

## Special Article

### ADDRESS AT THE ANNUAL DINNER OF ALPHA ETA OF PHI RHO SIGMA

Halifax, Nova Scotia, January 26, 1955

FRED C. JENNINGS, M.D.

With pleasure, but some hesitancy, I accepted the kind invitation of your president to speak to you at this, your annual dinner. As we grow older we cherish any honor which may be offered us—probably in compensation for other activities which we have to forego. I feel honored by being here and I bring greetings and good wishes from many “Phi Rhos” who are active in medical circles in Saint John.

I puzzled for some time over a suitable subject to present to you, until, in my reading, the sentence by George W. Stephens, assistant director of the American College of Surgeons, caught my eye: “Teachers should teach, not only the Science and Art but also the Ethics and Economics of medicine.” So, I chose for my subject—with apologies to Dale Carnegie—

“How to Win Patients and Affluence—Period.”

Many of you, in a few months, will proudly march out from the portals of Dalhousie, bearing the coveted M.D., C.M. Each year another company will follow you, eager to win renown in the field of medicine. Many will go to postgraduate work; others to general practice. It is of the time when you begin to meet the public as practitioners of medicine in specialties or otherwise that I would like to speak.

First, choose well the place to start your practice, whether city, town or village. Ask yourself these questions:

First: Is this where I want to live? You owe it to yourself and to your work to pick a congenial environment.

Second: Is there enough work to keep me occupied? A busy doctor is a happy doctor or he shouldn't be a doctor. And a busy doctor is bound to be a successful doctor.

Third: Are there facilities, within easy reach, to do the type of practice for which I am trained? A surgeon, settled in the backwoods, would be a total loss, both to himself and the community, whereas a good general practitioner could well change the face of the community and reap for himself renown and recompense.

Fourth: Are the other practitioners in the community congenial? In starting practice in any community it is well to get acquainted with your confreres in the vicinity. I have seen ill-feeling develop between two doctors, both good, and, due to lack of cooperation time and efficiency wasted in petty wrangling and vicious back-biting, to the detriment of their practices and the profession as a whole.

When you settle in a community, visit one or more of your confreres. Ask his advice. He will be compli-

mented and it may well be the start of a strong friendship that you will need in the future. He knows the people of the locality and their peculiarities and can set your stumbling feet in the right path.

Almost one hundred per cent of the patients who come to you in the first year will have, at some time, consulted somebody else; probably fifty per cent will tell you why they did not go back but rather chose you. Don't encourage criticism of, or pass judgement on, a fellow practitioner. The patient, in a few instances, may be right, but, in many cases, is wrong, his judgment warped by some fancied slight or a guilty conscience over an unpaid bill. You may be the next to his list of "pet peeves."

Records — from the first day of practice, keep records. They don't have to be elaborate case history sheets. I have used a 4 by 6 card index system for years, with very brief notes, and it has been of inestimable value in recalling previous diagnosis and treatment. Lack of records can be very embarrassing if you have to give testimony in court.

Many times, believe it or not, you will have difficulty in making a diagnosis. Don't be afraid to say "I don't know" or "I am not sure." Further investigation may solve the difficulty or you may require a consultation. I have never "lost face" by admitting I was not sure of a diagnosis and I have always learned something from a consultation, even if it was only that the consultant was as puzzled as I. Cocksurenness to cover uncertainty will get you no place, except into an embarrassing position.

Book-keeping — Today, more than ever, with Income Tax and all the different forms of health insurance, a common sense, which means a simple, book-keeping system is necessary. Make yourself familiar with a system at the start and save many headaches. Keep it up to date and I would suggest that you send accounts regularly. The patients who will be the mainstay of your practice will appreciate it.

As to charges, you will have a Tariff of Fees, authorized and published by the Provincial Society under which you are licensed. Variation from this tariff should be a matter between you and your patient, with the patient knowing that you are taking into consideration his financial difficulties.

Your patients, in the main, will come from the ordinary people of the community with not too much surplus money. Save them expense where you can, not by skimping on necessary diagnostic aids or therapeutic agents, but by using your knowledge of the Art and Science of medicine before calling in the aids to diagnosis. I mention the Art of medicine advisedly. It is said that a laborer works with his hands; a craftsman works with his hands and his mind; an artist works with his hands, his mind and his heart. Let us never forget the third member of that trinity.

And now we come to ethics—

When you become licensed to practise medicine you will subscribe to a code of ethics. There are some who criticize the code of ethics of the Canadian Medical Association as

idealistic. What of it? Are ideals out of fashion? Do we lower our standards by having ideals? The code of ethics of the medical profession, in essence is the Golden Rule. Don't you think it wise for the most materialistic of us to practice "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you", if only for personal protection and insurance for the future?

In all your activities be honest with your patients, your confreres and yourself and you will succeed. It is truly said, ours is a noble profession. This accolade must not be taken lightly. We, the members, must continue to earn it for the profession.

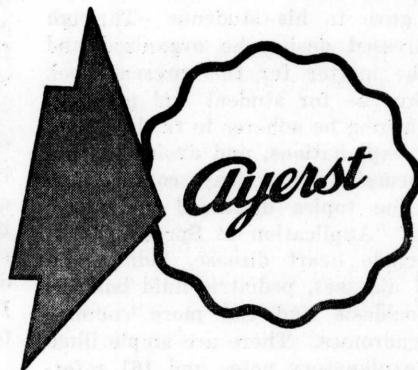
Let us, from the first day we take up the burden of others' ills, to the day we fold our hands to rest, keep in our hearts the prayer of Maimonides who lived in the 12th century:

"Almighty God! Inspire in me a love for my art and for Thy creatures. Let no thirst for profit or seeking for renown or admiration take away from my calling . . . Keep within me strength of body and soul, ever ready, with cheerfulness, to help and succor rich and poor, good and bad, enemy as well as friend. In the sufferer, let me see the human being."

Here lies the way of the conqueror.

There points the road to Success.

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