

**CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS AT THE JOINT MEETING OF THE  
NATIONAL DENTAL ASSOCIATION AND THE INTER-  
STATE ASSOCIATION OF ANESTHETISTS AT  
LOUISVILLE, KY., JULY 27, 1916.**

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**T**HIS is truly an auspicious occasion and one teeming with great opportunities for the future. This is the first time in history that two first-class organizations representing the medical and dental professions have met on equal terms to discuss vital subjects of common interest. This is the moment which leading thinkers of both professions have eagerly looked forward and in this common meeting their ideals so fondly cherished are consummated.

It is particularly fitting that this reunion occur in the discussion of the subject of anesthesia. No greater gift has been given to humanity than the wonderful endowment of loss of sensibility to pain. It seems hardly possible to younger men in the profession that the first general anesthetic, nitrous oxid, was administered only seventy-two years ago. In the days of our grandfathers, cracked ice, Indian hemp, opium, and alcohol were the agents used to diminish the agony of the suffering. In these days of modern surgical procedures by the aid of trained anesthetists and by the employment of anesthetics best suited to the case, operations can be performed which were not dreamed of seventy-five years ago.

As a coincident to this common meeting it is an interesting fact that dentists and physicians have shared equally in the discovery and early development of anesthesia. In Hartford, Connecticut, a tablet was erected on the wall of the building now occupying the site of the building in which Dr. Horace Wells' office was situated. The tablet bears the following inscription:

"ON THIS SPOT HORACE WELLS,  
DECEMBER 11, 1844, SUBMITTED TO  
A SURGICAL OPERATION, WHEREBY  
HE DISCOVERED, DEMONSTRATED  
AND PROCLAIMED THE INESTIMABLE  
BENEFITS OF ANESTHESIA."

There is also a monument in Hartford to Wells erected by the State of Connecticut and the City of Hartford. The citizens of Boston erected a marble monument to Morton in Mount Auburn Cemetery with the following inscription: "WILLIAM THOMAS GREEN MORTON, INVENTOR AND REVEALOR OF ANESTHETIC INHALATION BEFORE WHOM IN ALL TIME SURGERY WAS AGONY, BY WHOM PAIN IN SURGERY WAS AVERTED AND ANNULLED SINCE WHOM SCIENCE HAS CONTROL OF PAIN."

In the present day, members of both professions are equally prominent in the administration and research work connected with this great subject.

Reading from Constitution of the Interstate Association of Anesthetists:

"The objects of this Association shall be to advance the science and practice of anesthesia and analgesia; to promote the teaching thereof and to conserve the interests of anesthetists."

Its members are composed of licensed practitioners of medicine and dentistry interested in anesthesia and analgesia.

It has been asked what advantages would the general practitioners of dentistry derive from being a member of this society?

It becomes the unwritten obligation of every individual entering a profession to

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strive to make that profession better for his presence. The watch word of today is service. Men more clearly realize the truth of the old saying,

“What I kept, I lost;  
What I spent I had;  
What I gave, I have.”

One of the objects of this Association is to establish the teaching of anesthesia and analgesia in the curricula of all medical and dental colleges. The great majority of graduates enter the practice of their profession with no thought of advancing the methods or educational requirements of their professional schools. They daily witness shortcomings in the education of future associates without even suggesting better plans or endorsing those men who are working for better conditions. The status of a profession is not in the ideals of that profession but in the general average of its members. One of the greatest pieces of service which the individual dentist can render it to obtain membership in this organization and insist that the education of dental and medical students in anesthesia be improved. Until all professional schools are run for the benefit of humanity and not for private gain, supervision of them is not only necessary but should be considered by each individual as his professional obligation.

Another opportunity for the general practitioner to advance the standards of his profession is to ally himself with a body of men which is striving to guide the legislators in the various states to pass laws which will truly serve the medical and dental professions as well as the general public. One of the most reprehensible propagandas against dental anesthetists occurred only last year in New York State. The bill as it entered the New York legislature was known as “A Bill to Regulate the Administration of General Anesthetics by Persons other than Licensed and Registered Physicians.” The following is the bill:

“The administration by any process of

any substance, liquid or gas, commonly called a general anesthetic, for the purpose of producing unconsciousness, shall constitute the practice of medicine and surgery, even if undertaken in the presence of and by order of a licensed and registered physician, surgeon or dentist, with the following exceptions:

“Sec. 1. A licensed and registered dentist may administer any general anesthetic for any operation which such a dentist can lawfully perform, but not for any operation which a dentist cannot lawfully perform, even if a licensed physician is present and directs such dentist to administer such general anesthetic, except as hereinafter provided.

“Sec. 2. In any case of sudden severe illness or sickness in which the licensed physician or surgeon in attendance upon the patient conscientiously believes that the delay necessary to obtain the services of another licensed physician to administer a general anesthetic, will endanger the life or health of the patient, that attending physician or surgeon may employ any reliable person to administer such general anesthetic in his presence and directly under his instructions, but not in his absence. The employment in this manner of any person other than a licensed and registered physician to administer any general anesthetic must be strictly limited to emergencies in which the services as anesthetist of a licensed and registred physician cannot be quickly and easily obtained, and must not be a regular or habitual practice.

Nothing contained in this statute shall be construed to prohibit necessary practical instruction in the administration of general anesthetics being given to registered medical students by licensed physicians or to registered dental students by licensed dentists or licensed physicians; always provided that while giving such instruction, the instructor devotes his entire attention to teaching and neither operates or does any medical surgical or dental work unconnected with

the administration of a general anesthetic."

Commenting on this bill the editor of the Anesthesia Supplement of the American Journal of Surgery writes: "The Editor of the Supplement submits that this statute if passed as printed will not accomplish its purpose, but will involve dental and surgical anesthetists in a maze of difficulties. It is an entirely misguided and reprehensible propaganda.

"While the SUPPLEMENT is making every effort to abolish the evils involved in the administration of anesthetics by non-medical anesthetists, it cannot subscribe to the limitations this statute intends to place on the dental anesthetist, and it is hoped that dental associations in New York will give this matter their immediate attention.

"This effort to differentiate the respective prerogatives of dental and surgical anesthetists is responsible and in direct contravention to the spirit of amalgamating the interests of both professions, which is leavening the American professions of medicine and dentistry.

"Section 2 of this statute simply leaves a loophole for future violations of the law; while the final paragraph shows how absurd a propaganda of reform may become under the lash of misguided enthusiasm. This section if strictly interpreted and enforced would utterly abolish dental anesthesia clinics as they have been held for years in connection with state and national dental association meetings.

"Moreover, it would imperil the future of analgesia, as a technic of pain-alleviation, in which the surgeon or dentist both administers the anesthetic and operates, and teaches."

Thru its official Journal the Association prints the papers presented at its various meetings and is enabled to carry out its policies for the advancement of anesthesia. This association was able to

halt the legislation on this bill and to secure the substitution of another bill which placed the medical and dental anesthetist on equal footing.

One of the greatest advantages of this common meeting to the individual dentist is that it gives him an opportunity to learn improved methods and to obtain latest information on the subject of anesthesia. The average medical or dental student is not prepared to pass a fair examination from the knowledge of anesthesia which he acquires during his college course. The medical student's knowledge is obtained by giving anesthetics in his internship. The dental student memorizes sufficient answers to pass the state board. That this information necessary to administer scientifically an anesthetic can be obtained is evidenced by physicians and dentists of international reputation present here today who have educated themselves in this science. One of the greatest evidences of advancement in dentistry is the change of attitude regarding reading and studying. Laws which were supposed to be fundamental have changed until it is necessary to really study to keep within reach of these present day investigations. In this program of today methods never before written, illustrations never before shown in any textbook will be presented to you by the speakers who are to follow.

The present high standards demanded by physicians and dentists demand the most efficient organization and co-operation to culminate its purpose. We must remember that each one of our professions is but a part of the vast mosaic of biology. We must sacrifice personal feelings and professional prejudices to the great cause of advancement in the science of life. Only by the aid of each individual can these things be accomplished and may each be sufficiently recompensed by the privilege of doing his part.