he began his career as a clinical investigator under Dr. Fritz Talbot at the Massachusetts General Hospital. During this period, his future course was very much influenced by Professor L. J. Henderson, as he described in his speech of acceptance of the Kober Medal:



JAMES LAWDER GAMBLE—1883–1959

Although I never worked directly with Henderson, I learned from him to admire the beauty of the physico-chemical systems which sustain the body fluids, the marvel of their automaticity and their remarkable resiliency in the presence of obstacles imposed by disease, and ever since I have been content to work in this wide field as an humble artisan applying the simple tool of quantitative description to the pattern provided by this great architect of concept.

In 1915 he moved to Baltimore and joined the new Department of Pediatrics under Dr. John Howland at Johns Hopkins, a "lush meadow of opportunity," where he formed lasting friendships with Kenneth Blackfan, Edwards Park, McKim Marriott and others who were to become the leaders of American pediatrics. Against the advice of Dr. Howland, to whom he was personally devoted, he decided to give up all formal clinical responsibilities in order to devote his life "to the study of disease by the methods of chemistry." During this period he and Blackfan proved that infants synthesize cholesterol and he obtained fundamental information upon "the Metabolism of Fixed Base during Fasting," by seizing the opportunity provided by an attempt to confirm the observations of a physical culturist that starvation would eliminate epileptic seizures in children.

In 1922, when Oscar Schloss was appointed to the chair of Pediatrics at Harvard, he brought Dr. Gamble to Boston as Assistant Professor and had laboratories constructed for him at the Children's Hospital. Here Dr. Gamble spent the remainder of his life "as a student of disease"; he was promoted to Associate Professor in 1925, to Professor in 1932, and retired as Professor *Emeritus* in 1950, but until the time of his death continued to come to the laboratory to guide the investigations of the "oncoming young men," in whom he took such a keen interest. Dr. Schloss returned to New York after only a brief period in Boston, but Kenneth Blackfan succeeded him and thus began an extremely happy and productive relationship, to use Allan Butler's words, between "Blackfan, the superb clinician and tactful ad-

ministrator, and Gamble, the gifted investigator," which ended with the former's untimely death in 1941.

Gamble's investigations concerned the mechanisms of acidosis, the disturbances in the body fluids produced by various lesions of the gastrointestinal tract and kidneys and the physiological defences against dehydration, acidosis, and starvation. As early as 1933, with Allan Butler and Charles F. McKhann, he pointed out the importance of intracellular fluid loss and potassium deficits in diarrheal dehydration but his primary concern was with extracellular fluid. Probably his most influential publication, printed in looseleaf form by the Harvard Press, was his syllabus, "Chemical Anatomy, Physiology, and Pathology of Extracellular Fluid." During the war he collaborated with Allan Butler's group at the Massachusetts General Hospital in their clearly conceived studies of a group of conscientious objectors who voluntarily submitted to deprivation of food and water in order to simulate the problems of survivors on a life raft at sea. Based on these studies, Dr. Gamble gave a Harvey Lecture, entitled "Physiological Information from Studies on the Life Raft Ration," which admirably illustrates his extraordinary talent for clear analysis and lucid presentation of experimental data. Following the war, with Wil-

liam Wallace and a group of younger colleagues, he devoted himself to a study of the chemical phenomena of growth and to the causes of some of the inconsistencies of metabolic balance data.

He was not a prolific author; his entire bibliography over a period of 45 years includes only 54 papers, but each one is characterized by clarity of thought, preciseness and lucidity of expression, and a vivid and often whimsical choice of phrase, which were the product of hours of longhand composition and numerous revisions. His data were usually presented in very clear charts, which he claimed to have devised to make up for his mathematical deficiencies but which were a boon to his audiences and a model to be copied by aspirants for election to the Society for Clinical Investigation.

Although his chosen place of work was in a department of pediatrics, his laboratory was sought as a place for training by aspiring young investigators from medicine and surgery as well as pediatrics, many of whom now hold important academic positions in this country and abroad. It was a happy place to work, a far cry from the high-powered research institute, a laboratory in which the neophyte was set to learn by formulating his own problem, by making his own measurements, by informal discussion with his colleagues, and by the final effort to present his data in a simple, precise fashion which could pass Dr. Gamble's kindly but rigorous editorial scrutiny.

Dr. Gamble was the recipient of many honors in recognition of the extent to which his quantitative descriptions and lucid analyses had increased medical understanding of the body fluids in health and disease and had thus laid the foundations for rational, quantitative supportive therapy for patients of all ages. Not only did he receive several honorary degrees—M. S. from Yale in 1930, M. D. from Zurich in 1950 and D. Sc. from Chicago in 1952—but he was given the Borden Award of the American Academy of Pediatrics in 1946, the Kober Medal of the Association of American Physicians in 1951, and in 1955 the Moxon Medal of the Royal College of Physicians and the John Howland Award of the American Pediatric Society. He was a member of the American Society for Clinical Investigation, the Association of American Physicians, the Society for Pediatric Research and the American Pediatric Society, of which he was President in 1945, and was one of very few pediatricians ever to be elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

In 1941, Dr. Gamble succeeded Randolph West as Editor of *The Journal of Clinical Investigation*, and carried the *Journal* through the Second World War. He had been a member of the Editorial Board for the preceding seven years, during the last part of Dr. Austin's and all of Dr. West's term as Editor, and he was eminently qualified by the importance and elegance of his own scientific writing to maintain the high standards of this distinguished journal. In taking on this responsibility, he made his first important innovation, the appointment of an Associate Editor, his former pupil, colleague, and close friend, Allan M. Butler, to whom must go a fair

share of the credit for Dr. Gamble's accomplishments as Editor. The two men met weekly with Mrs. Margaret Came, Chief Editorial Assistant, and made their decisions about manuscripts and other phases of editorial policy. Dr. Gamble's term as Editor-in-Chief covered the difficult war period. The seven members of the Editorial Board, composed of distinguished *emeritus* members of the Society, each with particular competence in some field of clinical investigation, who had always served as critical reviewers for the *Journal* and thus established its high quality, were all very busy men with heavy commitments to teaching or government service. Partly because of this, and partly because he believed in making the *Journal* one to be edited *by* as well as *for* the Society, Dr. Gamble changed the established editorial policy during his tenure of office. The Editorial Board became less and less active, and instead the members of the American Society for Clinical Investigation were used increasingly as critical reviewers of manuscripts submitted by their peers. In order to advise him upon the individuals to be selected as reviewers for particular manuscripts, and to help with final decisions based upon their reviews, he enlarged the group of Associate Editors to three; Chester Keefer and Eugene Landis joined Allan Butler in this capacity in 1944. Thus, there emerged a new pattern, still being followed by the *Journal*, of an Editor-in-Chief, assisted by a group of two or three Associate Editors, colleagues of his own choosing in his own city, with the reviewing of manuscripts being done by an ever widening circle of individuals who can bring their expert knowledge and critical faculties to bear upon the writings of their peers. It is doubtful whether the manuscripts submitted to any other journal are subjected to such stringent criticism by such a well-informed group. The Editorial Board was not reappointed in 1946 when Dr. Gamble's term as Editor expired, and the pattern of operation which he had established was maintained. Supervision of the *Journal* policies by the Society continues as in the past through the Editorial Committee, consisting of a group of active members who meet with the Editor annually to review the *Journal's* policies and activities.

A second important innovation during Dr. Gamble's Editorship was the publication of groups of papers upon a single broad topic. The first such group occupied a whole issue (Number 4, Volume 23, July, 1944) and comprised papers under the general heading, "Chemical, Clinical, and Immunological Studies upon the Products of Plasma Fractionation." These papers reported various phases of research upon the plasma fractions being developed by Professor E. J. Cohn and his collaborators under a contract, sponsored by the Committee on Medical Research, with the Office of Scientific Research and Development. Despite the inevitable curtailment of some phases of clinical investigation by the war effort, an adequate flow of good manuscripts continued, and Dr. Gamble was particularly anxious to have the *Journal* used as a medium for publication of the results of the government-sponsored research programs in relation to the problems of military medicine. Actually many of these studies were ultimately published in *The Journal*

of *Clinical Investigation*. Subsequently, several other smaller groups of papers on other phases of plasma fractionation appeared and an important series of eleven papers on the "Clinical Uses of 2,3-Dimercaptanol (BAL)" occupied half of the July, 1946 issue (Volume 25, Number 4). Dr. Gamble felt very strongly that these papers, so intimately related to the war effort, deserved preferential treatment and tried very hard to get the War Production Board to increase its allotment of paper to the *Journal* to permit their publication as a special supplement. He was very incensed when, his request having been turned down, he received a large luxuriously printed advertising brochure from one of the pharmaceutical firms. His goal was only achieved under Dr. Ferris' Editorship after the war was over, when a Symposium on Malaria appeared as a supplement to the May, 1948 issue of the *Journal*.

Despite the war, the affairs of the *Journal* prospered during the period from 1941 to 1946, when Dr. Gamble was Editor. He was able to increase the amount of advertising appreciably, thus strengthening its financial support. The number of subscriptions rose slowly and steadily from 1,046 in 1942 to 1,530 in 1945 (they now number approximately 5,000), as the importance of the *Journal* as a medium for publication of much of this country's best clinical investigation came to be appreciated by a growing body of scientifically trained clinicians. He was particularly concerned that the *Journal* should reach younger men in training, and thus a lower subscription rate for medical students, residents and fellows was inaugurated. In order to increase the number of pages, he succeeded in obtaining a grant of 2,000 dollars a year for three years from the Commonwealth Fund, which permitted the addition of approximately 200 pages of text per year to those which the Society felt it could afford to publish.

Another problem, which has plagued the Society itself, concerned him, namely, the feeling on the part of a relatively small number of members from the western part of the country that their section was being discriminated against, not only in election to the Society but in the acceptance of papers for the *Journal*. He tried to lean over backwards in this matter and to see that the Editorial Committee became representative of all sections of the country as well as of all the main fields of in-

vestigation. He was very sensitive to the criticism that the *Journal* should become more clinical and less investigative. Nevertheless, he and his Associate Editors hewed firmly to the line of quality—quality in the formulation and planning of clinical or experimental studies and quality in the precision and clarity with which the results were presented and conclusions drawn. Consequently, the *Journal* maintained its high standards of excellence throughout his term of service as Editor-in-Chief.

When he and his Associate Editors retired in 1946 and the leadership of the *Journal* was handed on to Eugene Ferris in Cincinnati as Editor, with Arthur Mirsky and William Bean as Associate Editors, they inherited a publication which had survived a difficult war period with a fifty per cent increase in subscription, a continuing reputation for excellence in content and form of presentation of material as a result of vigorous critical scrutiny of manuscripts, and new editorial policies, which are still being followed today.

Dr. Gamble's reputation as a medical scientist and as an Editor entitles him to a lasting place of honor among the great contributors to the development of the type of clinical investigation which has been such a prominent feature of academic medicine in this country. Entering medicine at the time when quantitative clinical methods were being introduced into the clinic and when full-time departments were being established, his life spanned what may well appear in retrospect to be the golden age of clinical investigation, when the individual investigator, as opposed to the increasingly prevalent team of today, could learn and apply relatively simple methods to the solution of fundamental problems, if he had Dr. Gamble's genius for clear formulation, critical analysis, and lucid presentation.

Apart from his specific contributions, it was the combination of rare intellect with an unusually appealing character and personality which endeared him to a close circle of devoted friends and to his students. His "influence stemmed from a clarity of mind, a warmth of friendly interest, a simplicity of character and a gentle integrity which never frightened but always uplifted those whom he touched. As his great friend, A. N. Richards, put it, 'There was not a spurious fibre in him.'"

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