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HISTORICAL REMINISCENCES

A TOAST

At the Twenty-Sixth Annual Banquet of the
Luzerne County Medical Society,
January 11, 1911.

Celebrating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding
of the Society.

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HISTORICAL SKETCH.

A TOAST AT THE BANQUET CELEBRATING THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LUZERNE COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY.

By DR. LEWIS H. TAYLOR, WILKES-BARRE, PA.

READ JANUARY 11, 1911.

Mr. President and Fellow Members:

I am overwhelmed with the task that you have set for me in asking me to present a sketch of the Luzerne County Medical Society during the fifty years of its successful existence. To present even the salient points, to touch here and there upon a few of the important things that have happened would require a much longer time than that at my disposal, and would, I fear, tax your patience too greatly for me to hope to retain a good standing as one of your speakers at this banquet. The Luzerne County Medical Society and that for fifty years! I tell you the subject looms up largely, and, I may say, grandly, for we are not ashamed of our heritage.

THE ORGANIZATION.

Twenty-five years ago this month we met in our first annual society banquet at the Wyoming Valley Hotel, at which time that grand old man, Dr. Edward R. Mayer, read a paper on the "Then and Now of Medicine," in which, at its close, he gave a sketch of the founding of this society. After describing a number of the older men of the county of 1861, and especially the one who originated the novel method of hastening delayed labor by incising the scalp of the child with a pair of scissors and inserting the fingers between the scalp and skull for purpose of traction, he goes on to say: "Such were some of the lights of our profession in the early days of this region. Animosities between medical men were rife, and courtesies professional or social were rare. It became necessary to infuse new life into the calling and to resublime the medical *caput mortuum*. Some few of us who thought we knew more than our elders, put our live heads together, and in the ides of March, A. D. 1861, commenced the organization of the Luzerne

County Medical Society." We who celebrate the fiftieth anniversary, though antedating the exact time by a couple of months, can hardly realize what it meant to start a new society in a county of the then size of Luzerne, which contained an immense area and whose facilities for travel were by no means what they are to-day. The present populous and important county of Lackawanna was then a part of Luzerne. The founders of the society were Drs. Rooney, of Hazleton; Moody, of Lehman; Throop, Ladd, Marr and Green, of Scranton; Tubbs, of Kingston; Lawton, of Pittston; Cressler and Casselberry, of Conyngham; Urquhart, Dennis, C. Wagner, E. B. Miner and E. R. Mayer, of Wilkes-Barre. Of the original founders Dr. Mayer was the only one present at the quarto-centennial celebration. He said: "We were few and far between, but we were, and have ever since been, increasingly becoming a power in the goodly land we occupy. We and our successors have been fortunate in bringing order out of chaos in all medical matters among us, in unifying the decent and honorable members of our guild in one harmonious whole, in dignifying its character, and in demanding and securing from the public the appreciation and compensation which we, its members, earn and deserve."

Such was the founding of the society and such the brief record given by the very best man of all the good and true men who in fifty years have honored the society by their presence, and who in turn have been honored by membership in it.

The records of the first two meetings have been lost and the first recorded meeting in the minute books in our possession was that of September 11, 1861, held at Scranton, though Dr. Mayer states that the society was founded in March and the declaration was signed on April 17, 1861. Of the original members elected on March 4, 1861, Dr. Charles Marr was the first to die in 1864, followed by Dr. Moody in 1866.

MEETINGS.

For a number of years meetings of the society were held but three times a year on the second Wednesday of January, May and September; the January meetings being held in Wilkes-

Barre, the May meetings in Pittston, and the September meetings in Scranton, and it is a pleasing fact to note that in general these meetings were fairly well attended, considering the small total membership.

As early as January, 1870, a motion was introduced by Dr. W. F. Dennis, and carried, that the society meet on the second Wednesday of each month, but this motion must have been rescinded, for meetings continued to be held but three times a year up to 1875, an amendment to the By-Laws being adopted on January 13 of that year providing for bi-monthly meetings; these to be held, three in Wilkes-Barre, three in Pittston, and three in Scranton. In the latter part of 1878, owing to the newly created county of Lackawanna having separated from Luzerne, the meetings in Scranton were discontinued, and it was provided that four meetings of the six should be held in Wilkes-Barre, and two in Pittston, but after May 18, 1881, it was provided that all meetings should be held in Wilkes-Barre, owing to the difficulty of securing a quorum at Pittston. On July 18, 1885, the By-Laws were again amended providing for monthly meetings, and the Executive Committee was directed to announce the subject for discussion and the essayist two months in advance. In January, 1891, the By-Laws were again amended, calling for meetings on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, the first meeting of each month to be devoted to the regular formal paper and discussion, the second to be for the presentation of voluntary papers, pathological specimens, etc. This was continued for some time, until the society, without formal action, gradually fell into the plan of having a paper presented at each meeting.

PLACES OF MEETINGS.

In the early or migratory days of the society, the meetings were held in various places in the three towns, sometimes in the offices of members, sometimes in the court house in Wilkes-Barre, the town hall in Pittston, the Wyoming House in Scranton, and usually at the hour of 1:30 p. m. For a number of years previous to the death of Harrison Wright, Esq., the genial and accomplished Secretary of the Historical Society,

the meetings of the medical society were held in the rooms of the Historical Society on South Franklin street, up to May 13, of 1885. On May 20, 1885, a special meeting was held at the Wyoming Valley Hotel to discuss the Plymouth epidemic of typhoid fever, which at that time was attracting the attention of the valley, as well as of a large part of the country.

To this meeting all practitioners of the county were invited. Meetings continued to be held at the Valley House until December 1, 1886, when the society moved to the rooms of the Royal Arcanum on South Franklin street. On January 8, 1890, the Executive Committee reported having leased the Young Men's Hebrew Association rooms in Loomis Hall, North Main street, and meetings were held there until September 3, 1890, when the society moved into rooms rented for its exclusive use on the sixth floor of the Coal Exchange building, at the corner of River and Market streets. This marked a new epoch in the life and dignity of the society. The feeling of having a home we could call our own seemed to give stability and feeling of secureness for the future. These rooms were held until November 17, 1897, when we moved to our present quarters in the Anthracite building, the rooms having previously been attractively fitted up by the society. As previously mentioned, the hour for meeting was usually 1:30 p. m., though several efforts had been made to change this. Beginning with January, 1890, the meetings were held alternately in the afternoon at 1:30 and the evening at 8 o'clock. Beginning with the first meeting in February, 1891, all meetings were held at 8 p. m., and this was changed a few years later to 8:30 p. m., our present hour of meeting.

ANNUAL DUES.

In the beginning of the society and up to May, 1886, the annual dues were two dollars per year, though as far back as 1876 Dr. Harvey had introduced a motion that the initiation fee be \$5.00 instead of two. In 1886, however, adopting the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the annual dues were made five dollars, but owing to deficits in publication accounts, banquets, increased expenses, etc., this was increased

on March 3, 1897, to \$10.00 per year, at which price it has since remained. It is an interesting fact that the society had more lapses for non-payment of dues under the two-dollar charge than under five, and more under the five-dollar charge than under ten. The Secretary has more than once reported at the end of the year, "all dues paid to date". In other words, that which we pay for we appreciate, and with the establishment of a library and reading room with many publications, the publishing of our transactions, etc., the members have felt that they are receiving a fair return for their investment, and in general there has been but little complaint of high price of dues.

MEMBERSHIP.

The membership, which started in 1861 with fifteen, had increased in twenty-five years to sixty, and in the last twenty-five years, in spite of some lapses and some discouragements, the society has gone steadily forward, till we now number one hundred and fifty members. This we all admit is much smaller than it should be and much smaller than we trust it will be in a very few years. And when I have the honor to address you again in twenty-five years from now, we hope to see every reputable physician of the county enrolled as a member of the Luzerne County Medical Society.

SECRETARIES.

The good work of any scientific society depends in a measure upon the efficiency of its Secretary, and while we have elected a new President yearly, and from time to time have changed the personnel of our committees, we have had but few secretaries. Dr. George Urquhart held the office from its foundation till January, 1869; he resigned from the society May 13, 1869. Dr. J. B. Crawford acted as Secretary from January, 1869, till January, 1873, when Dr. William Hartman, of Pittston, who is still a member of the society, was elected for one year. At the annual meeting in January, 1874, Dr. G. W. Guthrie was elected Secretary, though he was not then a member of the society, and was not elected to membership till January, 1875, it being decided at that time that the Secre-

tary need not necessarily be a member of the society. This office he held with credit to himself and honor to the society for sixteen years, until he was called to go up higher by being elected President of the Society, if it really be going higher to be advanced from the Secretaryship to the Presidency.

The office was efficiently held by Dr. Maris Gibson from 1890 to 1899, when he too was called to go forward by being elected President. In like manner the office was conducted by Dr. E. U. Buckman for three years, from 1899 to 1902, when he resigned, and his place was filled by the election of Dr. Delbert Barney, who has since held the office and of whose work you all know.

THE PRESIDENTS.

I presume I ought to mention the Presidents, who have been many, whom this society has honored by calling them to preside over its destinies. But, lo, are they not written in the chronicles of this society? Are their names not duly enshrined in the various volumes of our transactions, and their memory cherished in the hearts of all our membership? Let them rest in peace!

THE WORK.

In the early days of the society, when our Secretaries were not so busy and our transactions not published, making full minutes unnecessary, it was customary for the minutes to be written up in full, and we often find four, five, and six, and even as many as twelve folio pages of minutes giving abstracts of papers and discussions, reports of cases, and of pathological specimens.

These are full of interest and well worthy of perusal. On January 9, 1868, Dr. Crawford read a paper on "Cryptogamic Poisons", which is the first recorded paper read before the society. The previous meetings being occupied, seemingly, with extemporaneous discussions. At this time, and for many years after, it was the custom to pass a vote of thanks and request the reader of the paper to have the same published, which he usually did in pamphlet form, at his own expense, for distribution among members of the society and friends.

On January 13, 1869, Dr. Crawford introduced a resolution, "that it shall hereafter be the duty of the President of this society to deliver before the society, at the close of his term of office, an address upon some subject pertaining to the practice of medicine or surgery, and present a copy of the same to the Secretary, who shall preserve such address among the archives of the society." This custom or rule was "more honored in the breach than in the observance," and it was not until the establishment of our annual banquets that the President has regularly delivered an ex-augural address. This has always been, or nearly always, a working society, and it has numbered among its membership many brilliant and progressive men. In May, 1871, Dr. Reese Davis reported a case of ovarian tumor on which he had successfully operated a few weeks previously. Remember, gentlemen, that was forty years ago, and this a country town, and operations for ovarian tumor were not plentiful at that time. On January 14, 1874, he reported a case of successful vaginal ovariectomy, and this was the second reported case of the kind in the world. Dr. Goodell gave it in full in his "Lessons on Gynecology" and gave Dr. Davis due credit for his successful work. One year later he reported his new method of dealing with Placenta Previa. This was later read at the State society meeting, was published, and widely commented on and copied.

On November 14, 1877, in a discussion on "Placenta Previa," Dr. Bulkeley, in thirty-two years practice, reported having seen one case.

Dr. Underwood, with thirty years practice, only one or two cases.

Dr. Burr, thirty-eight years practice, never saw a case.

Dr. Jones, fourteen years practice, one case.

Dr. Davis, eleven years practice, had had nine complete cases.

In January, 1874, Dr. J. T. Rothrock, subsequently professor of botany in the University of Pennsylvania, and later State Commissioner of Forestry, reported to this society upon treatment of tuberculosis by outdoor life in the West, saying that those who went to the West and lived in cities generally died, while those who roughed it on the prairies or in the mountains

got well. This was thirty-seven years ago and might be worthy of note by those who think the outdoor treatment of tuberculosis a very recent discovery.

On September 12, 1877, Dr. Guthrie reported a case of perityphlitic abscess "which was opened on the tenth day by an incision two and one-half inches long parallel to Ponpart's ligament and about two inches within the anterior superior process of the ilium, resulting in complete recovery." Dr. Underwood and others reported similar cases which had recovered without operation by rupture into the intestines. Ten years later Dr. Guthrie read the essay of the day on "Perityphlitis". In 1888 Dr. Longshore reported a very interesting case of perityphlitic abscess opening into the bladder. In 1892 Dr. Lathrop read a paper on "Inflammation in the Right Iliac Fossa." In 1894 Dr. Guthrie presented a pathological specimen of a vermiform appendix removed from a patient with appendicitis. This is the first time "appendicitis" appears in the minutes of the society. Thus did we grope forward through painful years from the obscure perityphlitic abscess toward the full blown and glorious appendicitis. In 1894 Dr. Guthrie read a paper entitled "Some Thoughts on Appendicitis," and since then it would almost seem that some surgeons, elsewhere of course, had had thoughts on nothing else. A very interesting and valuable part of the society's work has been the reports of cases and presenting of pathological specimens, a part of our work now unhappily fallen into "innocuous desuetude".

It would be impossible to mention the many interesting and important cases recorded. In matters of sanitation, preservation of health and other matters of public welfare, this society has always had advanced views and has always been on the right side. In 1885 the Plymouth epidemic of typhoid fever claimed the attention of the whole country. A committee of members of this society made a careful investigation of the whole situation, and on the next day presented a report, the conclusions of which were later accepted by this society, and the correctness of which has never been disputed by any scientific society. The discussion of this question called attention to our society, and we had during the year 1885 a larger admis-

sion of members than we had ever had before in any one year. In that year Dr. Charles Long reported a case of acromegalia, which had been most thoroughly studied and was admirably presented. Again in 1889 another outbreak of typhoid fever caused widespread alarm and its discussion and conclusions reached by this society and subsequent agitation by the same was the direct cause of securing for a time water filtration, and later led to securing our present system of water supply, which, while still leaving much to be desired, is a decided improvement on that of previous years. In various other matters, such as preventing the spread of contagious diseases, in urging the establishment of a Board of Health, which unfortunately we have never succeeded in getting, the city bacteriological laboratory, a city bacteriologist, the society has raised its voice with no uncertain sound. Many of our members have been interested in public affairs, and even to-day, with one of the best school boards in the State, we have four members of our society on this board of six. But, "tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph," even with this large representation of medical men on the Board, one of them qualified to be President of the State society, another qualified to be toast master at our fiftieth anniversary, and the other two qualified for anything that is left, it nevertheless takes the ladies of the Civic Club to tell what is necessary to be done and to point out to them their duty in matters sanitary.

THE TRANSACTIONS.

An interesting feature of the work of this society and growing out of what seemed to be a desire on the part of many to do good work and to stimulate all members to their best, has been the publication of our transactions in a clean cut volume unmarred by advertisements and unsullied by unseemly controversies or indecencies. The first volume was published at the end of 1886 under the editorship of Dr. C. P. Knapp; a modest volume of sixty-six pages, but one of the most important we have had, for it contains "The Now and Then of Medicine" by Dr. Mayer; "Rabies," by Dr. Reese Davis; "Rectal Alimen-

tation," by Dr. Weaver, and a report of successful reduction of dislocation of the dorsal vertebra by Dr. Faulds.

The preservation of these papers alone would be worth while and would compensate for much of the care and work in this line for the past twenty years. Although the editor was continued, he did not succeed in getting the material for another volume in the next four years. But in 1891 the Lehigh Valley Medical Magazine, through its editor, urged us to publish our transactions in that periodical, and to have extra impressions for binding at the end of the year. Two assistant editors were appointed to secure discussions and they did the work so well that the Lehigh Valley Magazine was nearly swamped and the Luzerne County Medical Society nearly bankrupt by paying the printing bill. After the society's resources failed a deficit of sixty-one dollars was paid by two members, and the amount subsequently credited to them in dues by the society. Nothing further was done until 1895, when the then editor, with more zeal than discretion, undertook the publication at his own risk, trusting to voluntary contributions from members to keep his head above water. From 1895 to the present time a volume has been issued annually, and since the increase of dues to the present charge there has been no deficit in the treasury. Many interesting, and, I speak without fear of contradiction, many valuable papers have been published. And though we stand to-night at the closing of the old era and the opening of the new, when it has been deemed wise by the society to discontinue these transactions and to issue a monthly bulletin, I still maintain that these transactions contain material that well justifies the expense of publication, and that they will be a source of pride in future years, as an exponent of the work of this society in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the new.

THE LIBRARY.

The library was started in a modest way in 1892 by the donation of a number of books from the library of the late Dr. Edward R. Mayer. Nothing much was done to increase this nucleus until we moved into our present quarters in the latter part of 1897, when a Library Committee was appointed, which

went seriously at work to build up a library which would be of practical value to our growing society. The publication of our transactions has made us widely known and has brought to us in exchange many valuable publications from scientific societies and valuable donations from individual authors and from other libraries. At the close of 1910, the Library Committee reported 4,989 volumes, exclusive of duplicates, pamphlets and reprints of which we have some thousands more. The figures are given in the interest of accuracy and truth rather than to say in round numbers, 5,000. We have also on file over forty periodicals which are accessible to all and an attendant on duty every afternoon from two to five, at which hours the library is open for any one who cares to use it whether a member of the society or not.

THE BANQUETS.

You would not have me stop without a word on banquets even if you are bored almost to death. "Blest be the tie that binds," and one of the ties that has bound us together, that has made us forget animosities, that has softened and warmed our hearts toward our fellows, has been the gathering together in scenes like this, when we have looked into one another's faces around the festive board and have annually pledged anew one another's health as we have started on the journey of each succeeding new year. We couldn't go out from a place like this and be mean toward our fellows if we wanted to.

Away back in 1876 a committee was appointed to consider the advisability of holding an annual banquet, but on January 10, 1877, this committee reported adversely and the matter was dropped for many years. Poor fellows, they didn't know what they were missing, even if our friend Dr. Smith does think our banquets are sad affairs. A complimentary dinner at the Wyoming Valley House was tendered to Dr. E. R. Mayer upon his return from Europe, whither he had gone in search of health. This was given on September 26, 1882, and was attended by twenty-seven doctors, nearly all of whom were members of this society. But the first real medical society banquet came as the result of a resolution introduced by Dr. J. L. Miner on Sep-

tember 9, 1885, for the appointment of a committee on banquet, which reported favorably, and the first banquet was held in the Wyoming Valley House on January 13, 1886. Of the thirty members and ten visitors who were then present, twelve still survive as members of our society: Mahon, Brooks, Howell, Longshore, Stewart, Gibson, James, Barton, Johnson, Guthrie, Knapp and Taylor. It was a successful banquet and was the beginning of good fellowship, which has continued unbrokenly for twenty-six years. As early as 1887 Dr. Howell was chairman of the banquet committee, and at the February meeting following he reported a deficit of \$18.96, and then regularly for many years he reported a deficit which the society cheerfully paid. And he has been chairman every year since with one exception, but I think he has developed better business habits, for lately he hasn't reported any deficit.

But once when Howell was President, the way was clear and fair,

The committee, by appointment, had Stewart in the chair;
The boys grew wildly happy, as they kept the festive day,
And the deficit was sixty plunks, which Stewart had to pay.

Now, I am not really sure that he had to pay it, but he told me just the other night that he couldn't remember whether the society ever re-imbursed or not, but Stewart wasn't the only one whose memory failed at that banquet. There were several others who couldn't give an intelligent account of it the next day.

Well, the next year we had Howell in the saddle again, and we'll keep him there till the saddle wears out. Later on, two other stayers, who are still with us, came into this banquet committee. Just when it happened is lost in oblivion, for it has been said that:

Somewhere in the nineties, the date you'll never know,
The committee named on banquet was Barney, Howell and Roe;
And then each year thereafter we appointed them once more,
And they'll be their own successors, henceforth, forever more!

Long may they live and flourish and long may the Luzerne County Medical Society banquets continue as "the tie that binds".

THOSE WHO HAVE GONE.

Now, Mr. Chairman, a note in a different vein:

"The horologue of Time
Strikes the half century with a solemn chime,
And summons us together once again
The joy of meeting not unmixed with pain."

I would not willingly bring here one word of sadness or aught to mar the joyousness of this occasion, and yet I feel that in these reminiscences I would not do all that is expected of me if I failed to make mention of some of the men who are gone. And yet it need not be with sadness that they are recalled, but rather a joyful note that we lived with them and rejoiced in their labors and successes and appreciated them while living, and are glad of the privilege we had of the companionship and association of many of the founders and builders of this society, for they were men

"Who said not to their Lord as if afraid,
Here is thy talent in a napkin laid,
But labored in their sphere, as men who live
In the delight which work alone can give.
Peace be to them; eternal peace and rest,
And the fulfillment of the great behest.
'Ye have been faithful in a few things,
Over ten cities shall ye rule as kings.'"

Of the fifteen founders of the society I never saw but five, and with only one of these was I intimately acquainted. Dr. Welden F. Dennis I knew but slightly. He was a grandson of Judge Jesse Fell, was born October 1, 1818, as his biographer says, "In an isolated house in a scantily inhabited village and died in the same room at the same house in 1876, on the busiest street of the populous city of Wilkes-Barre." He practiced in Wilkes-Barre but removed for a time to Pittston, at the request of the officers of the Pennsylvania Coal Company, but later returned to Wilkes-Barre, where he practiced till his

death. He was a man of great ingenuity and resourcefulness and much beloved by a large clientele of patients. On one occasion, being in need of an obstetric forceps, he had one forged by a blacksmith in a few moments, which answered his purpose. On another occasion he had a gunsmith prepare a set of cataract needles and eye speculum for operation in a case which was urgent, and for which he could not wait to send to the then inaccessible cities for the necessary instruments.

Dr. George Urquhart was known to many of us in the later years of his life as a kindly, sympathetic, elderly man. He withdrew from the medical society after having served as its Secretary for nine years, and I think lived to regret the step that separated him from his fellows of the medical profession.

There was one man whose name has been often mentioned in our society and at these banquets, and as the ancient Athenians grew tired of hearing Aristides called "The Just", it may be that some who knew him not might feel that we have mentioned too often the name of Edward R. Mayer. He was *facile princeps* among all the good, true, and brilliant men that this society has numbered in its long and worthy roll of membership. I believe he was the prime mover in the founding of this society and that it was largely due to his efforts that it was kept alive in the early years of its existence, though his modesty would never let this fact be known. Born in 1823, he lived until August 16, 1891, toiling in his beloved work till the last. He lived to see many changes in medicine and surgery, and no man among us all, I make no exception, kept more fully abreast of the times or represented in himself more fully all that was best and true in the practice of medicine. The friend and advisor of every young man in the profession, and the model which every young man might be proud to follow. Time will not allow me to give the obituaries of the men I have known of this society, but they are recorded elsewhere and I can only refer to a few of them briefly.

As early as 1868 this society discussed the question of recognizing female practitioners, and while some were opposed, there was a fair number in favor of recognition. On January 10, 1877, Melissa A. Bradley was elected to membership in the

society, and was, I think, the first female physician ever elected to membership in a county medical society in Pennsylvania. She died in July, 1878, and a most beautiful tribute to her memory appears in the minutes of the society.

Among the early members of the society, Drs. Whitney, Bulkeley, Crawford, Ross, Underwood, and possibly others, were army surgeons during the war of the Rebellion. In the minutes of 1863, Drs. Whitney and Bulkeley were excused from a committee because absent in the service of their country.

Dr. J. E. Bulkeley traced his ancestry to Peter Bulkeley, the Puritan, who with his descendants took conspicuous part in the settlement of New England. Born in 1825, graduated at Dickinson College in 1842, and at Jefferson Medical College in 1846, he practiced in Wilkes-Barre to within a few years of his death, which occurred in 1885. He was assistant surgeon in the 4th Pa. Vols. in 1862, and subsequently surgeon. He was on the staff of the Wilkes-Barre City Hospital as consulting physician from its organization till his death.

Dr. J. B. Crawford was another of the early members of this society whom we all knew and honored. He, too, was an army surgeon of repute, and this very fact in the early days after the war gave a physician a certain standing in the community. He practiced several years in Wyoming and then moved to Wilkes-Barre, where he died in 1894 at the age of sixty-six. He was a man of strong friendships, who loved this society and loved his professional brethren, and he was also a good hater whenever he thought wrong had been done. Slow to forgive an injury which he believed unjustly inflicted, he was nevertheless a courteous gentleman, a loveable companion and accomplished physician. He wrote many papers for this society and they all show evidence of scholarly thought and mature judgment.

Who of us who knew him can forget Dr. Isaac E. Ross, for twenty years an honored member of this society. He was the wit, the story teller, the poet of our society. Our banquets were incomplete without a story or speech from Dr. Ross. He could turn any fad of the day to laughter. Some of you remember the Brown-Sequard craze of rejuvenation of old men

by injecting the extract obtained from certain organs of animals. I am sorry I lost a poem he sent me years ago entitled, "The Death of Mary's Little Ram." Dr. Ross was an all round physician, of the kind expected to do everything, and he did many things well. I well remember his service at the City Hospital, when I was resident physician. He took so much interest in the work and gave many valuable points to the young physician. For many years an invalid in the latter part of his life and unable to mingle with his brethren, he still loved the profession, and even in his sad days of suffering he had always a pleasant word, a genial smile and warm grasp of the hand as in his days of prosperity and sunshine.

Who that has ever looked into the genial face of Gideon Underwood and felt the warm grasp of his hand can ever forget him? He, too, was one of our old-time practitioners who knew his duty and did it well; a general practitioner widely known and respected, he was a valuable member of this society and could always be depended upon to take part in our discussions. He talked from practice and not for practice. He, Dr. Mayer and Dr. Crawford were the only members of the society who held the Presidency more than once.

Dr. Reese Davis was pre-eminently a surgeon. A graduate of Hamilton College and of Bellevue Medical College, he settled first in LeRaysville, then practiced a few years in Providence, coming to Wilkes-Barre in 1871, where he remained till his death in 1895, at the age of 58 years. The records of our society from the time of his entrance to it show him to have been one of its most active workers. He was a man who did things and did them well. He soon took first rank as a surgeon in Wilkes-Barre and his reputation extended far beyond his adopted city. I am sure I will be unchallenged in saying that up to the time of his retirement from practice on account of ill health, he was without doubt the chief surgeon in this part of the State. I know that many of you around this board have surpassed him far and away in the number and the variety of your operations, but your opportunities have been greater. He was the first in this part of the State to do an abdominal section

and he had the second case on record in the world of vaginal ovariectomy, as mentioned before. As an operator he was cool and resourceful, but always skillful and accurate. I one time assisted him in doing an ovariectomy in which I was the etherizer and first and second assistant. Think of it, you men who have all the paraphernalia of well equipped hospitals at your service and well trained assistants at your command; think of Dr. Davis doing an abdominal operation in a kitchen up on Meade street, with only one doctor to assist him, with an ironing board as an improvised operating table, and with nothing but tin basins to hold the sponges and instruments! Dr. Guthrie was to have been present as assistant but was detained and did not arrive until the tumor was removed and the operation almost completed. The patient made a rapid recovery without an untoward symptom. When beginning an important operation Dr. Davis announced a rule, which was also the rule of Dr. Washington Atlee, whom he regarded in a measure as his master, that no one should speak during the operation unless spoken to by the operator. A rule I believe that might well be established at all operations.

Dr. Joseph A. Murphy from the time of his advent in Wilkes-Barre to the time of his last illness was one of the most active and successful practitioners of the town. He, too, was a surgeon of no mean repute. He did not operate with the skill and careful attention to details of Dr. Davis, and yet his results were nearly always good. And this I attributed, in part, to his rapidity of operation and the short time that his patients were under ether and the small loss of blood with its attending shock. He was the most rapid operator I ever saw handle the knife, and I think he prided himself upon the quickness with which he could complete an ordinary operation. But to know Dr. Murphy well one should have traveled with him and seen him away from his work, and many of us remember the genial companionship in trips to State Medical Society, American Medical Association, or elsewhere, and one who took a long trip of many weeks in his company can testify that on these occasions he never lost his pleasant smile or allowed a harsh word to pass his lips.

And then that other whole souled companion who was nearer to us in time than any I have mentioned, the warm-hearted Harry Hakes! Old Samuel Burton, author of "Anatomy of Melancholy," said of himself, that he was "by profession a divine, by inclination a physician," so, although we knew Dr. Hakes, by occupation a lawyer, I think he was to the last, by inclination, the physician. And what pleasure he took in our society and in our banquets. Always ready to take part in our discussions, always ready to prepare a paper when called upon. I think he was nowhere more at home than among those he loved of the medical profession. I had the pleasure of sitting beside him at the last medical banquet he ever attended, and I recall his interest in everything going on, an interest tinged, however, with a shade of sadness as he felt it might be the last time he would be with us in annual banquet.

I would like to speak of Dr. Weaver; my roommate of old, my companion and friend of many years. He has so recently gone out from among us that any eulogy of him, of his work in this society, of his life, and of his last days among us, which were beautiful in their courage and strength in meeting the inevitable, would only be a repetition of what is so well known to you all.

As one of old said in his epistle to the Hebrews: "Time would fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Sampson, Jephtha, of David and Samuel and the prophets." So time would fail me to tell of Rogers, Corss, Trimmer, Hileman, Kirwan, Miner, Young, Jones, Shoemaker, Carle, Weiss, Farrel and others who honorably held membership in this society and have gone to their reward.

Of those taken from us in early life, who had mingled with us but a few years, Dr. J. L. Miner, Dr. George Kirwan, of Wilkes-Barre, and Dr. Young, of Nanticoke, gave brilliant promise of success, and each would have continued an ornament of this society had the grim messenger but spared him.

As I once said in jest to you, the living, let me now say in reverence of those who are no more:

These were the days of long ago, they've gone, those friends of mine,
But their memory shines as brightly as the sparkle on the wine;
They've passed beyond the border, to the islands of the Blest,
Where the patients cease from troubling and the doctors are at rest.

There are many living who are well worthy of mention; men who have been part and parcel of this society, who have had much to do with its success, and one of the best to-night lies out yonder in a western town convalescing from a serious operation, and we can all thank God that we shall soon have him again in our midst, rejuvenated and ready to take up his share of work of whatever nature it may be to the welfare and betterment of this society.*

Another member of our society who for some years has not been able to be with us on account of ill health, early after graduation left the practice of medicine to become editor of one of the best daily papers in the State. He has always, however, taken an interest in this society and in all matters pertaining to the health of the city. He has published in our transactions a most interesting history of the early practitioners of the Wyoming Valley, and for many years he compiled the vital statistics for the year for publication in our annual volume of transactions. I am sure you will all join me in regretting that Dr. F. C. Johnson cannot be with us to-night.

Of those who left us and who still labor elsewhere we can recall with pride the gifted Rothrock, our one-time associate, explorer and scientist, later professor of botany in the University of Pennsylvania, then commissioner of forestry; a man always in the front rank in any work in which he might engage; and his no less gifted son, whose papers read before this society were literary gems which are happily preserved in our transactions. The older men remember Dr. Mays, who still practices in Philadelphia; Goldberger, of the Marine Hospital; Tewksberry, still practicing in a neighboring county; Rippard, in Georgia, and Singer, of Stroudsburg, with us to-night, and whom we greet so gladly whenever he gives us a chance.

*Dr. G. W. Guthrie.

PRESENT CONDITIONS.

I know, Mr. Chairman, I am sealing my doom if I talk a minute longer, and yet I feel that I would be recreant to my trust if I failed to express my convictions as to present conditions in the society. I am not a pessimist. I think you will all admit that I have generally worked cheerfully and hopefully with the rest of you and have always been optimistic as to our future. But to-night I believe a warning note should be sounded. At the close of this, our half century of existence, I am compelled to say we are by no means what we ought to be. You have heard me quote from another the decades of man's existence and apply the same to the society:

"At ten a child,
At twenty wild,
At thirty strong if ever;
At forty wise,
At fifty rich,
At sixty good or never."

Is it possible that we at fifty are in the condition of a man who is simply rich and is nothing else, dead to the finer attributes and activities of life and forgetful of the service and duty which he owes to others? But what are we doing in the way of work that should characterize a medical society of one hundred and fifty members. Our Constitution requires that a program shall be prepared and announced at the beginning of the year for the whole year. So far as I know this has not been done for many years. If we cannot do it, then let us abolish it from our written law. We formerly had frequent meetings of the Executive Committee and announcements were made at least one meeting ahead, and the appointment made of persons to open the discussions as well as of the one to read the paper. I am told there has been but one meeting of the Executive Committee during the year and that for the purpose of nominating officers.

We have lots of men in our society who have never read a paper before the society and whose voices have never been heard in discussion.

Young men who have come into the society expecting to find encouragement and nourishment, "young men whose generous hearts are beating high," and they find us warming our hands over the embers of the past; why "in that elder day to be a Roman were greater than to be a king". And in our elder day the preparation of a paper for this society was regarded as an honor as well as a duty. On July 11, 1888, Dr. Weaver introduced the following: "Resolved, That hereafter when a member who has been appointed to read a paper fails to do so, without any explanation to the society, he shall thereafter be debarred from reading a paper until an explanation or apology be made to the society, and that in any event he shall be considered as the last member having an opportunity to read, and, consequently, the last to be called again."

We stand to-night at the beginning of a new era. Shall we go forward or still stand where we are? We have said so often as individuals, with our loved physician poet of New England, "Build thee more stately mansions, oh my soul!" So let us say to the soul of this medical society, "Build thee more stately mansions, oh my soul, as the swift seasons roll".

We have a goodly heritage in the past. Let us be worthy of it. Let us go forward to the future manfully, courageously, hopefully!

"Whatever hath been written shall remain,
Nor be erased nor written o'er again;
The unwritten only still belongs to thee,
Take heed and ponder well what that shall be."





