

THE MEDICAL COLUMN

by Yale Kanter

Assyro-Babylonian Medicine

The sources of Assyro-Babylonian medicine are the cuneiform inscriptions on baked clay tablets. It's main features were the demons at causes of disease, incantations against them as preventative medicine, augury from inspection of the liver, from fetal monstrosities (birth-omens, prognosis from astrological signs, and very crude therapy, often of filthy ingredients. They had, however, many devices of modern civilization, including a code of medical ethics, with regulation of fees.

One of the earliest kings of Babylon was the able ruler Hammurabi (1948BC-1905BC). He drew up a code of laws, the oldest in existence, which, leased on the caste society, covered almost all phases of life. What is of particular interest, are the laws relating to medical practice. It is stated, for example, that "if the doctor shall treat a gentleman and shall open an abscess with a bronze knife and shall preserve the eye of the patient, he shall receive ten shekles of silver. If the patient is a slave, his master shall pay two shekels of silver." That there might be a

account for the unfortunate doctor is shown by the following rule: "if the doctor shall open an abscess with a bronze knife and shall kill the patient or shall destroy the sight of the eye, his hands shall be cut off." In the case of a slave, the penalty was less drastic, "he shall replace the slave with another slave." If the eye of a slave was destroyed as a result of an operation, the operator was to pay the master half the price of the slave.

Reprisals such as these might well have deterred the ambitious surgeon of Babylon, yet there appears to have been a well organized medical profession in those ancient times. It is true that magic entered largely into the treatment, and the list of deciphered remedies are literally interspersed with incantations and charms.

Herodotus reveals that every Babylonian was an amateur physician, as it was the custom to lay the sick in the street so that any passer-by "if they had ever had this disease themselves, or have known of any who had suffered from it, may give him advice . . . and no-one is allowed to pass the sick man in silence." Yet the existence of a medical profession is implied in the code. The physicians were probably of the priestly class, and medical concepts were dominated by primitive magical and religious ideas.

Assyro-Babylonian Medicine Medicine of the Bible

Moses preached, what can be rightly called, preventive medicine. It was preached as a part of his religion. His followers obeyed to save their soul, as well as to protect their bodies. "Defile not your souls by any creeping thing," the Lord told Moses; and Moses repeated this to the Israelites. "If any beast die, he that toucheth the carcass thereof shall be unclean until the evening." Moses knew that animal disease may be passed to man. He knew that contamination may linger in unclean dishes and therefore drinking from them was forbidden. "They shall be dipped in water, and shall be unclean until the evening, and soon afterwards shall be clean."

In the book of Leviticus, there are 43 verses devoted to the diagnosis of Leprosy, and the leper, once recognized, "shall dwell alone, without the camp." His possessions, if contaminated, "shall be burnt with fire."

Cleanliness was demanded of all. Of each seven days, there was one day of rest. The Israelites multiplied and grew strong in the desert.

Like the Egyptians, the Hebrews thought that to dissect the body was to desecrate it. But a little investigation on the corpse of a low character, condemned to be burned—that would hardly be a sin, thought a disciple of Rabbi Ishmall. He dissected away and counted 252 bones, just about 49 more than were present. His figure was unfortunately accepted and quoted for centuries.

In the book of Eclesiasticus it is said, "Honor the physician for the need thou hast of him for the Most High hath created him." Unscientific he may have been, but the physicians protected well the sons of Israel.

Chinese Medicine

In medicine, the Chinese have shown originality and enterprise, although until recent times it has been wholly stationary. To quote one of themselves, Dr. Chin Min Wong (1932): ". . . they have never pursued a single subject in a way calculated to lead them to final success."

For 4000 years they followed the ophorisms of Hoang-Ti (who died around 2600BC). A very involved love of the pulse, and extensive materia medica and a prodigious faith in the efficacy of acupuncture and the mixa were conspicuous features of their medical system.

In Hoang-Ti's *Nei Ching*, the book of medicine, is a statement which is often quoted in support of the contention that the Chinese discovered the circulation of the blood many centuries before Harvey. "All the blood in the body is under control of the heart . . . The blood current flows continuously in a circle and never stops." The statement is more remarkable when one remembers that, owing to religious scruples, the Chinese seldom practiced dissection, and their idea of anatomy and physiology besides being grossly inaccurate were wholly fantastic.

Ancient Medicine of India

The lack of progress is also true of the medicine of ancient India, which, however, attained, in a later period, remarkable skill in surgery, with well written treatises on infant nutrition and other branches.

It is interesting to note that the early Hindus treated fractures with bamboo splints, and performed such operations as Caesarian section, excision of tumors, and lotothomy. The performance of the last mentioned operation was continued through the ages, and was undertaken by native-trained surgeons until recent times. Of particular interest and of very ancient date is the operation of rhinoplasty, which originated in India. It was frequently required, as adulterers were punished by having their noses cut off. The leaf of a tree, cut to the desired shape and size, was used as a pattern, and a piece of skin from the cheek or forehead, fashioned to form the new nose, was sutured in position. Thus were the Hindus the pionsers of modern pastic surgery.

SCM News

The Student Christian Movement would like to take this opportunity to welcome all new students to the campus, and at the same time spread a little information about our organization. It is an international and inter-denominational organization, with branches in most Canadian universities, and also in other countries. Its aim is to promote Christian fellowship among students. We do this by studying together, praying together, working together and playing together.

Like other organizations on this campus, we are now starting our season's activities. The first was an informal supper held in the Women's Common Room of the Arts building on Thursday evening, October 4. New and old members were welcomed by the president, Miss Shirley Powell, and the supper was followed by a lively sing-song. Only a few freshmen turned out, but we hope to arouse more interest in the next few weeks.

The next big event of this year's activities was a weekend camp, which was held at Camp Brunswick, East Chezzetcook, on Oct. 13 and 14. (You don't sleep in a tent, the camp was a large remodelled farmhouse). Activities included study and discussion groups, worship services and recreation.

Other activities which we will be sponsoring during the year will include "open house," a period of discussion open to anyone on the campus, and bible study groups which will be meeting regularly throughout the year. Watch the Gazette and the bulletin boards for further details. Following is this year's executive, who are always willing to talk to anyone interested in SCM. We extend a special invitation to freshmen and freshettes.

Pres.—Shirley Powell
Vice-Pres.—John Phillips
Sec.—Ernestine Pace
Treas.—Murray Davis

"A Humorous Article of 400 Words or More"

by PETER OUTHIT

My Uncle Ernest used to tell me anybody can write about anything if they have a 20-20 eyesight and lots of time. And he was right, on account of I missed seeing my assignments (see above) on the editor's notice board, until a few minutes ago, and the deadline is fast approaching. In the urgency of the moment I naturally turned to the renowned Dal Campus in search for humor. Every freshman comes to college knowing that life is a real ball and in fact just a

WALLACE BROS.

Home of
Quality
Shoes

COLLEGE STUDENTS
WELCOME

Wallace
BROS.
BETTER GRADE FOOTWEAR

Thought of The Week—

SCIENTIFIC RELIGION

"When primitive tribes planted the seed knowing that life depended on the harvest, they went through all sorts of religious ceremonies to assure a good crop. But if they did not act in harmony with the nature of the seed and fulfill the conditions of growth and ripening, there could be no escape from a poor harvest.

"The same is true in regard to health. According to the laws of physical health, a patient suffering from diseased lungs, let us say, will not be healed if he is kept in a dark, damp, and ill-ventilated dwelling, and without proper nourishment, regardless of what ceremonies the medicine man performs or what sacrifices his friends make. The inevitability from which there is no escape by flattery or bribery or indulgence in what grips the imagination of the present-day generation is a way that no picture of hell ever could."

["Religion for Today"—A. J. W. Myers.]

huge joke. My brief experience in English, French, Latin and other classrooms has prompted a vague feeling that life here may not be as funny as all that, but in my search, I didn't have time to get off the campus. As a matter of fact, I'm glad I didn't because I think I proved my point.

First I rushed to the football field where I interviewed Coach Al (Chuckles) Thomas immediately after the Dal-Greenwood game, finding him doubled up with mirth in the locker room. I asked him where I could find humor. He grinned cheerfully and said, "Just look about you." I did, and I left.

This was a pretty good start, and confidently I set out for the canteen. I passed Prof. Bennet en route smiling happily to himself, probably at the prospect of marking the week's themes. Eventually I entered the canteen, that monument to human enterprise where humor seemed to have gone underground. Bleary-eyed law men set over cold cups of coffee wondering what had happened to their supposedly air-tight cases; "those Shirreff Hall girls" gathered in shirreffous groups and transmitted highly secret information, and the odd student stared unseeing at his page as he put up a facade of studying. Here were undergrads discussing the football situation and football players discussing homework.

The common room, on the other hand, had a quiet, studious atmosphere. In one far corner five grim undergrads played a strained and uneasy game of

nines; students sprawled in various attitudes over the chairs around the room, some excitedly scanning textbooks, some asleep, and some buried in newspapers (the Gazette of course, but I would rather be buried in a thicker newspaper), and a pall of smoke hung over all, as if indicative of mute tragedy.

I hustled over to Shirreff Hall, and drew a blank. All I could find was an engineer jammed in an upper storey window sans transitus (caught without his transit), engineering his way either in or out. This wasn't funny. It could happen to you.

I decided to check back in at the Gazette office. Upon re-entering the building, I was accosted somewhat listlessly in the outer hall by an unhappy Commerce man who attempted unenthusiastically to force Saint F.X. train trip tickets on me. I asked him if he had bought his yet, and his reply was, "Hell, no, I haven't got five bucks."

Which seemed to be an attitude prevalent among Juniors, and, for that matter, Seniors and Freshmen.

In the Gazette office all was confusion; Dave Peel was threatening some poor subordinate, George Travis pounded frustratedly at his typewriter and Murray Fraser dug at the first pile of libel suits . . .

Humor at Dalhousie? Nuts!

The point being that the only person on the campus with a sense of humor is the editor, for choosing this article (see title).



DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

Founded 1818

Offers exceptional opportunities for students, in Arts, Science and the professions. Entrance scholarships available on the basis of educational attainments. Special emphasis on student health and a well-regulated programme of athletics and recreation.

Courses Leading to Degrees in:
Arts, Science, Commerce, Law, Medicine, Dentistry, Music, Education, Nursing Science.

Courses Leading to Diplomas in:
Engineering, Education, Music, Nursing, (Public Health, Teaching and Administration).

Honour Courses in Many Fields
The Faculty of Graduate Studies offers courses leading to the degrees of M.A., M.Sc., L.L.M., and Ph.D., in Biological Sciences.

Teaching Fellowships
A number of Teaching Fellowships of value of \$450 and \$750 per annum are available in the Faculty of Graduate studies.

EXCELLENT RESIDENCE ACCOMMODATION FOR WOMEN STUDENTS

For full particulars

write

THE REGISTRAR — DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY
HALIFAX, N. S.

McCurdy PRINTING CO. LTD.

College and Student Printing

54 ARGYLE STREET

PHONE 3-7606

Jack Mitchell

139 SPRING GARDEN ROAD

Four Barbers at your Service