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newhat shy person, sometimes  
to see him at work in his office  
that he saved his strength and  
became so fanatically loyal and  
that he did that he cared about  
families, their careers and their  
he was able to create an intense  
ral and never forced.

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self as against others. Perhaps  
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ove for his wife was not dimin-

, but I shall not stop without  
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g practice.

Alan's name, I will not fail to  
ns. May we all do our best to  
s of generations of physicians

Abraham Genecin

### COMMENTS ON THE AMERICAN OSLER SOCIETY AND AN INTRODUCTION OF WILLIAM B. BEAN<sup>1</sup>

Alfred R. Henderson<sup>2</sup>

One of the chief legacies of William Osler is the concept, reiterated time and again to his students and young practitioners, that the practice of medicine consists of much more than the science of preserving health, curing diseases and prolonging life. The heritage of Osler contains the admonition that science is but a part of practice and that the real need of the profession at large is the quality of humanism and the mark of the cultured gentlemen. Kipling told us that there were but two kinds of people, doctors and patients (1). Osler's qualities of humanism and culture were not only meant to be extended from the former to the latter, but also to serve as gospel within the brotherhood of physicians.

It is a sad and serious observation that far too many twentieth century physicians are concerned chiefly with the science and economics of medicine. Witness the all-too-common "pay when served" signs that confront those who enter the waiting rooms of our colleagues, transmuting instantly what we must respectfully call a "patient" into a "client." Listen to the diatribe in hospital coffee shops and all-too-frequently wherever doctors congregate, which repeatedly brings to mind a missing Beatitude in the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed is he who has nothing to say and gives no verbal proof of the fact."

Listen to the censuring and croaking mass of humanity that, in an ever-widening crescendo, voices complaints concerning current trends in private and government medicine. And everywhere, men are blaming the times, man's changing nature and fate. Let us recall what Democritus said, ". . .yet is man's fate but the echo of his character and passions, his mistakes and weaknesses" (2).

The great need of medicine today has little to do with its science. But, just a word about the science of medicine. In the light of our many deficiencies, there is no room or time for self-deception or much self-satisfying esteem or pride, feeling of superiority or confidence. Patients and their diseases daily expose the conscientious physician to his ignorance and leave him all-too-often but an idle spectator in the midst of his science that repeatedly fails him. Circumstances improve slowly with the centuries, and we are somewhat better off now than in Montaigne's day, some four centuries ago. Unimpressed by the pompousness and pretentiousness of certain members of the Academy

<sup>1</sup> Introductory remarks made at the First Annual Meeting of the American Osler Society, at Denver, Colorado, April 1, 1971.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Henderson, Treasurer-Historian of The American Osler Society, is Consultant to the Division of Medical Science of the Smithsonian Institute and to the Veterans Administration, Washington, D. C.

of Medicine, thinking their state of knowledge quite conclusive, he remarked that he thought none of them really knowledgeable, for he knew not one among them who knew how to make a worm. "Oh how soft, how gentle, and how sound a pillow is ignorance, and incuriosity, to rest a well composed head upon," wrote Montaigne (3).

But, aside from what we need in science, the need as regards our redemption as a revered and trustful profession among mankind, is for the reinstatement of humanism in medicine and the breeding of cultured, learned and devoted gentlemen as an antidote to progressive medical commerce. What is needed is something of the man as illustrated in Plato's Dialogues of Eryximadus.

To be sure the nurturing begins early in life, but its cultivation should be continued in our medical curriculum. It is instituted best by the contagion of examples set by a carefully selected faculty, and further nourished in the study of what Osler called the "historical continuity of medicine's apostolic succession." It is a betraying sign of the times that so many so-called "Class A" medical schools have not the time for so much as one hour in four years for the history and philosophy of medicine. Let us ask ourselves, *in this day*, how many think of the profession as did Robert Louis Stevenson, who wrote: "There are men who stand above the common herd, the soldier, the sailor and the shepherd unfrequently; the artist rarely, rarer still the clergyman, the physician as a rule. He is the flower (such as it is) of our civilization; and when that stage of man is done with, and only to be marvelled at in history, he will be thought to have shared as little as any in the defects of the period, and most notably exhibited the virtues of the race" (4).

Osler pointed out at the turn of the century the traits that threatened to sap the foundations of medicine from within and lower medicine as a respected profession. The unwelcomed traits of prejudice and vaunted conceit, intolerance and uncharitableness he collected in one word, *chauvinism* (5). The great fallacy, and the great danger, in sending men into the profession schooled only in academics is comparative to the launching of Sir Thomas Browne's proverbial ark upon rough seas....an ark is a vessel without oars, without sails and without a rudder and, therefore, without direction (6).

The American Osler Society has been founded not only to memorialize the life and works of William Osler, but also to perpetuate the example of the just and charitable life, the intellectual resourcefulness and the humanism of Osler as a pattern for a way of life.

I would like to introduce our First Annual Lecturer, Dr. William B. Bean, not with the usual tedious catalogue of his accomplishments, which can be found documented in the eleventh edition of *American Men of Science*, Volume A-C, pages 302-303. Suffice it to say he is well known among you as professor, editor, author, practicing physician, Oslerian, tennis player and, indeed, the cultured gentlemen of Osler's tradition.

There is a legend in Philisita, a Pharisal legend, of course, that those who follow letters are, "disorderly-minded, unstable of habit, and, thus, peculiarly open to misfortune and suffering" (7). Our speaker tonight belies this jocular judgment of Kipling's. Our speaker's works, unlike most of the works of others, who pragmatize too much by

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pen and larynx, have been a delight to the profession for many years. Almost everything else that appears within the same covers is severely handicapped, by contrast, like little children playing store on the threshold of a real world market, or would-be "big-game" writers chasing jackels, butterflies and grasshoppers.

Rudyard Kipling told the tale of a land where much faith and dependence was placed upon the rain-doctors for a sufficient harvest (8). During one season of drought, the rain-doctor's success was only partial, producing scanty, ineffectual local sprinklings. The angry tribe set upon the rain-doctors and questioned them. The rain-doctors retorted, "We have been making our proper magic. . . suppose you tell us what you have been about." The answer came, "The headmen have been running about hunting jackels and our little people have been chasing grasshoppers." The rain-doctors replied, "Just as long as you run about thus, just so long will the rain fall in this manner."

May I present to you a maker of Monsoon harvests; a reliable creator of tempests and downpours that result, always, in a prodigious ingathering!

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