REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST*

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**Dr. Craig, Members of the Cushing Society and Guests:**

I am most appreciative for the honor of the invitation that accounts for my presence here tonight. Individually, and socially, I have long known many of the members of this Society, but never, in my fondest dreams, could I have hoped to be your collective guest. Although having suffered from long exposure to neurosurgery, I have never been so emboldened as to practice the art. Perhaps that is why you invited me.

My appreciation is commingled with a sense of humility, I may say inferiority, and you must bear with me, for I admit to being out of character and out of place. I find myself much in the position of a mountaineer who went fishing at night. His friend rowed the boat in the bow, while he sat in the stern armed with a fishing pole, a bucket of minnows, a can of worms, and a jug of moonshine. He would cast his line and then take a drink from the jug: a perfect synthesis of two of the most delightful avocations of which I am aware. After this had gone on for some time, he was startled by an object in the water, and he said to his friend, “What’s that?”

“Why that,” said the friend, “is the moon.”

“The moon! And what in the hell am I doing up there?”

Dr. Cushing’s work and his life have been so covered in prose and verse, in the main by members of this Society, that little is left to be said. Since all the facets of this many-sided man have been so admirably dealt with in John Fulton’s definitive *Life*, anything that I may say is by way of supererogation. The field of fact having been so amply covered, there is left to me only the expression of personal recollections; perhaps some fiction.

The sense of the world is short,
Long and various the report...

The difficulty of speaking of Harvey Cushing is that he has become a thing apart, set aside as an immortal, which he certainly *is*, and we are apt to forget not so much the things that made him great, but the things that made him mortal, which he certainly *was*.

Surely if ever the imagination is allowed to riot, it has the privilege in our present environment. For Harvey Cushing remained to the last, a *professional* Yale man, a not unusual accomplishment, particularly since in

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his days at New Haven, Yale held a dominant place in athletics, and he was always "a part of all he met." As a member of the baseball team, his interest in Yale sports never waned, and like many another Old Blue, he could not refrain from occasional reference to the "good old days," and depreciation of the poor coaching which he assumed (correctly) to be the cause of Yale's descendancy.

On one occasion shortly before his death I jokingly suggested to him that there was a movement on foot to bring Walter Camp back as the Yale coach. I immediately knew that I had touched a sore point. He at once realized that I was speaking irreverently of a Yale god, and he furiously turned on me with the remark: "Well, he would at least teach them how to tackle."

Like most graduate students he never considered himself an alumnus of Harvard. His return here was in a way a college reunion. Brekkekekeke was always sounding in his ears; the crack of bat on ball, the old friendships of field and fence and classroom . . . so it is most appropriate that we meet tonight beneath the elms.

For those of you who did not know him, perhaps a personal recollection of his appearance might be in order. He had a long neck, which Sargent, according to his custom, caricatured with his crayon. His brow was wide and high, that of a thinker, but of particular serenity. His walk had the easy swing of the born athlete, but it was the head that attracted attention and disarmed you of the size of the body, for he was short and small.

He always reminded me of a jockey grown a little too old to ride, but with the figure and force and the strong hands, the vim and vitality to be a trainer, and, if the occasion demanded, to saddle a horse for himself.

His mouth, as I recollect it, was his best feature; the chin sharp but not imperious, and the nose long and big, but all were blended well—a man of action—but at the same time expressing poise and equanimity. There was both power and thoughtful speculation blended in that face, a face that was never doubtful of its power, but one that was not conceited, for above all things he hated humbug in any form.

He dressed well, a little nattily, usually grey tweeds of an ill-fitting, English manner, never gaudy save for large ties knit by Mrs. Cushing, which he chose to wear when Windsor was only a prince.

Perhaps it is old-fashioned to think of an inheritance like this, but in him was commingled the inherent sanity of New England Puritanism crossed with the pioneering spirit of the West, and all leveled out to produce what Galsworthy called "the soul of balance."

His outstanding characteristic, save his ambition, was his capacity for work—coextensive terms, to be sure. He never allowed the duties of administration to interfere with the development of neurosurgery and of Harvey Cushing. He served on few committees, and I recall no instance of a formal meeting of his staff, save on the occasion of Gil Horrax's marriage, which was used as an opportunity for pointing out the marring and disastrous