“The Harvey Cushing Library”*

DAVID L. REEVES, M.D.†
Santa Barbara, California

ON THIS, the occasion of our thirty-first annual meeting, I want, first of all, to express my appreciation to the Society for the honor of serving as your president. Well do I realize the wheel of fortune might more appropriately have favored many of our prominent and talented members. Here rather naturally in the rich autumn years of a neurosurgical career, this tribute, coming from colleagues and friends one holds in the highest esteem, and from a profession I have served so long, moves one deeply. This impressive honor and my great good fortune is shared by my family, my friends, and by my medical colleagues of Santa Barbara. This is an occasion I shall remember and cherish as long as I live.

We are greatly indebted to the various officers and committee members who so ably conduct the affairs of the Society and who have carried the burden of the arrangements for this meeting, and to all of you for your continuous cooperation and interest, which make the meetings of this Society so stimulating.

In the past, presidential addresses have emphasized various spheres of interest. Cobb Pilcher's was entitled “Neurosurgery Comes of Age,” Frank Turnbull’s “Neurosurgery is What You Make It,” while Paul Bucy's chose as his title “Our Training Programs and the Future of Neurological Surgery.” When we met in 1953 at Hollywood, Florida, William J. German selected as his subject “Neurological Surgery. Its Past, Present and Future,” and in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Edgar Kahn spoke on “Twenty Years of Surgery for Hypertension.” Harry Wilkins discussed “Atypical Facial Neuralgia—Some Observations and Surgical Approach to Treatment,” and Leo Davidoff "The Place of Neurological Surgery in the Undergraduate Curriculum.” In 1958, in Washington, D. C., Howard A. Brown reviewed the interesting historical features of our Society under the heading of “The Harvey Cushing Society. Past, Present and Future,” and the next year Bronson S. Ray spoke of “The Neurosurgeon’s New Interest in the Pituitary.” This was followed by “Neurosurgery in the Soviet Union” by James L. Poppen, "Neurosurgery, the Public and the Law,” by J. Grafton Love; and at our Chicago meeting last year Leonard T. Furlow chose “The American Board of Neurological Surgery” as the title for his presidential address.

The problem of presenting a presidential address differing from those already given so well seemed difficult, until one day I was discussing it with a friend who suggested “The Harvey Cushing Library.” This seemed desirable, for it is to be recalled that at our twenty-fifth annual meeting and anniversary, the Board of Directors had proposed the Society make a yearly contribution to the library fund. Additionally, it seemed likely many of our increasing numbers of members would not be particularly informed concerning the background and development of this great collection.

At the meeting in Washington, D. C., in 1958, Leo Davidoff, in the absence of George S. Baker, chairman of the Members' Memorial to the Harvey Cushing Library, reviewed the features of the proposal indicating that at the twenty-fifth anniversary meeting of the Society in Detroit, it was believed that some appropriate expression should be made toward the memory of Harvey Cushing. The committee recommended that each year the Society contribute $200 to the Historical Library at

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† Address: 316 West Junipero Street, Santa Barbara, California.
Yale, that a bookplate be prepared from the Society's funds, and that this should be inserted in the books to be purchased by Mr. Frederick G. Kilgour, the Librarian of the Yale Medical Library, who would be authorized to select such books as he deemed appropriate. A bookplate would be inserted and inscribed in memory of the deceased members of The Harvey Cushing Society of the year of their passing. The President said this would allow the Society to establish a memorial for the deceased members and also to contribute to the perpetuation of the Historical Library. This report was accepted.

At the meeting the following year in New Orleans, Louise Eisenhardt, in the absence of Leo Davidoff, reported concerning the Members' Memorial to the Historical Library and mentioned again the memorial was established not only in memory of Harvey Cushing, but also of our deceased members. She also informed us that Mr. Kilgour was very pleased with the design of the bookplate prepared by Mr. Russell L. Drake of the Mayo Clinic (Fig. 1). Since that time our Society's yearly contribution to the Historical Library at Yale has been increased to $500.

The story of the evolution of the Historical Library is an interesting one. While time permits only an outline of its history, hopefully this will stimulate many to read the papers and books that cover the subject so entertainingly and completely. First of all, this is not the Harvey Cushing Library, even though there remain many who continue so to regard it. There were long discussions about a name, and the Advisory Board appointed by Yale University decided it was unwise to use one name when there were actually three main donors, Harvey Cushing, Arnold C. Klebs, and John F. Fulton. Additionally, inasmuch as a "named library" was often looked upon as a static collection, this was far from what the donors had in mind. For this reason, the impersonal term, "The Historical Library," came into being. Nonetheless, it will become readily apparent that Harvey Cushing was instrumental in the establishment of this Historical Library.

As John Fulton has indicated, the collecting instinct was in Harvey Cushing's blood. His great grandfather, David Cushing, a country practitioner of South Adams, Massachusetts, brought together a sizable library for his times. Much of this ended in the Harvey Cushing collection or in his father's collection now in the Cleveland Medical Library. Next, he fell heir to the acquisitive habits of his older brothers and cousins. As the tenth and last child he had to continue with their collections of butterflies, stamps, coins and botanical specimens of all kinds. At Yale College his extensive collection of dance programs, clippings concerning Yale's victories and defeats on the baseball diamond and football field was probably unique only in that it was carefully and chronologically preserved in two large scrapbooks with a thoroughness unusual for one of that age.

Even with this background, however, there seems little doubt his interest in books was stimulated by his friendship with Sir William Osler. As Samuel James Crowe has written, he was William Stewart Halsted's