

AEQUANIMITAS

MASTER OF MEDICINE

My phone rang a few months ago and a Scottish voice stated that he had a serious complaint to make in that I had reflected adversely on the number of editions of his works. I made no mistake in recognizing that Edinburgh burred as the voice of one of the world's most distinguished doctors, William Boyd.¹ After a few pleasantries I enquired about his health and learned that he was currently enduring an attack of herpes zoster in the area of distribution of the greater and smaller occipital nerves which, as everyone knows, are branches of the 1st cervical. Disregarding the pathology, we discussed his physician's recommended treatment, aspirin and alcohol, and agreed that the latter element was more efficacious.

This incident started a train of thought which covers a period of 30 years, the duration of my acquaintance with this great man. I have entitled this piece with a phrase which I gleaned from a speech which he made at a dinner for Lord Horder about 1947. He kept referring to the guest of honour as "Tommy Horder, Master of Medicine". How apt these words are for William Boyd, the doctors' doctor, and the most widely read medical author in the world.

I had, of course, known his reputation at the University of Manitoba, but I had never met him until 1937 when I became a member of a C.M.A. committee which had two functions: to organize the Canadian Cancer Society and to initiate a professional education campaign in cancer. Dr. Boyd was then, and for several years thereafter, Chairman of the Committee on Cancer and a member of the Authorship Committee of the Department of Cancer Control of the C.M.A. The result of the committee's work was the production, in 1938, of the Handbook on Cancer. It was distributed to every Canadian doctor and its contents are still authoritative pronouncements on the nature of malignancies throughout the body. My copy of the Handbook, which I dug out last night, is autographed by members of the Authorship Committee: Roscoe Graham, George S. Young, William Boyd, R. I. Harris, T. C. Routley and C. C. Ross. What a roster of good men!

It is either ironic or an example of poetic justice that the man who had made such contributions to the study of cancer should himself develop a carcinoma of the parotid. The diagnosis was established and a surgical resection was carried out by Dr. R. M. Janes in midsummer of 1948. I remember the year because postoperative irradiation was indicated and, as the late Dr. Gordon Richards was not available, it was decided that Dr. Ralston Paterson of Manchester was the man to consult. William Boyd was therefore one of the earliest patients from abroad who received treatment under Britain's new National Health Service. He told me afterward that the only bill he had received after a month's skilled

care in hospital was for two shillings for a trunk call to London. This detail would appeal to a Scot.

They say that medical speakers can be subdivided into two broad classes, speakers with a message and speakers with slides. Boyd has participated in both forms of oratory, never more effectively than at a meeting in New Orleans where I heard him conclude a talk by showing a picture of a parotid malignancy and saying "That's my parotid. I had cancer and I'm cured!" The effect on the packed audience of American doctors was profound and spontaneous.

My friend has been very canny about permitting publication of his talks which qualify under the "message" variety. We have all been charmed and delighted to listen to his polished and pertinent phrases, but when he is asked for a manuscript for publication he can only be described as effectively evasive. I suspect that he is fundamentally lazy and, to avoid the necessity of further thought, he is determined to get the maximum mileage from his past performance.

I remember an international medical meeting a few years ago and a new friend from India had only one thing on his mind. He wanted to see Professor Boyd so that his invasion of the wilds of Canada would be complete. We went up to the house to see Bill and found him hard at work on a new edition, carefully and painstakingly correcting the manuscript in pen and ink. My Indian friend was satisfied, as I was, that the language which flows so delightfully in his words is not achieved without blood, sweat and tears. Any royalties earned by his writings are earned indeed.

In a review of the 7th edition of "Pathology for the Physician" that appeared in *Medical News* of February 4, 1966, H. G. Smith summarized global opinion very well when he noted "In this edition, as in the past, the author has managed to combine his style of classical descriptive elegance—indeed the word 'inspired' would not be out of place—with modernity."

Consider the man's contribution to medical education. In succession, Head of the Department of Pathology at Manitoba, Toronto and U.B.C., and in his so-called retirement, guest professor for seven years at the University of Alabama in Birmingham, where the winters are milder than they are in this country.

Not connected with his flight from winter was last spring's guest professorship at the Pathology Museum, Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. This constituted the first occasion that such an appointment had been made, and at its conclusion "They had to give me the Fellowship, as I could never have passed the exam."

Such academic eminence would contribute to the stuffing of the shirts of lesser men, but not in this instance. Bill Boyd is received as a dear friend and

as one of the boys in the medical parties which not infrequently follow the scientific sessions at meetings all over the country. I must report that our hero seems to enjoy these gatherings to the full and is among the last to depart.

If he is sufficiently pressed, he will relate the story of the collaborative effort with his village bootmaker to provide him with footgear appropriate to the frontiers of Manitoba. The punch line is delivered as he recalls clumping, hobnails and all, across the marble floor of the Fort Gary Hotel while the orchestra played softly for the tea dance on the afternoon of his arrival at the Winnipeg outpost.

I hope that these revelations will teach him not to molest me at home with his petulant criticisms. Like Osler with his postcards, this man has the

agreeable habit of writing notes to authors whose views he agrees with or, alternatively, to point out their errors. I have a small collection of holograph Boyds which I am sure will be worth money some day.

I admit that this is an unorthodox tribute to the Master of Medicine in our midst, but why wait to contribute a stilted appreciation to the obituary columns?
A.D.K.

REFERENCE

1. Canadian Medical Directory, 1966: Boyd, William; 40 Arjay Cres., Willowdale, Ont. (res.); Edinburgh (Scot.) '08; D. Psy.; M.R.C.P. (Edin.), F.R.C.S.[C], Path; F.R.C.P. (Hon.) (Edin. & Lond.), M.D. (Hon.) (Oslo), D.Sc. (Hon.) (Manitoba), LL.D. (Hon.) (Sask. & Queen's); F.R.S.[C]; Prof. Emerit. (Path) U. of Toronto.

OBITUARIES

DR. ALBERT E. ALLIN

The medical profession at Fort William and the whole of North Western Ontario suffered a grievous loss in the sudden death on November 6, 1966, of Dr. Albert E. Allin, Medical Director of the Provincial Laboratory at Fort William.

Dr. Allin was born at Hampton, Ontario, on May 13, 1906, the son of Frederick T. Allin and Io Europa Ellis. He attended public school at Hampton, then the high school at Bowmanville. He entered Victoria College, Toronto, obtaining his B.A. in Honour Biology in 1929. He obtained his M.D. from the University of Toronto in 1932. He interned at Riverdale Isolation Hospital in Toronto and was resident physician there in 1933-34. He obtained his Diploma in Public Health at the School of Hygiene, University of Toronto, in 1935 and the Hastings Memorial Fellowship of that school in 1935-36. He was Demonstrator in Bacteriology at McGill and Assistant in Bacteriology at Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal in 1937, when he accepted the position of Medical Director of the Provincial Laboratory at Fort William.

Dr. Allin soon made his influence felt in medical circles. He was pathologist for McKellar Hospital from 1937 to 1954 and for St. Joseph's and the Port Arthur General Hospitals from 1937 to 1950. He was Regional Pathologist for the Attorney General's Department from 1943 to 1955. He was certified by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada as a specialist in bacteriology and pathology in 1946.

Dr. Allin was very co-operative with the doctors and hospitals at the Lakehead, and while his interests

naturally settled around the Provincial Laboratory, his spare time was used to supervise and build up the laboratories at McKellar Hospital in Fort William and the St. Joseph's and General Hospitals in Port Arthur. As these hospitals grew and developed, they established their own departments, leaving Dr. Allin more time to assist the hospitals developing in Northwestern Ontario.

Albert Allin was an intense man with an alert, active mind and an unusual memory. He was never satisfied with second best in his laboratory and would follow clues to the limit. This resulted in his doing some **original work**.

Dr. Allin was one of Canada's outstanding naturalists. As a small boy he was introduced to ornithology by the late Dr. Jabez Elliott. He continued this interest throughout his life, and during his college holidays he did some investigating for the Department of Game and Fisheries. He was a member of the Brodie Club (1926) and a founding member of the Toronto Ornithological Club. From his arrival at the Lakehead to his death he was a leading figure in the Thunder Bay Field Naturalists Club. He collected many specimens of birds and flowers of this area for the Museum in Toronto. He was a member of many societies active in nature study. He was one of the few Canadian members of the Wilson Bird Club and of the American Ornithological Union. He was a frequent contributor to scientific and natural history publications. He was a contributing editor of the *Ontario Naturalist* and a regular contributor to *The Loon*, the *Journal of the Minnesota Ornithological Union*, and was instrumental in the organization of joint meetings of this club every winter with the naturalists of Northwestern Ontario.