

American Proctologic Society, 1915.

SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING.

San Francisco, California.

Monday Afternoon, June 21, 1915.

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. with the President, Dr. Louis J. Krouse, in the chair. The first business called for was the reading of the minutes of the last annual meeting. Being moved and carried that the regular order of business be dispensed with, the meeting proceeded with the scientific program.

In the absence of the Vice-President, Dr. Jos. M. Mathews took the chair, and called for the reading of the Annual Address of the President.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS. RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT.

By LOUIS J. KROUSE, M.D.,
CINCINNATI, OHIO.

As chairman of the American Proctologic Society, it is my pleasant duty to bid you welcome to this our seventeenth annual meeting.

I wish to express to the Fellows of the Society my cordial thanks and appreciation for the honor conferred upon me in selecting me as their presiding officer. The good work of this Society, and the high qualifications of my predecessors, make me realize that the honor is a great one, and causes me to feel a deep responsibility in assuming the office which they have so well filled.

The greater part of the work of the past year has fallen upon our experienced and proficient Secretary, and the credit for the success of this meeting will be due to his energy and perseverance.

When I look at this year's program and read the titles of the various papers, the number of which compares favorably with that of any meeting of previous years, I feel that the success of this session ought to be equal to or even surpass some of our preceding gatherings.

I trust that all those who have honored the program with their names, will have shown their interest in the welfare of the Society by being present to-day.

Nearly two decades have now elapsed since the organization of this Society. It was on Wednesday, the 7th day of June, at two-thirty p.m., in the year 1899, that the first meeting of the American Proctologic Society took place at the Hotel Chittenden, Columbus, Ohio. At the time of the organization I was in Columbus, having gone there for the specific purpose of attending the meeting. The meeting hour occurred at a much earlier time than I had been informed it was to take place. It was due entirely to this fact that my name is not among the charter members. Notwithstanding my great disappointment that I was not a charter member, my enthusiasm for proctological work was not lessened, nor did it prevent me from handing in my application to this new organization as soon as possible. Mine was the first application. I was admitted to full membership the following year when the Society convened at Washington, D. C.

In the early days of its existence the Society demanded of the applicant a thesis on some proctologic subject, which was to be handed in with the application before the name of the candidate could be considered by the council. This custom is now a thing of the past, but ought never to have been discontinued.

I recall distinctly the great enthusiasm manifested by the members of this Society at the first meeting that I attended. It was something I shall never forget. I had never before seen such enthusiasm displayed by any organization composed of medical men that it had been my pleasure to attend. All of the members with the exception of one were present. So great was the interest displayed that the time devoted to deliberations seemed to be too short to suit the members so that they had three sessions each day.

Slowly and steadily our membership has increased until now we have a fair enrollment of Fellows, who come from widely scattered districts. The increase has been salutary. What we lacked in "quantity" has more than made up in "quality". Every member admitted has been carefully scrutinized before his name has been acted upon. Within the last few years an innovation has been introduced by which a member becomes an associate Fellow before he can acquire full fellowship. It is needless to say that all our Fellows are workers. It has always been so from the very beginning. There are no drones in our midst. Every one does his share for the common good, each according to his capacity.

That the medical fraternity has still need of a society like ours,

whose field of activity is limited to ailments located in the anus, rectum and colon, can readily be seen when you come in contact with general practitioners who first see these cases and later refer them to you. Physicians in large towns are not any better informed than those practicing in small villages; and their ignorance in this field is perfectly ludicrous were it not so often tragical.

Dr. Murray, in his address to this Society some years ago, showed by statistics that the study of proctology was taught so little or not at all in most of the colleges that many of the graduates later on acknowledge that they could have treated their patients better, and would have had better results, had more attention been devoted to teaching this specialty and less time spent on some of the other specialties. Such training they claim would have enabled them to treat suffering humanity with more intelligence, and the results would have been more to their credit.

That a separate section devoted to proctology has not yet been created in the American Medical Association is something that every one of us, who have the best interest of the profession at heart, and are best qualified to judge, cannot understand.

Ours is not the only medical organization, whose field of activity was originally in the hands of the advertising quacks before it was taken up by the regular profession who made a special study of it. Each succeeding year the work of the advertising charlatan is getting less and less lucrative. Their success in the past was owing more to the fault and carelessness of the regular practitioner than to the inherent knowledge ascribed to, or to the method of treatment employed by them. What the sufferers wanted was relief. If the regular practitioners could not give it to them, then naturally they would seek it elsewhere.

Progress in our specialty dates from the time of our organization. Prior to this time little was taught in the medical schools, and little attention was paid to these ailments by medical practitioners. At present there is an awakening. It will take many years before it will be fully aroused. Many of the medical colleges realize the need of a chair on proctology. A few have already installed them. Another sign of progress is the number of text books which have appeared in the last few years. Over half a dozen have been written by active Fellows of this Society. These books must be revised yearly, on account of the rapid advance of this branch of medicine, if the authors wish to keep abreast of the times.

Every one of you, without a single exception, has added something worth knowing to our knowledge of this branch of medicine.

Let us recall our late lamented James P. Tuttle. What a vast amount of useful information has been contributed by him not only to our specialty, but to surgery in general. It is a pity that we cannot do justice to him and Proctology by placing his bust in the National Hall of Fame. There are many others still with us, who although they have not added quite so much, deserve a certain amount of recognition. What we have accomplished in the past is on record, and let us hope that our accomplishment in the future will add even greater luster to our Society.

What is needed most at the present time is the dissemination of a better knowledge of proctology by a more thorough preliminary training of our young men and women in the field of our endeavors. There ought to be created a separate chair in our medical schools, and a separate ward in our hospitals should be devoted exclusively to this branch of medicine. These positions should be filled by men, whose life work lies in this field. When this is done the student will be able to acquire a better knowledge of this specialty and will then be better prepared when he leaves his Alma Mater to go forth into the world to treat these cases. Until such steps are taken, the knowledge of Proctology will continue to be on the same plane as was that of Dermatology before it was taken up by the medical profession and placed on the curriculum of the medical schools.

It has been suggested that as the field of observation and investigation of our specialty has been extended in the last few years the name of our Society should be changed. While formerly we confined ourselves almost wholly to the lower outlet of the gut, we now include in our specialty all of the intestinal tract extending from the pyloric extremity of the stomach to the anus. This naturally opens a much larger field for our special work than the charter members anticipated when they applied the name of Proctologic to our Society. Procto-enterologic and Enterologic are the names that have been suggested. The first seems to be more suggestive, and gives the laity as well as the profession-at-large a better idea of the scope of our work.

Another suggestion that I would like to offer is in reference to the selection of a place of meeting of the Society for the ensuing year. It has always been the custom of the Society to leave the selection of the city in the hands of the Executive Council. As most of the fellows of our society are also members of the A. M. A., the Executive Council usually selected the same city for our meeting. The question has been raised several times, not only on the floor of the society, but also by one of my predecessors, that we should meet independently of the A. M. A. This occurred only once and that was in May of 1905,

when we departed from the time honored custom of following the A. M. A., and selected another city for our annual gathering. It was through the courtesy of one of our esteemed Fellows that we were invited to convene at Pittsburgh, where we had as good and as large a gathering of the members as we ever had in the sixteen years' experience of the Society. This was the only time that the Society met independently of the A. M. A.

Fearing that the present session of our Society in San Francisco would perhaps not have a large attendance of our Fellows it was proposed that a plan similar to that of 1905 should be followed, and that another city, more centrally located, should be selected as our meeting place. This suggestion did not receive the entire approval of the Council, and they decided to leave the selection of the city to a vote of the Fellows. The result was, as you all know, in favor of San Francisco. That is the reason why we met here to-day.

Prior to the year 1908 the transactions of this organization were not kept nor published by the Society. Many of the papers read at our former meetings were rich in original work and therefore very valuable. These papers were published by the authors in the various medical journals scattered over our country. Reprints were supposed to be sent to the Secretary. Many years have now elapsed since these papers appeared in print. It would be an onerous task for anybody to find some of these papers. Unless something is done soon to collect and preserve them, they will likely be lost in the maze of medical literature. Would it not be good policy to collect these papers and have them published in book form? The outlay cannot be very great and we would then have in our possession a complete record of the work that this society has accomplished from the time of its inception to the present meeting. Should this suggestion not meet the approval of the Fellows then I would suggest that a copy of the reprints that still remain in the hands of the authors be mailed to the Secretary, who can distribute them, or, instead, the authors could mail them direct to the members.

In conclusion I wish to thank the Fellows for their co-operation in making this session a success, and request for my successor a hearty and an enthusiastic support.