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THE PHYSICIAN AS PHILOSOPHER AND CITIZEN

Address of Cyrus Eaton
Canadian-Born Chairman of the Board
Steep Rock Iron Mines Limited
and
Chesapeake and Ohio Railway
At 50th Annual Banquet of
Hippocratic Society
University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada
Friday, January 13, 1961

(Biographical Information on Cyrus Eaton is Attached)

Summary of Address of Cyrus Eaton
At 50th Annual Banquet of Hippocratic Society
University of Western Ontario, London, Canada
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Cyrus Eaton today challenged the physicians to save mankind from nuclear annihilation.

The Canadian-born American industrialist made this proposal to the medical profession in a major address at the 50th Annual Banquet of the 80-year-old Hippocratic Society of the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario, Canada.

Mr. Eaton noted that "the tremendous scientific advances of the last 20 years have, for the first time in history, placed in mankind's hands the power to wipe itself out almost instantaneously, and simultaneously to obliterate every other form of life on earth."

"Can man be prevented from misusing nuclear fission and fusion and missiles?" Mr. Eaton asked. "After the glorious triumphs of science and medicine, is the human race going to destroy itself by the hydrogen bomb?"

Mr. Eaton pointed out that "The so-called pure scientists, who possess the full knowledge of the atom and its awful capacity for misuse, have not succeeded in persuading the public of the mortal peril in which we live.

"Nor have the preachers, who appeal to the noblest motives of their congregations, been able to slow the feverish preparations for nuclear conflict that will annihilate countless millions of defenseless women and children," he added.

Mr. Eaton suggested that "the crusade for use of man's new control of the forces of nature for the common good instead of universal destruction" ought to become the "greatest outside obligation of the physicians."

"I suggest this is a duty suited to the physicians," Mr. Eaton asserted, "because of the unique position of trust and respect they occupy in the communities where they live and practice. They are recognized humanitarians and they have the power to influence public opinion as no one else can.

"Mankind may have a chance if the medical profession will take up this greatest challenge in history," Mr. Eaton concluded.

(Full text of Mr. Eaton's Address is attached)

May I begin by offering my heartfelt congratulations to the eighty-year old Hippocratic Society on the occasion of its Fiftieth Annual Banquet.

My first visits to London, Ontario, were made sixty years ago, when I came here occasionally to enjoy the hospitality of the homes of some of my fellow students in Toronto. This gave me an opportunity to develop an early respect for the substantial quality of your city and its institutions.

Over the years I have had occasion to keep in touch with the progress of both the community and its great University. Among my valued friends have been a number of the able leaders that London has given to the industry and government of the Province of Ontario.

An annual event to which I always used to look eagerly forward was a week end visit here with the late Thomas E. Wilson, at the farm where he was born on the outskirts of the city. Tom took as much interest and pride in maintaining the old family place as he did in building his Wilson packing company up into one of the world's most noted business concerns. Although his headquarters were in Chicago, his heart never left London and the farm here. The achievement for which he will probably be best remembered, the fostering of 4-H work among the farm children of North America, certainly owed its inspiration to his own boyhood background in agriculture.

One of my strongest bonds with London comes from enduring friendship with Sherwood Fox, the eminent classical scholar who headed this University with such distinction. As a farmer, I have been familiar with the brilliant career of President Hall, and have watched with admiration as he widened his scope from

initial preoccupation with agriculture to include concern for the health and welfare of humanity. Both as Dean of Medicine and as President of the University of Western Ontario, I know Dr. Hall has given great impetus to the growth and importance of your Medical School. Dr. Collip, the present Dean of Medicine, and his faculty are held in the highest esteem by fellow physicians on both sides of the border.

The physician has played a telling role in my life, not only in contributing to my physical well-being, but also in influencing my conclusions on the great questions that affect mankind. It is for this reason that I was particularly pleased to accept the cordial invitation to address tonight's meeting. I welcome the opportunity to pay tribute to the medical profession.

Canadian Physicians Who Have Influenced Me

Let me first mention a few of the Canadian-born doctors whose influence I have especially felt. My father was ushered into the world, and my wife is a relative of, Dr. Charles Tupper, better known later as Sir Charles Tupper, one of the fathers of Confederation and Prime Minister of Canada. As a student in Toronto, I had the good fortune to enjoy the friendship of Dr., later Col., Clarence Starr, Chief of Staff of the University of Toronto Medical School.

When I went to Cleveland at the turn of the century, I was lucky to find almost immediate employment with the original John D. Rockefeller. Although he was everywhere enviously referred to as the richest man in the world, Mr. Rockefeller was for a time obliged to pay more attention to the preservation of his health than to the augmentation of his fortune.

At the age of about sixty, Mr. Rockefeller was stricken with severe illnesses. A half dozen of the world's leading specialists were summoned to study



his case. Being amply able to meet his medical bills promptly, he was naturally looked upon as a desirable patient, but the distinguished practitioners found themselves forced to take a somewhat gloomy view of the prospects for the famous man of wealth. At this point, the Canadian-born and educated doctor, Hamilton Biggar, was called in. He outlined a straightforward program for living to the age of 100. Dr. Biggar advised Mr. Rockefeller to adopt wise eating habits, spend as much time outdoors as possible, avoid severe emotional strain and give himself the advantages of a poor man's home. The rest of the story is now history. Mr. Rockefeller dismissed the specialists, followed Dr. Biggar's advice and missed the century-mark by only a small margin.

A Common Sense Formula for Living

In the 1920's, at a much younger age, I found my own health threatened. The extreme pressure of work, coupled with the anxieties and competitions of big business, were playing havoc with me. Much to my chagrin, the great specialist whom I consulted prescribed twelve months of complete rest as the only possible cure. I went with my woes to my great good friend John Phillips, again a Canadian-born and educated physician. He was one of the founders of the Cleveland Clinic, and the world lost a truly great doctor when his career was cut short by the Clinic explosion and fire.

Dr. Phillips made a careful study of my characteristics, and offered me a common sense formula for living that enabled me to go on working twice as hard, seven days a week, while enjoying life to the full. Careless diet was his first target. In addition to plain but palatable food, he recommended regular rest and simple recreations, with stress on fresh air. He was at particular pains to point

out that the recreations we choose affect our lives equally with our work. It did not take me long to decide on the wisdom of giving up the excitement of bridge for the great books and the competitive strain of golf for the quiet joys of farming, bird watching and other relaxing outdoor pleasures.

So far I have been discussing physicians mainly as physicians. Now I should like to turn to some of them who have profoundly influenced me in the realm of the mind. At the top of the list I would certainly place a distinguished Canadian, Sir William Osler, who excelled not alone in his chosen profession, but likewise as philosopher, essayist and historian.

The Physician Can Also Serve Society as Philosopher and Citizen

I know that the modern scientific doctor is thoroughly trained in the disciplines that deal with the human body. None of you needs any advice from me on that subject and, in any case, I would be incapable of giving it. I think I can counsel you a little, though, on your activities outside of what is strictly your vocation. You have a great deal to give to society by serving as philosopher and citizen, as well as physician, in the tradition of Osler and others of his school.

I should like to urge everyone to read some of Osler's non-medical writings, especially three of his speeches that have deeply affected my conclusions on life and on man's place in society and the universe. They are his Harvard address on "Science and Immortality," his Yale address on "A Way of Life," and his Edinburgh address on "Man's Redemption of Man." Like me, you may be led by a reference of Osler's to turn to John Tyndall's Belfast Address, on his inauguration as president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. I have read and re-read the Tyndall Address, and regard it as one of the best statements that has

ever been made on the scientific intellect. Tyndall, in turn, may send you in search of Lange's History of Materialism, a monumental philosophical work that has made a lasting impression on me.

From Osler, Tyndall and Lange, I gained a desire to make a more detailed study of Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine, from whom your Society takes its name; his master, Democritus; Empedocles, another great pupil of Democritus; and Epicurus and Lucretius, two of his later followers.

Freeing Mankind from Myths and Illusion

More than two thousand years ago, these philosophers set themselves the courageous and difficult task of freeing mankind from the myths and illusions which are so easy to accept and so difficult to remove from the path of scientific progress. Hippocrates, a man of the highest integrity and the purest morality, matched skill in science with zeal in opposing the superstitions that hold disease as the product of demons and see the cure in supernatural intervention.

By pure reason, and without facilities for observation and experiment, Democritus and Empedocles came close to elucidating the origin and structure of matter, whose secrets our advanced nuclear scientists of the Twentieth Century are only now gradually narrowing to the final point. This same pioneering pair thought through much of the theory of evolution and natural selection, which Darwin demonstrated and Huxley expounded in the modern scientific manner barely a century ago. Huxley's surpassing ability as essayist and lecturer, as well as surgeon-scientist and philosopher, can be credited with accomplishing more than the work of anyone else in the English-speaking world to destroy the buttresses of superstition and to establish the importance of the scientific viewpoint.



That the mind of mankind can stand still is demonstrated by the long ages that passed between the postulations of Democritus and Empedocles and their modern scientific proofs. The frailty of the human mind, the weakness of the body and the sluggishness of the spirit all too often combine to persuade man to accept superficial explanations of life and to follow the course that calls for the least use of his intellect and energies. Superstition still persists, even in this age of scientific enlightenment, as was discovered when a public figure of the prominence of William Jennings Bryan, three times the nominee of his party for the Presidency of the United States, made himself the self-appointed prosecutor of the school teacher Scopes for teaching his classes the theory of evolution in the 1920's.

Physician-Authors Make Lasting Contributions to Literature

There are many others among the authors I have read with delight and profit whose names are household words to you. I cannot resist naming two or three more of my favorite physician-authors. Pasteur made lasting contributions to literature while revolutionizing chemical and biological science and surgical practice. von Helmholtz laid claim to profundity in his writings on philosophy as well as on science and medicine. The wit of Oliver Wendell Holmes is recognized as having done as much to relieve the austerity of new England as his medical practice did to alleviate illness and improve health.

I hope I have convinced you that I derive solid satisfaction from reading the doctors and the scientists. I also hope that many of you will learn to look to books as sources of entertainment and consolation, and not solely for information and education. Poetry, history, philosophy, all make great companions. If you need this layman's urging reinforced by a member of your own profession, consult Osler's



injunction to let no day pass without contact with the world's best literature.

As a businessman, I should like to see the physicians become more active as directors of banks, railroads and industrial corporations. The doctor's scientific outlook and knowledge of human nature give him a fresh viewpoint that can be of inestimable benefit to the business organization with which he becomes associated. A bank president of my acquaintance told me that his doctor-director was the most valuable member of the board because his broad acquaintance and instinctive ability to appraise character made him a prime judge of would-be borrowers.

The Part Played by the Scientists and Physicians at Pugwash

The scientists and the physicians have, as you probably know, been playing a prominent part in the Pugwash Conferences. Some of these gatherings bring scientists together from the major nations to exchange ideas on disarmament in the nuclear age. Other meetings are held at Pugwash to enable college presidents and deans and other scholars representing a wide variety of disciplines to reawaken one another's intellectual powers. The scientists become philosophers and the philosophers scientists. The goal is to preserve and strengthen all that is best in religion, art, literature and music, not only to add to the happiness of life, but also to encourage the sense of brotherhood that was exemplified by the Good Samaritan. Race, creed and color know no differences at Pugwash.

My lifelong studies of science and philosophy, under the inspiration of the great physicians I have enumerated, provided much of the impetus for the Pugwash movement. I have been particularly happy to collaborate with such men as the grandsons of Darwin and Huxley in the work at Pugwash. The present Sir Charles Darwin and Sir Julian Huxley are also both frequent visitors in my home.



Sir Julian claims not only Thomas Huxley for an ancestor, but also the Matthew Arnold family, a rare combination of science and the humanities.

This is a time of acute crisis in the world. Osler described the spirit of hatred and bitterness that prevailed everywhere in Great Britain against the Germans, at the end of World War I, as a paroxysm of delirium. Throughout the United States, and to some extent in Canada, public opinion is today animated with this same fear and hatred of communism, particularly as exemplified by the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. Powerful minds and exceptional courage are required to make reason and common sense prevail. The dangers of this latter-day paroxysm of delirium far outstrip its earlier manifestations.

The tremendous scientific advances of the past twenty years have, for the first time in history, placed in mankind's hands the power to wipe itself out almost instantaneously and simultaneously to obliterate every other form of life on earth. Can man be prevented from misusing nuclear fission and fusion and missiles? After the glorious triumphs of science and medicine, is the human race going to destroy itself by the hydrogen bomb?

Can the Physicians Save Mankind from Nuclear Annihilation?

Here is where I believe the greatest outside obligation and opportunity of the physicians lie. The so-called pure scientists, who possess the full knowledge of the atom and its awful capacity for misuse, have not succeeded in persuading the public of the mortal peril in which we live. Nor have the preachers, who appeal to the noblest motives of their congregations, been able to slow the feverish preparations for nuclear conflict that will annihilate countless millions of defenseless women and children. Hopefully the physicians will take up the crusade for use of man's new

control of the forces of nature for the common good instead of universal destruction.

I suggest this is a duty suited to the physicians because of the unique position of trust and respect that they occupy in the communities where they live and practice. They are recognized humanitarians, and they have the power to influence public opinion as no one else can. Mankind may have a chance if the medical profession will take up this greatest challenge in history.

