

1957

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS
AMERICAN PROCTOLOGIC SOCIETY
NEW ORLEANS, APRIL 24, 1957

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Lexington Kentucky

WHEN YOU ELECTED ME YOUR PRESIDENT YOU CONFERRED UPON ME THE HIGHEST OFFICE IN YOUR POWER TO GIVE AND THE GREATEST HONOR A PROCTOLOGIST CAN RECEIVE. THIS IS ESPECIALLY POIGNANT BECAUSE ALL WHO HAVE PRECEDED ME IN THIS HIGH OFFICE HAVE BEEN DISTINGUISHED PROCTOLOGISTS FROM LARGE METROPOLITAN OR CLINICAL CENTERS, WHILE I AM A PROCTOLOGIST IN PRIVATE PRACTICE IN A RELATIVELY SMALL COMMUNITY WHICH IS NEARLY ONE HUNDRED MILES FROM THE NEAREST MEDICAL SCHOOL. THIS IS AN IMPRESSIVE EXAMPLE OF THE "AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE," AND IS CONVINCING EVIDENCE THAT HERE IN OUR GREAT UNITED STATES OPPORTUNITY IS TRULY UNLIMITED. WITH MIXED EMOTIONS OF PROFOUND GRATITUDE, AND WITH JUSTIFIABLE PRIDE TEMPERED WITH HUMILITY, I THANK YOU FOR THIS HIGHEST OF HONORS.

THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO AN ORGANIZATION OF THIS SIZE AND IMPORTANCE IS TRADITIONALLY ONE OF PHILOSOPHIC REMINISCENCES, PRONOUNCEMENTS, AND ADMONITIONS BASED UPON A BACKGROUND OF WISDOM ATTAINED DURING A LONG LIFE OF PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT. I MUST ADMIT, WITH RELUCTANCE OF COURSE, EITHER THAT I HAVE NOT YET LIVED LONG ENOUGH, OR THAT I HAVE NOT YET ACHIEVED SUFFICIENT SUCCESS TO QUALIFY AS A DISPENSER OF THE SO-CALLED "PEARLS OF WISDOM." I WILL THEREFORE LIMIT MY REMARKS TO A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE PRESENT STATUS OF OUR SOCIETY, TO SOME OF OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND TO A FEW OF OUR PROBLEMS. I WILL ALSO OFFER SOME SUGGESTIONS WHICH, IN MY OPINION, ARE WORTHY OF CONSIDERATION FOR FUTURE ACTION.

PRESENT STATUS

DURING THE PAST TEN OR TWELVE YEARS THE AMERICAN PROCTOLOGIC SOCIETY HAS EXPERIENCED ITS GREATEST PERIOD OF GROWTH AND IS NOW MUCH LARGER AND STRONGER THAN EVER BEFORE. OUR COLLECTIVE STRENGTH AS AN ORGANIZATION IS MUCH GREATER THAN THE SUMMATION OF OUR INDIVIDUAL STRENGTHS. THIS IS TRUE BECAUSE FOR MORE THAN A HALF CENTURY THIS SOCIETY HAS WISELY MADE USE OF AN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL COMPOSED OF CAREFULLY SELECTED MEMBERS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT, AND FOR THE STUDY OF AND RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING MAJOR POLICIES AND DECISIONS. THROUGHOUT THE YEARS WE HAVE UTILIZED AS MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL THE BEST TALENT AMONG OUR MEMBERSHIP, AND

THROUGH THEM HAVE BUILT UP A PRICELESS HERITAGE IN THE FORM OF STRENGTH AND PRESTIGE. THIS INVALUABLE HERITAGE, IN WHICH WE ALL SHARE, MUST BE PROTECTED AS ASSIDUOUSLY AS WE WOULD PROTECT OUR OWN GOOD NAMES. I SAY THIS ADVISEDLY BECAUSE THERE ARE FORCES IN THIS COUNTRY TODAY WHICH WOULD WELCOME AN OPPORTUNITY TO WEAKEN OR EVEN TO DESTROY US.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

THIS ADDRESS IS THE ONE AND ONLY OPPORTUNITY I WILL HAVE TO SPEAK TO ALL OF YOU TOGETHER, AND IT IS ONLY NATURAL THAT I WISH TO DISCUSS WITH YOU SOME OF OUR MORE RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF WHICH WE CAN BE JUSTLY PROUD.

ONE OF OUR GREATEST AND MOST VALUABLE ACHIEVEMENTS HAS BEEN THE ORGANIZATION AND CO-ORDINATION OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL PROCTOLOGIC SOCIETIES. UNDER THE VERY ABLE GUIDANCE OF DR. LAWRENCE E. BROWN AND HIS COMMITTEE ON LOCAL SOCIETIES THIS IMPORTANT AND DIFFICULT PROCEDURE IS MAKING RAPID AND HIGHLY SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. IT NOW APPEARS CERTAIN THAT LONG RANGE PLANS FOR THE INTEGRATION OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL PROCTOLOGIC GROUPS AS ORGANIZED AUTONOMOUS COMPONENTS OF THE AMERICAN PROCTOLOGIC SOCIETY WILL MATERIALIZE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. UPON COMPLETION OF THIS INTEGRATION PROGRAM THE COMBINED STRENGTHS OF OUR NUMEROUS FINE LOCAL SOCIETIES WILL BE WELDED TOGETHER. THIS UNION OF COMPONENTS WILL, LIKE THE ESSENTIAL ROOT SYSTEM OF A MIGHTY TREE, FEED LIFE AND VIGOR

INTO THE PARENT ORGANIZATION. CONSUMMATION OF THIS UNITY WILL IMPROVE AND MAKE STRONGER ALL COMPONENT PARTS FROM LOCAL TO NATIONAL LEVELS, WITH SUSTENANCE AND STRENGTH DIFFUSING FROM BELOW UPWARD, WHICH IS AS IT SHOULD BE.

ANOTHER ACCOMPLISHMENT OF WHICH WE ARE PROUD IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AMERICAN PROCTOLOGIC SOCIETY LOAN FUND FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE TO QUALIFIED WORTHY PHYSICIANS WHO ARE IN APPROVED PROCTOLOGY TRAINING. THIS CONCEPT OF FINANCIAL AID ORIGINATED IN THE FERTILE MIND OF DR. WENDEL W. GREEN WHO HAS CONTRIBUTED GENEROUSLY OF HIS TALENT AND EFFORT TO OUR AFFAIRS IN GENERAL AND TO OUR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM IN PARTICULAR. DR. RALPH BURKE OF OUR EDUCATION COMMITTEE MADE A THOROUGH STUDY OF VARIOUS STUDENT LOAN FUNDS AND, AT DETROIT LAST YEAR (JUNE 1956), PRESENTED A PLAN SKILLFULLY TAILORED TO FIT OUR REQUIREMENTS. HIS PLAN WAS ADOPTED, AND WE EARMARKED \$10,000 OF OUR TREASURY FUNDS FOR THIS PURPOSE. THIS REVOLVING LOAN FUND IS ALREADY "IN BUSINESS" AND WE BELIEVE IT WILL PROVE TO BE OF GREAT PRACTICAL BENEFIT TO THOSE WHO NEED IT AND TO OUR SPECIALTY.

THE THIRD AND LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT ABOUT WHICH I WILL SPEAK IS BY NO MEANS LEAST. AS MOST OF YOU KNOW, WE HAVE FOR A LONG TIME ASPIRED TO HAVE OUR OWN JOURNAL PUBLISHED FOR AND DEVOTED TO OUR OWN SPECIALTY. REPEATED PURSUITS OF

THIS ASPIRATION OVER A LONG PERIOD OF YEARS ALWAYS LED TO DISAPPOINTMENT BECAUSE OF INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLES AND COMPLEXITIES. IN RECENT MONTHS, HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN A SUDDEN CHANGE IN THE PICTURE WHICH COULD WELL BE A TRIBUTE TO THE VIRTUES OF PERSISTENCE AND DETERMINATION. IT NOW APPEARS THAT OUR JOURNAL IS TO BECOME A REALITY. THIS IS DUE LARGELY TO THE DEDICATED AND TIRELESS EFFORTS OF DRS. HARRY E. BACON, LOUIS A. BUIE, STUART T. ROSS, AND MANY OTHERS. IF ALL GOES WELL, AND WE FULLY EXPECT THAT IT WILL, THE FIRST ISSUE OF OUR OWN JOURNAL, "DISEASES OF THE COLON & RECTUM", TO BE PUBLISHED BY THE GREAT FIRM OF J. B. LIPPENCOTT COMPANY OF PHILADELPHIA, SHOULD REACH YOU NEXT JANUARY CARRYING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, A REPORT OF THIS MEETING. THE EDITOR IS TO BE OUR OWN DR. LOUIS A. BUIE, AND HE WILL HAVE A STRONG EDITORIAL BOARD TO SUPPORT HIM. TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF THIS NEW VENTURE IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT EACH OF US GIVE IT WHOLE HEARTED SUPPORT IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE. WE CANNOT AND SHALL NOT BE SATISFIED WITH JOURNALISTIC MEDIOCRITY; OURS MUST AND WILL BE AT LEAST EQUAL TO THE BEST.

PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTIONS

WE HAVE PROBLEMS AS WELL AS ACHIEVEMENTS TO CONSIDER. INDIFFERENCE AND COMPLACENCY MIGHT EASILY PREVENT RECOGNITION AND CORRECTION OF POTENTIAL OR EXISTING WEAKNESSES IN OUR ORGANIZATION, AND THIS WOULD INDEED BE A GRIEVOUS ERROR.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM ARE ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESS OR EVEN FOR SURVIVAL IN THIS AGE OF RAPID AND SOMETIMES CONFUSING PROGRESS. WITH THIS IN MIND, AND WITH ABIDING FAITH IN OUR COLLECTIVE ABILITY OF COMPREHENSION, THE FOLLOWING PROBLEMS, CRITICISMS AND SUGGESTIONS ARE PRESENTED.

ANORECTAL SURGERY

A FEW YEARS AGO (1954) CERTIFICATION IN AND RECOGNITION OF ANORECTAL SURGERY WAS ABOLISHED, AND THIS HAS BEEN A MATTER OF DEEP CONCERN TO ME AS WELL AS TO MANY OTHERS. ONE OF MY EMINENT PREDECESSORS, DR. NEWTON D. SMITH, IN HIS PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO THIS SOCIETY IN BOSTON FOUR YEARS AGO (1953) EXPRESSED CLEARLY HIS DOUBTS CONCERNING THE WISDOM OF THIS ABOLITION BY DEVOTING MORE THAN ONE THIRD OF HIS ADDRESS TO THIS SUBJECT. HE SAID, IN PART, "..... WILL ANORECTAL SURGERY AGAIN BECOME A PROFITABLE FIELD FOR PHYSICIANS WHO ARE INSUFFICIENTLY TRAINED? WILL THOSE WHO ARE PRONE TO BE, OR ARE, GROSSLY UNETHICAL SEEK THE ADVERTISED PROMINENCE WHICH ONCE SERVED THE SQUALID PURPOSES OF THEIR KIND? NOT MANY YEARS AGO MEN WHO HAD TIRED OF THE BURDENS OF GENERAL PRACTICE WOULD SPEND A FEW WEEKS, OR AT MOST A FEW MONTHS, STUDYING WITH, OR VISITING A PROCTOLOGIST, OR THEY COULD TAKE A SO-CALLED COURSE IN PROCTOLOGY AND THEN IMPOSE THEMSELVES ON PATIENTS AS QUALIFIED 'RECTAL SPECIALISTS',.....IT APPEARS CERTAIN THAT PHYSICIANS ARE DISPOSED TO ACCEDE TO WHAT THEY

BELIEVE IS A PUBLIC DEMAND THAT SOME OF THEM PRACTICE ANORECTAL SURGERY AS A SPECIALTY. IT SEEMS EQUALLY CERTAIN THAT IT IS OUR MORAL DUTY TO PROVIDE PATIENTS WITH PHYSICIANS WHOM WE KNOW ARE QUALIFIED TO PRACTICE SUCH SURGERY. IF WE FAIL IN THIS, NOT ONLY IS IT PROBABLE THAT PATIENTS WILL SUFFER BUT ALSO IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS SOCIETY, HAVING SHIRKED AN APPARENT RESPONSIBILITY, MAY LOSE ITS PRESENT INFLUENCE."

WE RECOGNIZE AND FULLY APPRECIATE THE COMPLEX DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF AN EXAMINATION AND CERTIFYING AGENCY (THE AMERICAN BOARD OF PROCTOLOGY) WHICH MUST ALSO DELINEATE AND SAFEGUARD THE HIGH STANDARDS OF OUR SPECIALTY. WE RECOGNIZE ALSO THAT THE VERY SYSTEM TO WHICH WE ARE COMMITTED IS WORKING HARDSHIPS AND INJUSTICES IN MANY INSTANCES. IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT THESE DIFFICULTIES MAY EVENTUALLY BE CORRECTED WHEN THEIR EXISTENCE AND IMPORTANCE ARE FULLY APPRECIATED AND WHEN THE NEED FOR QUALIFIED ANORECTAL SURGEONS IS RECOGNIZED.

IT IS UNFORTUNATELY TRUE THAT A FEW OF OUR OWN MEMBERS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN SITUATIONS AND WITH ORGANIZATIONS WHICH DO NOT REFLECT FAVORABLY ON THEM OR ON THE INTEGRITY OF THIS SOCIETY. IN NEARLY EVERY INSTANCE SUCH INVOLVEMENT HAS BEEN DUE TO LACK OF INFORMATION, OR TO MISINFORMATION, AND NOT TO BAD INTENTIONS. TODAY WE LIVE IN A STRANGE AND TROUBLED WORLD;

HERE IN OUR OWN COUNTRY UNPRECEDENTED PROSPERITY WALKS HAND IN HAND WITH THE SPECTRE OF APPREHENSION AND FEELINGS OF INSECURITY. EVEN IN OUR OWN SELECT GROUP IT SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISING, PERHAPS, THAT AN OCCASIONAL UNWARY INDIVIDUAL WOULD UNWITTINGLY ALLOW HIS PERSPECTIVE TO BECOME SUFFICIENTLY ALTERED TO MAKE HIM VULNERABLE TO SUBTLE BUT UNPROFITIOUS TEMPTATIONS FOR SELF-AGGRANDIZEMENT. WE CANNOT COMPROMISE OUR INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR UNTARNISHED DECORUM.

ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANIZATION

THE UNREASONABLE BURDENS WE PLACE ON OUR ELECTED SECRETARY, AND THE TREMENDOUS PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL SACRIFICE HE MUST MAKE IN ORDER TO PERFORM PROPERLY THE DUTIES OF THAT OFFICE, IS A PROBLEM THAT BECOMES MORE SERIOUS EACH YEAR. THE TIME HAS ARRIVED WHEN WE MUST EMPLOY A COMPETENT EXECUTIVE SECRETARY TO TAKE OVER THESE BURDENS OF ADMINISTRATION AND ALSO MUCH OF THE ROUTINE ADMINISTRATIVE DETAIL NOW HANDLED BY OUR TREASURER AND CERTAIN COMMITTEES. WHILE THIS IS A BIG AND UNPRECEDENTED STEP FOR US IT WILL, I AM CONVINCED, LEAD US TO NEW HORIZONS OF SUCCESS, ACCOMPLISHMENT AND SATISFACTION.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT PROBLEM IS THAT OF OUR OWN INTERNAL ORGANIZATION. OUR VARIOUS MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATIONS AND THEIR COMPLEX REQUIREMENTS ARE CONFUSING AND DIFFICULT TO

INTERPRET. THIS REQUIRES A CAREFUL AND COMPREHENSIVE RE-EXAMINATION, AND THE FORMULATION OF A SIMPLER ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE. OUR EXECUTIVE ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURES, WHICH HAVE CHANGED BUT LITTLE FOR HALF A CENTURY, LIKEWISE DESERVE RE-APPRAISAL WITH THE VIEW OF SIMPLIFICATION AND STREAMLINING FOR BETTER CO-ORDINATION AND GREATER EFFICIENCY. ALL OF THIS, HOWEVER, IS TRICKY BUSINESS AND SHOULD BE DELAYED UNTIL WE HAVE BENEFIT OF COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT. WE WILL THEN ALSO HAVE BENEFIT OF THE SPECIALIZED ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND "KNOW-HOW" THAT GOES WITH SUCH PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT.

WE ALL KNOW THAT IMPROVEMENTS USUALLY COST MONEY AS WELL AS EFFORT. OUR TREASURY HAS DONE VERY WELL INDEED DURING THE PAST DECADE WITH A CONSIDERABLE INCREASE IN RECEIPTS FROM A LARGER DUES-PAYING MEMBERSHIP AND FROM RENTALS PAID BY TECHNICAL EXHIBITORS AT OUR ANNUAL CONVENTIONS. IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT OUR EXPENSES HAVE INCREASED CONSIDERABLY. PUBLICATION OF OUR JOURNAL WILL INVOLVE A FINANCIAL LIABILITY THAT MAY EXCEED \$20,000 TO OFFSET ANTICIPATED UNAVOIDABLE DEFICITS IN GETTING STARTED. AN INCREASE IN OUR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES WILL PROBABLY BE NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN FINANCIAL SOUNDNESS AND TO PROVIDE FOR EACH OF OUR MEMBERS A SUBSCRIPTION TO OUR NEW JOURNAL.

CONCLUSIONS

THE AMERICAN PROCTOLOGIC SOCIETY WAS ORGANIZED FIFTY-EIGHT YEARS AGO (1899) WITH TWELVE MEMBERS, IN COLUMBUS, OHIO. DR. JOSEPH M. MATHEWS, A DISTINGUISHED PROCTOLOGIST AND TEACHER, OF LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, WAS ITS FIRST PRESIDENT; HE WAS ALSO PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION. IT IS DOUBTFUL IF ANY MAN EVER DID MORE FOR ANY SPECIALTY THAN DR. MATHEWS DID FOR PROCTOLOGY. HE WROTE IN 1920, "FORTY YEARS HAVE ELAPSED SINCE I EMBARKED IN PROCTOLOGY AS A SPECIALIST. AT THAT TIME NO ONE, ANYWHERE, HAD DONE SO. I MUST CONFESS THAT IT WAS WITH SOME FEAR AND TREPIDATION THAT I GAVE UP GENERAL PRACTICE TO ENTER THIS NEW AND UNTRIED FIELD. IT WAS NOT RECOGNIZED BY ANY MEDICAL COLLEGE OR ORGANIZATION; NOT A SINGLE ARTICLE RELATING TO THESE IMPORTANT DISEASES COULD BE FOUND IN ANY MEDICAL JOURNAL. THE FIELD WAS COVERED, AND IN THE HANDS OF THE CHARLATAN."

THIS QUOTATION FROM DR. MATHEWS IS PRESENTED BECAUSE OF THE STRIKING CONTRAST BETWEEN CONDITIONS HE ENCOUNTERED AND THOSE EXISTING TODAY. OUR FUTURE IS OUR OWN RESPONSIBILITY; IT CAN BE SHAPED ACCORDING TO OUR DESIRES. PERSISTENT EFFORT AND DETERMINATION GUIDED BY JUDICIOUS IMAGINATION AND WISDOM WILL SURELY LEAD US TO "HORIZONS UNLIMITED."

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