

Solidarity*

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Dr. Brodie, Honored Guests and Fellow Alumni:

Today we gather for our second reunion meeting. I find — and I am certain that all of you share my feeling — the idea and fact of reunion to be most comforting, indeed exhilarating. For reunion means the coming together again of those who have for a time, lived and worked in the same place or for the same purpose, but who have gone their separate ways. Reunion signifies, among other things, the spirit of friendship, cooperation, unity, the interchange of views and experiences, the settlement of differences caused perhaps by too long a separation, too long an isolation within one's own small and narrow world. This second reunion has an additional import; it coincides with the golden anniversary of the foundation of the American Society of Orthodontists, marking the inauguration of the science, art, and practice of orthodontics as a specialization. Surely such an occasion should stir in all our hearts a great surge of satisfaction, of genuine pride in a scientific and professional achievement to which we all contributed in various ways. Sometimes we may forget — in our entirely proper concern with our present progress — the contributions made by sagacity and inventiveness of the generation gone before and their really remarkable leaders. So I want, in this moment of welcoming you, to do honor to those responsible for the foundation of our present

success by recalling in general and brief terms the high points of the history of orthodontics as a serious science. That history reveals the difficulties, pains and conflicts through which we had to pass in order to reach our current strength and meaning, a strength and meaning which give us much hope for the accomplishments of the future.

Although we gather here as graduates of a great university, none of us should ever ignore the primary fundamental work done throughout the first quarter of this century by the proprietary schools even with their individual, empirical and mechanical emphasis. Let us be tolerant. The leaders of those schools had been ignored to the point where they regarded themselves as having, to all intents and purposes, been dismissed or driven out by the universities, as was the case in Dr. Angle's experience. They had to work alone and without the facilities, resources, directions and restraints provided by the university world and, on the whole, they worked admirably for the development of our profession. Remember, they had to work simply, I might say ruggedly, as individual and individual groups. Clearly this individualism had its natural advantages in freshness and independence of thought and action respecting our problems and procedures. Yet it also had its enormous disadvantages as shown in the bitter conflict of ideas and in the personal animosities that grew up between individuals and individual groups, conflicts detrimental to progress. The result of these deteriorative conflicts was vividly displayed at the meeting of the Chicago Dental Society, before the

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Orthodontic Section in the fall of 1929. At that meeting, accumulated tensions burst out in full fury on the floor of the session, and intelligent professional men resorted to petty and destructive criticism. This is an old and unpleasant story now and I do not care to elaborate upon it. I should like only to point out its significance.

However regrettable, these and other circumstances made it increasingly apparent that orthodontics and orthodontic education needed to be absorbed into the universities, where the science and practice of orthodontics would find their right relationships to other arts and sciences and where there could be exercised an over-all control of the warfare among the orthodontic sects. It was to be expected that the universities themselves would have difficulties in assuming the new responsibility. For one thing, the proprietary schools had but a single objective, namely to train practitioners; as a result, there were no prepared teachers. For another, orthodontics had not attained a degree of stability sufficient to allow the formulation of a proper course of training. The universities, therefore, in the face of the demands of our profession, were still in a hesitant, tentative and experimental stage. Actually, at first, they did precisely the same kind of thing as the old proprietary schools: they concentrated on the training of practitioners, merely giving the course a university flavor. Right from the very beginning at Illinois, however, the course was developed with a triple objective. It proposed — and it has wonderfully fulfilled its intentions — to train teachers and researchers as well as practitioners. Certainly this threefold design was a forward step, as is evidenced by the fact that other universities have adopted essentially the same program. The Illinois program to its lasting credit, led the way out of the weak-

ness and confusion. And there are now flourishing seven major university schools of orthodontics headed by Illinois graduates. Further, never in the history of orthodontics has there been reported such an abundance of research findings.

Despite the original difficulties of drawing orthodontic education into the universities, the importance of the university organization with its academic objectivity and authority in dealing with the works of individual specialists, cannot be over-emphasized. It is possible to think of a university as involved solely with universal knowledge, but in our time university growth has coincided with the growth of specialization. Every science and art demands a distinct and highly specialized education. As one of the most distinguished thinkers of our time has pointed out, education according to the democratic design requires, "the formation of a much larger and more diversified mass of outstanding citizens of all ranks in the nation." Accordingly, it is right that, "the arts and sciences, even those which concern the management of common life and the application of the human mind to matters of practical utility, should be embraced by the typical modern university." In a true university, the arts and sciences are arranged and organized into a plan or architecture of knowledge — and even the most practical and mechanical kind of work may there be put into proper perspective. Thus orthodontics, whether as art, science, or technique, within the university design is not narrowly confined to its own circle or domain; instead its connections can be more readily discerned, not only with the other arts and sciences, but also with man himself and with human life.

At the same time, I cannot help observing that there may be, in the wider domain of the university, some

failure to recognize the intrinsic merits of individual work, some tendency to nurture the academic or theoretical approach, at the expense of the practical. We can never be grateful enough to those individual practitioners of orthodontics who worked alone and wisely without benefit of university protection. Perhaps, from the university view, they may have accomplished only small or limited things or dealt only with small or limited problems. Still it was their small and single endeavours which set the founding stones of the larger works with which we are now engaged. The small efforts must never be neglected in favor of the big dynamic problems. A much admired etiological factor may very well have as its core or basis an obscure local factor.

There is in every field of action a constant conflict between the theoretical or academic and the practical levels. The academic theorist sometimes, in his anxiety for change and development, becomes in a measure a faddist, so preoccupied with a new and fascinating theory which he or someone else has generated that he sadly ignores or despises what we already know to be true. He takes new ways without benefit of the hard-won evidence of practical experience. The practical performer on the other hand, may be so certain that he knows his business through and through as to be contemptuous of the thought of the theorist or researcher who could really save him from becoming static in the daily, regular exercise of his science. But this conflict need not exist. The university approach and the practical, personal approach, each has its own virtues and can thrive in the same place and in the same society. We have the magnificent advantages of university work and university structures today. These advantages should be seized.

This is not to say that the personal or individual approach is outlived. Still, if the individual approach persists in excess, there will be a retarding of the dynamics of progress. The individualists in every field, in every profession, need to make honest, humble submissions to the wisdom and order of a more comprehensive guidance, knowledge and authority. They cannot be allowed to ride herd.

Some of our fellow workers in orthodontics are absent from this reunion meeting. We all regret their absence. But let us trust that there is none among them who feels that he can dispense with the real advantages that our reunion meeting provides.

Finally, it is in making submissions one to another, in recognizing our limitations of theory or experience, that we shall learn in our profession the meaning of *community*, the community of practitioners, teachers, and researchers. Today, after the first fifty years — some of which were marred by considerable turmoil but all of which have witnessed our often heroic efforts and our gradual passage to this jubilee occasion — today, we should resolve to go forward into the next half century in the spirit of mutual respect and of cooperation. We should be willing always to recognize the goodness of the labors of our past leaders, willing to submit whenever need be, our own perhaps stubborn ways, to the intelligence and insight of our present associates. No human situation is or can be perfect and we shall have our disagreements. They are necessary for really progressive change and advance, but our differences must never degenerate to a state of ruinous warfare. We have every reason to congratulate ourselves upon what has been done, upon what we are doing to improve the health and promote the happiness of our fellow men. Let us now all make a firm

resolution never to spoil by acrimony what can further be done. We have in orthodontics, at this mid-century point, the competence and security of a recognized and truly great science. No matter what part of the science preoccupies us as individuals — teaching, research or practice — each of us has faith in ourselves and hope in our

work. Let us, above all have charity. Let us have solidarity. In all things that count let us be of good spirit, one towards another and towards the progress of our profession. It is in this good spirit that I bid you a most cordial welcome.

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