

A MAN OF GOOD WILL

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Throughout the centuries, of all the men of all the world, there have been a few who differed from their fellows in the spirit of good will. Such men, always in the minority, varied from the majority, primarily, in that they were fundamentally and truly unselfish.

They possessed an innate will to make this world really better and subjugated their personal welfare to the betterment of their fellowmen.

Sometimes men of this character have been banded together to overcome a tyranny in their midst, or to accomplish some other worthwhile purpose. At times their aims have been less noteworthy and history may or may not have recorded their deeds.

The man of good will, who is the subject of my paper this evening, was not in the public eye. He was a surgeon of Chicago who had attained a degree of eminence in his profession. At the peak of his career, he turned aside from his medical life to the pursuit of ^{certain} philosophic studies which he deemed more important. In the eyes of the world he failed to achieve the full purpose of his good will, dying in poverty, and ^{was} forgotten ~~for~~ the most part by his fellow surgeons, doctors and ~~erstwhile~~ friends.

The first record of ^{his} ~~the~~ family was that of a Burgo-master General of Holland, whose descendants ⁱⁿ emigrated to New Amsterdam in the late 1600's. A century later one of the family accompanied Daniel Boone on his second trip to Kentucky. His descendants later came to Indiana, to found the family, where our record begins.

Dr. Weller Van Hook was born in Civil War times, May 14, 1862, in Greensville Indiana. His father was a physician before him. After his preliminary education he went to the University of Michigan in 1881, when he was nineteen years of age. He remained there until 1884, when he graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Arts. ~~Dr. James~~ Dr. James B. Herrick was an undergraduate at Ann Arbor at this same time and knew Van Hook. Dr. Herrick told me that he was a serious minded student, showing little interest in the social life of the campus or the fraternities. After graduation from Michigan, he came to Chicago to attend the College of Physicians and Surgeons (now the Division of Medicine of the University of Illinois), and graduated the following year, 1885, at the age of twenty-three. He interned in the Cook County Hospital from July of that year to January 1st, 1887.

^{near} ~~the~~ the end of his internship, he sought out Herrick, who was a student at Rush Medical College, to advise him to take his ^{training} ~~internship~~ at the Cook County Hospital. He told Herrick of the ^{superior} educational advantages of the large charity hospital, and Herrick later ^{did intern} ~~followed~~ ^{at that institution.} ~~at that institution.~~ Their paths crossed on many occasions during the years to follow, and Dr. Herrick has been very generous in telling about Van Hook and the medical activities of those days.

Van Hook, forty years later, wrote a short paper of his interne~~ship~~ in the County Hospital. One paragraph reads as follows: "It was again epoch making when, a little later, asepsis came, as Fenger told us, to become the new doctrine to succeed antiseptis. Later, came the rubber gloves of Halstead, of Baltimore, which made possible, real heartening success in surgery. Halstead's innovation was not recognized or appraised then as it should have been. We had just left the County Hospital when full fledged modern medicine and surgery could be recognized about us. As a young lecturer, in those early days, I was almost driven from the speakers rostrum by the students when I told them Behring's story of the experimental success of diphtheria antitoxin, predicting that, in six months time, the drug stores would sell it to all comers." He goes on to say, "---various social tragedies marked our way as we lived the common human round. There was the Haymarket riot, in which a large body of European anarchists defeated their own purpose by violence. I admitted to the hospital, and later helped to post, Mathias ~~Dugan~~ Di ~~Egan~~, the policeman whose slaying by those anarchists made the legal case of those who prosecuted the slayers."

Dr. Van Hook entered practise on the great West Side of Chicago in 1887, and remained there for a period of seven years, until 1894. His interests in practise were mainly surgical and in 1892 he held a professorship in the Principles of ~~Surgery~~ at the College of Physicians and Surgeons and also taught at the Post Graduate Hospital.

On June 16th, of that same year, '92, he married Miss Anna C. Whaley of St. Louis, Mo. She was also a physician and one of Herrick's students.

In 1894, he gave up the ~~general~~ ^{general} practise of medicine and went to Europe for postgraduate study ^{of Surgery} in Vienna, Berlin, London and Paris. A year after his return, in 1896, he was appointed to the chair of surgery at what is now Northwestern University Medical School. At this time both Dr. Van Hook and Dr. Herrick had their offices in the Columbia Memorial Building.

Dr. Herrick told me Dr. Van Hook was a vigorous crusader in those days. He was fiercely intolerant and antagonistic to ^{those of} his elders, who stood by what he thought were outmoded ideas, and missed no opportunity for criticism. Dr. Herrick said he had a facile pen, and could be sarcastic.

and

^{On this Subject,} ~~of this period,~~ Van Hook ^{himself wrote as follows:} ~~wrote,~~ "The grey heads cling to the denial of bacterial significance of disease, as, when a boy, I heard them doing in Central Music Hall at the Meetings of the American Medical Association. Even then, after the pathogenic powers of the pus microbes were known, many great surgeons still adhered to the primitive Listerian antiseptic methods." In the same pamphlet he said "We had practically no teacher except ^{for} ~~Finger~~ ^{Finger}."

A fellow crusader, and close friend of Dr. Van Hook, was Dr. Bayard Holmes, one of the pioneer obstetricians of that day. They fought on the same side of many an argument and aided one another in their operations. One of the

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battles at this time was the practical application of bacteriology and pathology to surgery and obstetrics. They were instrumental in the introduction of these subjects into the curriculum at P and S, although Van Hook gave the credit for this victory to Dr. Holmes on many occasions.

Another side of his personality may be seen in a paragraph from an article which he wrote on ether anesthesia. "The beginning of anesthesia constitutes a period of anxiety for both patient and surgeon. Too often, the anesthetist fails to treat his patient as a fellow mortal and starts to anesthetize him without formality. Twenty seconds may be spent in saying to the patient, "Mr. Jones, I am Dr. Smith and your surgeon Dr. So and So wishes me to administer your anesthetic", A pleasant word or two about any promising feature of the outlook from the patient's point of view will give the patient confidence in the man who is to have his life in charge for a while and will often have the effect of distinctly quieting the nervous system. Boisterous and confused conversation and activity, are most undesirable about a patient who is going to sleep."

Dr. Herrick told me that he was not wholly serious and did have some humor in his personality. This led to a story ^(which is in Dr. Herrick's Book) about a consultation ~~about~~ they had just off Leavitt Street on the west side. These two were standing on the curb discussing the patient they had just examined, when a cart piled high with manure passed by. The driver shouted "Hello, Dr. Herrick, you saved my life!" Dr. Van Hook

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after his reply
turned to Herrick and asked "Who ^{is} your fecal friend,
Dr. Herrick?"

By this time Dr. Van Hook had a ^{*Comfortable*} ~~large~~ surgical
^{*not*} practise, ~~limited not only~~ to Chicago, since patients came
from many distant localities. His surgical ability, modest
manner and his personal interest in each patient's welfare
brought other patients. He enjoyed a large consultation
practise with other physicians because of his kindly
manner.

~~He was active~~ ^{*activities were concentrated*} surgically ^{*and*} mainly at the old Wesley
Hospital at 256th and Dearborn Streets, adjacent to North-
western Medical School. In those days, patients operated
at the medical school amphitheatre had to ~~to~~ be carried on
stretchers, out of doors, from the hospital to the medical
school. In 1897, he maintained a crew of seven assistants,
many of whom have ^{*had*} ~~written~~ meritorious records in Chicago's
surgical history. This list includes such names as Dr.
Harry Richter, later pre-eminent in thyroid surgery, and ^{*himself*} ~~himself~~
a chief of surgery at Northwestern. ~~He told me his recoll-~~

~~ection of the famous fee-splitting story of those days.~~
Dr. Richter, after his internship, in 1896, in the Cook County
hospital, worked under Dr. Van Hook for approximately nine
years. To him, Van Hook was an introvert, ^{*and*} ~~an~~ utterly devoted
to surgery. He spoke of his extensive library and the many
volumes on anatomy. He said he was a man without temper,
never uttering and angry word. His voice was never raised
in remonstrance at a nurse or ~~an~~ associate for a break in
technique. ~~He said that his operative skill was beautiful to~~
~~watch. He esteemed him highly as a teacher and a surgeon.~~

The hospital in those days made their own catgut n and sterilized it by boiling before each operation. It was none too strong and many surgeons matched their strenth against the ligatures, to win, and voice their disapproval of the material, loudly and profanelly. The catgut, unused at one operation, was reboiled for a second operation. The nurses learned to reserve this for Van Hook who seldom broke a ligature, ~~with his technique~~ Dr. Richter said that his operative skill was beautiful to watch. He esteemed highly as a teacher and a surgeon.

Dr Richter told me his recollection of the famous fee splitting story of these days. To combat the evil of fee splitting, an ingenious

method was devised, of securing information on Chicago surgeons, regarding their participation in this practise. One or more Chicago physicians, in collaboration with the Chicago Tribune, wrote a number of Chicago surgeons from a downstate address, describing a patient who was in need of an operation. Included in the letter was a paragraph concerning the fee and the possibility that a portion was to be returned to the downstate referring physician. The letter closed asking for an appointment if such terms were agreeable. Dr. Van Hook did not receive one of these letters, which were sent to a large number of ~~physicians~~ *surgeons*, and remarked to Dr. Richter, his young assistant that he felt slighted. Many of his contemporaries, however, replied to the letter, agreed to the terms, and were more than chagrined to find their letters published in the Tribune with adequate editorial comment on the menace of fee-splitting. Another facet of the story was, that ^{Dr.} John B. Murphy replied with a telegram rather than a letter, in contrast ~~with~~ his competitors. There is little question that this was in keeping with Murphy's aggressive personality, but proof of the telegram was never made public and Murphy's biographers do not mention it. Murphy's enemies, and there were many, accused Murphy of hatching the plot, as president of the Chicago Medical Society, but later developments disproved this.

Associated with Dr. Richter under Dr. Van Hook were a number of other men, who were to ~~write many chapters~~ *be considered* *in the surgical history of Chicago.* His first assistant was

the late Dr. Fred Besley. to become a professor of surgery at Northwestern, and attending ~~surgeon~~ at the Cook County Hospital and officer of the American College of Surgeons. Another was the late Dr. Allen B. Kanavel, who became famous for his accomplishments in surgery of the hand ^{*the author of a*} and a textbook on this subject. He later ^{*also*} became chairman of the department of surgery at Northwestern Medical School.

In addition to his teaching activities at the Wesley Hospital and at Northwestern Medical School, he pioneered a number of projects. Nitrous oxide was introduced as a new anesthetic to the Wesley Hospital. It was not the custom in those days for the hospitals to examine tissue^s or tumors removed surgically to study their cellular pathology. Dr. Richter constructed a laboratory in his own home to prepare paraffine sections of their surgical specimens and examined them in the evenings with Dr. Van Hook at his home. Prior to the turn of the century, he had devised a new operation of transplanting one ureter into the one on the opposite side to salvage the kidney on the side of the obstructed ureter.

I am indebted to Dr. Richter for another phase of his many activities. One of their ~~patients~~ ^{*the*} was a lady from ~~out~~ West who was the wife of a prospector for gold, and Dr. Van Hook became interested in purchasing property for gold mining. He not only invested rather heavily in this land with his own funds but persuaded a number of his friends, including his young assistant, to join him. All was lost. He had another investment, as many physicians do, a grain farm. A few years of bad weather, crop failures, brought heavy losses in this venture.

He had another misfortune about this same time, when he developed a gall stone colic. Dr. Richter²⁴ then his first assistant operated him in his own home and removed the gall stones. He was out of bed in twenty four hours, an unusual procedure then, modern technique today.

The three leading surgeons of this era were, Van Hook, Murphy and Bevan, strikingly different in their personalities. Dr. John B. Murphy was an aggressive, arrogant Irishman - co-chairman of the department of surgery at Rush Medical School with Dr. Arthur Dean Bevan. Dr. Bevan was an aristocrat, able but stuffy. Murphy's clinics for students and visiting physicians were brilliant and theatrical compared to those of Bevan. Van Hook, the surgical chief at Northwestern, was said^{by many} to be better than either. Quiet, modest, friendly, he lectured in an easy conversational ~~manner~~ ^{manner}. He was devoting himself unreservedly to his work, writing, lecturing, exploring new methods and combatting the obsolete, with the vigor of a crusader, when a new and entirely different interest gradually overwhelmed him. May I divert your attention to this new factor.

The American Theosophical Society was founded in New York City in 1875, according to the New Standard Encyclopedia. The founders included Mme. Helen P. Blavatsky assisted by Col. Henry Olcott, and Mr. Wm. Q. Judge.

The objects of the society were to study all matter relating to theosophy, to encourage the study of comparative

religious philosophy, and science. Theosophy is said to have originated in the ³third century in Europe as a religious philosophy which started with the conception that man is a spritual being, one in Essence with the Universal Spirit. This concept included Christianity, Buddhism, ~~any~~ Oriental precepts, and ancient esoteric philosophy as well. The ancient esoteric philosophy was believed to have been preserved by a brotherhood of initiated scattered over the world preserving intimate relations, of unusual spiritual intelligence and supernatural control over natural forces. This ancient wisdom, a part of Buddhism, includes the concept of reincarnation and renunciation of the material things of life."

P } The Utopia envisioned by the Theosophical Society was almost inconceivable in it's scope. It was their aim to integrate and correlate all of the religions of the world, past and contemporary, into one reasonable and logical unit. Their veiwpoint also envisioned the incorporation of all scientific knowledge into this format, including astronomy, physics, medicine, chemistry, and all others. History, with adequate aid from the current historians would assume the responsibility of ~~proper~~ ^{proper} arrangement and integration of the past record.

The Messiahs of the past, Christ, Buddha, Confucius, and many master intellectuals of the ancient wisdom, not recorded in the written record, had ^{had} this same vision, though limited in scope. Reincarnation of ^{such a} ~~these~~ Masters ^{or} ~~and~~ Messiahs from one century to another, once as a religious leader,

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later as a scientist, ~~or~~ as a philosopher, was ~~about~~ to bring about a new era, with proper organization.

With the unlimited metaphysical knowledge of the Ancient Wisdom, not recorded in books, but handed down from Adept to Initiate, as is the ritual of the Masonic lodge, greater progress was foreseen. ~~I~~

In the books of the current leaders, the reader from the Western world ~~was~~ ^{was} introduced to the methodology of ~~the~~ ^a Orient, contemplation in peaceful ^a sanctuary, accumulation of wisdom by revelation, in contrast to the Western scientific method of action by trial and recording results. The terminology of the Buddhist sect was an integral part of the propaganda. A follower of theosophy acquired Karma or goodness in his worldly activity, and for future reincarnation. Consumption of

animal protein was ill advised and ^detrimental to the fulfilment of the ideal. Acquisition of wealth, intemperance in any form, abuse of personal power detracted from one's Karma.

The leaders of the Society were frequently in the public print, not only in the United States but in Europe as they traveled extensively in the promotion of the movement. The name of Mrs. Annie Besant was probably best known in the United States and Asia. Mr. W. L. Leadbeater was active in England and later in Europe. There were many followers with substantial scientific achievement, men and women of wealth, who contributed both energy and money to the cause.

In this philosophy, the initiate ~~was~~ presumed to develop spiritually, to teach and lead others to a better way of life. He ~~does~~ ^{did} not sin in the ordinary way of breaking one of the Biblical Ten Commandments of the Thou shalt nots, but he fails ^{ed} to progress if he ~~does~~ ^{id} not utilize his mental faculties and abilities to the utmost in this worldly life. Those who succeed ^{ed} to degrees of perfection ~~are~~ ^{were} presumed to have significant metaphysical power, ^{or,} in the modern sense, extrasensory perception.

These leaders and members were not as impractical as the forgoing paragraphs might imply. They did not expect to achieve their aims in a decade or even in a century. It was recognized that there would be war, tyranny, ~~and~~ poverty, and evil in the world but the ultimate goal of peace, justice, and a universal brotherhood of living ^{was to} ~~might finally~~ be achieved.

Dr. Van Hook, in the early part of the century, at the top of his profession as a surgeon became interested in this philosophy. At that time there were Theosophical Societies on every continent and in almost every country of the world. Their activities were documented in the public press, books by their leaders were currently available at the libraries and the movement was growing throughout the world. One of their leaders ^{Mr.} ~~Dr.~~ C. Jinara ~~idazi~~ was in Chicago at this time, about 1904, and apparently it was through him that Dr. Van Hook was introduced to the subject of Theosophy. In a short biography written after Dr. Van Hook's death, by one of his theosophical friends, it is stated that Mrs. Van Hook was the person who brought the subject to him, but

I have been informed that Mrs. Van Hook does not agree with this thought.

Mr. Jinaradasa himself wrote in the preface of a small book, entitled, In His Name, a foreword directed to Dr. Van Hook. " To W. H. We met only for an hour, but I felt the moment I saw you that I had a message to give. What this message is you will find in the following pages.

You have come to a point in your life when you cannot any longer be fully of the world. You are established in an honorable career and know that time will bring you success and ease; but already you feel that you cannot work for success alone. You feel you must be an idealist in your profession, and be loyal to the ideal you see even though it means suffering and humiliation. You are in the position that hundreds are in today, but you are different from them in that you believe that the ideal that compels your obedience is not a thing of your imagination, but is the first glimpse of a Personality whom you would like to call The Master. You feel that if this Master really exists and you could know him, then you would be utterly true to him in every way, regardless of what comes.

You know further that you cannot seek this Master by retiring into some monastic seclusion, in order that by meditation and contemplation there, you might communicate with him. You are not free to consider your welfare only, for there are those depending upon you for their needs. For their sakes you know you must engage in a worldly career; but while you are so engaged you would like, if it be possible, at the same time to serve the Master in some way. It is because there is such a way that I write these pages for you, and for others who are opening their

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eyes to those higher human possibilities that you have already seen.

Each human soul has some message to give to every other human soul, and what I write is my message to you just now. It is not mine in reality, for it came to me from other human souls, and I am giving it to you as a brother, what others as Brothers have given to me. "

In the book, of one hundred pages, after this personal foreword, Mr. Jinaradasi describes the theosophical concepts of discipleship, closing with a personal postscript similar in character to the lines which have just been quoted.

Under any circumstances, ^{Dr. Van Hook's} ~~his~~ interest grew with the acquaintances and friends that he made in the society, and with the books that he read on the subject. He quickly became a devoted follower and attempted to interest his medical associates and friends in the new philosophy.

By 1907, he well known in the Chicago group and at the Theosophical Convention that year he spoke at one of the meetings. In the ^{Previously} ~~and~~ biography mentioned, it is stated, "His commanding appearance as a man of affairs attracted attention from all sides. A committee was appointed to wait upon him to run for the office of chief executive of the American Section of the Theosophical Society. He declined, stating that his professional ~~at~~ gave him no time for other executive duties. The committee was insistent however, assuring him that the work of the theosophical society would consume only a narrow strip of the working surface of his desk. ----- He was prevailed upon to accept the nomination and his election followed."

About this time, Mrs. Van Hook left Chicago with their son, a lad of nine, to travel in Europe and to meet certain leaders of the Theosophical Society there. It was apparently Dr. Van Hook's idea that his son was destined to a significant future in the Theosophical world and his early education was directed along these lines. After visiting with his mother in Germany, Italy, and Sicily, they

returned to the United States and then went to India and lived in the Orient. Much of their time was spent at Adyar, in Madras, India, international headquarters of the Theosophical Society. The education of the boy was carried on by private tutors and supplemented by lectures and conferences with the inner circle of the Theosophical Society in Adyar, where the leaders of the group, philosophic and political were congregated. They remained there for some years.

Dr. Van Hook's concepts of child education were printed in a theosophical booklet entitled, "The Principles of Education". The first paragraph reads, "The purpose of education is the preparation of the vehicles ~~or~~ ~~bodies~~ of an ego to serve the highest possible uses during an incarnation. The ego sends a part of himself into manifestation in each incarnation to carry out certain definite plans and purposes. There are special duties to be performed, special qualities to be developed, or peculiarities or faults to be eliminated by the satisfaction of karma or by the practise of virtues of renunciation and service." In a later paragraph he states "This early training will consist of the modification of the child's instinctual nature in such a way that all the habits of the body will be molded and fixed to conform to the needs of

the tenant, who is to be a man, and not a baby. " A later paragraph reads, " In the first place, he (the teacher) must give the minutest attention to the ~~cha~~ character and educational requirements of each pupil. Hence, the number of pupils cannot be great. On the ~~con~~trary, it must remain so small that the method ~~of~~ teaching, so far as the housing and equipment are concerned, may approach the methods, employed in ancient Greece and Egypt. "

His intense devotion to the theosophical movement was also carried over into his personal economy, putting into practise what he taught and wrote. He utilized his private

funds to build a printing establishment on his own property for the production of free propaganda material. He tried to interest members of the Society in a parcel of land in the South Shore District for National Hdqtrs. A group of Theosophists in California, however, interfered with this project, and money from the Society went to establish headquarters there. Many of the Chicago group left the city to study in Los Angeles.

By this time, Dr. Van Hook was devoting most of his energy, his interest, and his income to the cause of Theosophy, with the same crusader spirit that he had shown in his earlier days in the field of medicine. He was sharing offices with Dr. Chas. B. Reed, one of our former members, and asked him to take over his surgical work, a practical impossibility as Dr. Reed was an obstetrician. Difficulties had also arisen in the medical school at Northwestern.

When Dr. Van Hook left P. and S. to go to Northwestern as professor of surgery under Dr. Fenger and later to succeed him as chairman of the department it was in part through a friendship with Dr. A. R. Edwards, Dean of Northwestern. Edwards was an entirely different type than Van Hook and ^{a member of} his friends had warned him on many occasions that Edwards was ~~not~~ the loyal friend that he held him to be. Van Hook, however, never believed these admonitions, which he found just cause to regret. Through Edwards's offices, Dr. John B. Murphy was ^{to} leave the co-chairmanship of the Surgical Department of Rush and become a professor of surgery at Northwestern, without Van Hook's knowledge, as his chief. This bit of medical political activity greatly upset him and embittered him, and I am indebted to Dr. Herrick for the story. The two friends met one day, in consultation over a patient at the Wesley Hospital. After the examination, Van Hook looked at Herrick and said, rather sarcastically, "What does the distinguished professor of medicine have to say about the patient?" Herrick was overwhelmed at his old friend's attitude and spoke critically of his remark. Van Hook resumed his former spirit and Herrick suggested that it was about time they have their annual debauch. This had always consisted of an ice-cream soda and much talk. The Northwestern incident was the immediate subject of the conversation and tears flowed from Van Hook's eyes as they talked. He said he had not seen Murphy to talk to and did not intend to see him. Herrick warned him he would be thrown out of the faculty. Shortly thereafter, the appointment of Dr. John B. Murphy to the chair of

Surgery at Northwestern appeared in the Bulletin of the Northwestern University Medical School, along with the formal resignation of Dr. Weller Van Hook. Parenthetically, Edwards was ~~to~~ discredited completely some years later and ^{he} lost what few remaining friends he had. The resignation from Northwestern practically ended ^{Van Hook's} ~~his~~ career as ^{Great} a surgeon. He devoted himself almost entirely to Theosophy except to earn his livelihood in his profession, *hereafter*,

By 1911, however, his practise had suffered so severely that he resigned from officership of the Society, to rehabilitate his economy. A year or so later, however, he made a pilgrimage to various shrines and holy places in Europe. On this same voyage, he went to Asia to the International Headquarters in Adyar.

A small volume, written while on this pilgrimage, entitled "Voyages" was published some years later. The opening paragraph reads, " The ocean has her waves of different heights when the sea drives not too strongly. Tiniest breaches of the glassy surface reflect the sunlight glitteringly. Then larger waves include these, holding them for infinitesimal moments in thier hollows. Still other waves are there of a third degree-- and others still.

But a mighty swell underlies them all. Even the lordliest ship bow and a little roll from side to side, responding to the inner Will of the Deep.

It is the same with our lives. There are the tiny experiences of the hour and the day. We have our places and ~~the~~ works of the year. Underneath allof these is our life of the incarnation. " Some pages later there is a brief essay entitled,

"A Scourge of The World". "Corsica is there to the left above.

What had the poor world done ~~xxxBonaparte~~ that Bonaparte was born to be there and then, how did it need to be, and then was scourged so pitilessly at last to be made clean?

How deva-like he was. How remorselessly he let fall his sword: how was he himself held as the instrument of fate's unswerving purpose, nor truly had one nation safety in its smallness or its might. Conceive the pointing of the karma of ^a ~~the~~ world and of a continent at one mans' sword tip, a great nation back of him to aid him and itself to be scourged in scourging.

The whole truth lies above. Wait, child; in His good time even you may know that."

^{essay}
Another [^] is labeled "Her Isles and Greece", which is of a more descriptive nature. " One autumn day when seas were dimpling glass, the world worn Greece was on the left and some of her islands on the right--except that Corfu for awhile, against the North, stood dim and far away, The lights of Brindisi had been left the night before--Italian eastern sands and hills were gone. And in the night the Adriatic Sea had slid away.

Rounded and bold rise the mountain~~x~~ shores of Greece, lifting almost sheer out of the blue-purple sea; worn and deep rifted are the isles that slowlyglide rearward on the right.

Old, old cities nestle in the cozy bays. Vineyards cling in terraces upon the heights.

Island after island glides away. Farther eastward it was, ~~x~~ not here, dear child, Pythagorus taught; these are the rugged hills down which have slid those sands on which ancient Argives ~~handed~~ their ships till storms swept by. " It continues on in this fashion.

When Dr. Van Hook returned from India, it was considered that he would again be the head of the American Section of the Theosophical Society. This commitment did not materialize, however, and he devoted himself to the Chicago Lodge and to surgery in a minor way, sufficient only to his material needs. In 1922, at a ^{Theosophical} convention in Kansas City, he read a paper in which he offered his services as a leading officer. No notice was taken of these overtures and he continued to devote himself to the spiritual welfare of the Chicago group.

My first acquaintance with Dr. Van Hook was in 1925, during my first year in practise, when he was around 65 years of age. At that time he still had his offices in the Columbus Memorial Building and carried on a rather limited surgical practise at the South Shore Hospital. I soon heard the story of his fame as a surgeon in former years, and of his decline. He still retained his skill as a surgeon, however, and was fully appreciated by his colleagues in this community hospital. In the local staff meetings he occasionally gave papers at the weekly pathological conferences, ^{which were} thoughtful, well-organized, and worth while educationally.

As I came to know him better, I learned to appreciate, not only his medical and surgical ability, but his integrity. On one occasion I asked him tell me about his Theosophical activity. He offered me a book to read on the subject and invited me to talk to him, a pleasure of which I availed myself. The book was not without interest and I read a

number of other texts which he gave me, and in the next few years, he devoted to me a number of pleasant evenings of conversation.

We talked, or rather, he talked of religion, of Masonry, of the simple philosophy of living and of the practise of medicine. He told me of his early medical life and of the introduction of bacteriology and the resistance of the older surgeons to the new ideas. I was introduced to ~~him~~ *some of his family.* *One of them was a* sister-in-law who trained as a nurse at the Cook County Hospital before the turn of the century when Dr. Van Hook was a surgeon there. One of her stories that I remember was concerned with the surgeons of that day, prior to 1900. A surgeon's ability was judged on his skill in removing tumors, particularly those originating in the female pelvis. These tumors and cysts frequently weighed around thirty or forty pounds. A surgeon who took out a uterine fibroid weighing less than 20 pounds was considered to be practically wasting his time.

Dr. Van Hook was of course greatly interested in the metaphysical aspects of his religion and he considered himself, and was revered by his fellow theosophists, as an adept in occultism. He felt that he had the occult power of being able to communicate with other adept leaders of the faith, and told me he conversed frequently with Annie Besant, then in India. I have been told that he had hoped to develop the occult power of clairvoyant vision, in his own field of surgery, i.e., to see with his eyes, what the X-ray reveals on the photographic film, a

power that he never achieved. I found it difficult to resolve such unusual concepts with his objective conventional activity as a surgeon. An incident occurring about this time, however, intrigued me immensely, and I find it difficult to forget. ~~It was a simple herniotomy to which he had submitted because of the inconvenience of a truss. Next day, some 36 hours after his operation, I met him in the hall making rounds on his patients. While it is now common practise to have surgical patients out of bed in 24 - 48 hours, it was heresy in 1920. I remonstrated and he replied that my concern was quite unnecessary. We walked back to his room and I continued to voice my concern over his activity. He then replied in the same vein and informed me that I should not be alarmed as I had recently examined his heart and given him a favorable report. At that remark I did feel perturbed, as I had dreamed a few days before, that he had presented himself at my office for examination of his heart. I recalled in the dream his removal of his old-fashioned shirt and baring his chest as I listened with the stethoscope and took his blood pressure. I had told him the findings were quite normal and suggested that he should have an electro-cardiogram and an X-ray of his heart and lungs as adjuncts to his physical examination. To this he had replied that this~~

One day as I was walking through the hospital, I saw Dr. Van Hook in bed as a patient. Surprised, I entered the room and said that I hoped he had no serious illness. He replied that it was nothing, a simple herniotomy to which he had submitted because of the inconvenience of a truss. Next day, some 36 hours after his operation, I met him in the hall making rounds on his patients. While it is now common practise to have surgical patients out of bed in 24 - 48 hours, it was heresy in ^{still} ~~1920~~ ^{the late 1920s.}. I remonstrated and he replied that my concern was quite unnecessary. We walked back to his room and I continued to voice my concern over his activity. He then replied in the same vein and informed me that I should not be alarmed as I had recently examined his heart and given him a favorable report. At that remark I did feel perturbed, as I had dreamed a few days before, that he had presented himself at my office for examination of his heart. I recalled in the dream his removal of his old-fashioned shirt and baring his chest as I listened with the stethoscope and took his blood pressure. I had told him the findings were quite normal and suggested that he should have an electro-cardiogram and an X-ray of his heart and lungs as adjuncts to his physical examination. To this he had replied that this

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was entirely unnecessary, that my examination was sufficient, replaced his shirt and coat, thanked me, and bade me good day. ~~He could deny~~ ^{no one could deny} that my dream and his ~~fantasy~~ ^{concepts} were coincidental incidents, but I was somewhat shaken when I left him. After this there were many occasions when I saw or thought I saw evidence of his extra-sensory perception in minor incidents around the hospital.

Dr. Van Hook introduced me to some of his patients who were theosophists, and I was much impressed by their philosophy of life-- and of death. One was a man, whom I had the responsibility of caring for during his last few months of life as a victim of cancer. He was entirely familiar with his diagnosis and his calm acceptance of his future was in sharp contrast to similar patients of other religious faiths. There were others with incurable disease, who sought medical advice, to plan objectively, their remaining months or years of life, with fortitude, that a doctor seldom encounters. These patients and Dr. Van Hook were remarkably different from the remainder of the hospital. Dr. Van Hook, even in those last years was a great teacher of medicine, surgery, ethics, and professional conduct.

It was tragedy indeed to watch these final years. His physical vigor began to fail and his surgical skill was greatly impaired. His family was apart from him, with his wife still in England. His son had renounced theosophy completely many years before. He was alone.

The Theosophical Society was also enfeebled. The membership had dwindled and the movement was dying of exhaustion. W. L. Leadbeater had been banned from England many years before for a grievous crime, which had done untold harm to the movement in Europe, Mrs. Annie Besant

leader of the ~~International~~ society, had chosen a young Hindoo, Krishna Murti as a Messiah, who had not come up to expectations. His presentation to the American audience including Chicago ~~was~~ provoked an unresponsive chord.

Dr. Van Hook continued to lecture to his local lodge with ~~his~~ enfeebled vigor but the members were of minor intellectual capacity, unstable emotionally, and of poor substance. There were a few ^{worthies,} however, like himself still anchored to the cause. About 1931, he left Chicago and went to a farm near Coopersville, Illinois, where he spent the remaining two years of his life. He had an apoplectic stroke and died June 30, 1933, aged 71. His body was cremated and his funeral supervised by his Masonic Lodge.

One should be hesitant to reveal this record critically. Dr. Van Hook did this himself throughout his life, and judged himself harshly. It would be much better in our present times, to hope for some practical elements of truth in his philosophy and for a leader of his kind to arise in our country, a man of good will.