

DR. HARRY HYLAND KERR
1742 N STREET

file in 1899 folder

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Ans.

WASHINGTON, D. C., June 21st 1920 191

Dr Harvey Cushing
721 Huntington Ave.,
Boston,
Mass.

My dear Colonel:-

I am sorry to say that the only Osler letters that I have are a few short notes, congratulating me on some of my published work from time to time. You know the type of letter he used to send, they are very brief and are of no interest to others, but mean so much to the recipient. A word of appreciation from Sir William was like a decoration to a soldier, and I always used to marvel that he would remember to send such a word. With the tremendous amount that he accomplished, he never forgot to encourage the youngsters that he was interested in.

Sir William was my father's best man at his wedding, and a life-long friend to all our family. It was he who advised my father to send me to McGill to study medicine. I had not been a very promising student at school, and when the time came for me to begin the study of medicine the question of where I should go came up one night when he was dining with us. Johns Hopkins meant four more years of college for my B.A. before I started medicine, and Sir William told my father that if he wanted to make a workaday surgeon out of me, rather than a teacher or laboratory investigator, he better send me to McGill.

I went off to Montreal, the first time away from home, and spent two weeks living in a boarding house while I stood my matriculation examinations. Sir William delivered the opening lecture that year. ON the morning of the opening lecture I received an invitation to breakfast from Dr Shepherd whom I had not met. I presented myself at his door at eight-thirty, and you can imagine my delight when I was met by Sir William who put his arm across my shoulder and led me into the dining room. It was just this little kindness to lonely youths in strange places that endeared him so much to all his fellow men.

I will never cease to be grateful to you for giving me the opportunity of getting to England and seeing Sir William last year.

I am quite busy both in my private work and still spend two days a week at Walter Reed. The work there is perhaps more interesting than ever as the cases we receive now are the unsolved problems from other hospitals. I wish you would tell me how to cure the painful peripheral nerve lesions. I have not been able to get the results Dean Lewis claims with the injections of alcohol nor has sympathectomy combined with neurolysis succeeded. We hope to begin a detailed study of our several hundred cases soon, but the continued admissions and reduced personnel on our service gives us too little time. What is the best way to make such an investigation? I have thought of a huge chart entering the details of each case in it's proper column.

I was very much flattered on being elected a member of the Neuro-Surgical Society. I look forward to it's meetings with great anticipation. I hope that the meetings will be clinical with informal

Dr Kerr graduated from McGill in 1904.

Address to his girl 1899

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discussion. I really believe one gets more by visiting clinics than by listening to papers at large meetings. You always pick up a lot of points for your own work when you are the visitor and there is no better stimulant than to know that you have to entertain a number of men at your own clinic.

How late into the summer will you be working at the Brigham Hospital? I am very anxious to visit your clinic and to see you again and now that my hospital services are over I might be able to get away.

Very sincerely yours,

Harry Kerr