

PROBLEMS AND PROGRESS OF THE AMERICAN PROCTOLOGIC SOCIETY

President's Address

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It is becoming that my first words on this occasion should be ones of appreciation and gratitude for the honor conferred upon me in selecting me as your president. From the very beginning I have considered it one of the greatest privileges of my professional life to be a member of the American Proctologic Society; a man can have no greater satisfaction in life than to feel that he has the confidence and esteem of his co-workers. The good work of this Society and the high qualifications of my predecessors, make me realize more that the honor is a great one, and causes me to feel a deep responsibility in the duties of the office which they have so well filled.

Whatever success may attend this annual meeting must be attributed to the splendid cooperation of our friendly, experienced and efficient secretary, Curtice Rosser, members of the Executive Council, the local committees and to all others who take an active part in our program.

In fulfilling the obligations incident to leadership, it has been the custom for the President to deliver an address, the nature of which is not specified, but by implication, he is supposed to give an account of his stewardship as well as to discuss policies which will be useful in the further advancement of proctology, and of those ideals of medical practice which this Society sponsors.

My remarks will deal chiefly with the field of proctology, but certain phases of the subject overlap into allied fields and general medicine.

The medical historian of the future will probably refer to the present era as one of great progress in medicine. The factors contributing to this progress come from: first, general medicine; second, the advancement of the various specialties; and third, the correlation of the various specialties back into medicine as a whole.

No specialty can be a thing apart; each must fit into the pattern of general medicine. Primarily the growth of specialties, individually and collectively, rests upon the foundation of a well rounded academic and medical education. Secondarily, it is based on adequate training in the selected specialty.

The profession and public have long wanted some definite uniform standard of identifying the adequately trained specialist. It was evident that the task of setting up such a standard must and should be national in scope. The solution of the problem seemed to lie in some national agency with sufficient force and respect of the profession and the public to set up and maintain such a uniform standard. The A. M. A. appeared to be the logical agency to assume this function.

On this basis the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association in 1933 authorized the Council to approve of special boards. The standards of these boards were to be formulated by the Council, House of Delegates of American Medical Association, and representatives chosen by the national societies in each specialty. Thus, was created a uniform standard, national in scope, by a group of men selected by the specialists and representatives of general medicine.

The standardization of specialists is progressive and I would ask the support of the members of this society in this work.

The American Proctologic Society was organized in 1899 for the purpose of "investigating and disseminating knowledge relating to the rectum, anus, and colon."

Our spirit of fellowship is a continuation of the immortal pioneers, Lewis Adler, William M. Beach, A. Bennett Cooke, Samuel T. Earle, George B. Evans, Samuel G. Gant, Thomas C. Martin, Joseph M. Mathews, J. Rawson Pennington, George J. Cook, and James P. Tuttle, who were the founders of the American Proctologic Society. This Society was destined to bring proctology out of obscurity and establish it on a plane comparable to that of any recognized scientific specialty of today.

The Society has a definite limited membership.

Admission to the annual meetings and participation in the discussions are confined to members and such guests as are sponsored by members and thereafter invited by the Executive Council.

The mutual respect and friendly cooperation among the fellows and members of allied organizations are the highest type.

Our programs are superb.

We publish the annual proceedings of the Scientific Sessions in book form which goes to the individual members.

But we give to the general profession, overlapping allied organizations and the public nothing of the education or advancement of our specialty except what can be given out on the return home by the individual members who attend and participate in our deliberations. In other words, we

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hold our annual scientific sessions but only a few outside our group know it. The profession and the public are demanding scientific information and continued progressive advancement in the field of proctology.

Former Presidents with profound interest in this society have emphasized the need of more well-trained proctologists throughout the country. They have deplored the fact that the teaching of proctology in many undergraduate medical schools is still neglected and that proctology as a specialty has not received from hospital staffs the recognition it deserves.

History records that "Nero fiddled while Rome burned." Are we to fiddle, and allow some other medium or organization to take our place in the education, guidance, and progress of our specialty? If we expect to continue as leaders in proctology, it is imperative that we remove our light from under the bushel and through the medium of a high class, ethical, scientific journal, disseminate our discussions, teachings, and leadership into overlapping allied subjects and general medicine. I cannot too strongly emphasize the need and demand for a journal of proctology published under the auspices of the American Proctologic Society. I commend this to your consideration.

We are standing on the threshold of an era of progress. Progress is invariably indicated or accompanied by changes. It is our duty to meet these changes and set a progressive standard for our specialty in keeping with that of allied specialties and general medicine. This means progress and greater enjoyment of living with our fellow men.