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SPECIAL ARTICLES

EXPERIENCES OF AN INTERNE AT THE  
MURRY AND LEONIE GUGGENHEIM  
DENTAL CLINIC\*

By Norbert G. Bain, D.D.S., '34

I TAKE this opportune time to express my appreciation to the Dean and Members of the Faculty of the College of Dentistry of Howard University, not only because I am privileged to write an article for *THE DENTOSCOPE*, but because I owe to them a debt that cannot be repaid in a monetary way. This debt is based upon the invaluable opportunities which have been afforded me by their recommendation for an internship in the Murry and Leonie Guggenheim Dental Clinic.

Perhaps the biggest problem that confronts a young graduate dentist is whether or not he needs an internship. A satisfactory answer to this question would solve, at least temporarily, one of the most pressing problems in the life of a recent graduate. Personally, this was one of my big problems, and I shall never forget the advice of Dr. Emmett J. Scott when he said to me, "You will never regret it." Hesitatingly at first, dubiously perhaps, I brought myself to think of the advantages an internship might offer.

When I received my notification from Dr. McCall, the Director of the Clinic, that I had been selected as an interne for the year 1934-1935, there was no doubt in my mind as to the value of this venture and I determined to put everything I had into it. Even in my wildest moments I never imagined I should ever be as enthusiastic over an internship as I am, now that I am starting my second year of service.

My subject, as the caption suggests is, *Experiences of an Interne at the Murry and Leonie Guggenheim Dental Clinic*. This might be handled in a variety of ways, but in order to do justice to the subject and to those who might read it, I shall confine the article to what its caption suggests.

The Clinic is a veritable bee-hive of industry. A new interne, at the very outset, is impressed by the congenial atmosphere of the place. A

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\* *Editorial Comment.*—This article is submitted by Dr. Norbert G. Bain, '34, who is now serving his second year as interne at the Guggenheim Dental Clinic in New York City. Dr. Bain is to be congratulated on his renewal of contract. This is an honor sought by many, but realized by only a few.

wealth of new information is afforded him here. The staff is composed of men from fifteen or sixteen universities, so one can understand readily that there are numerous theories and techniques.

Before starting work at the Clinic, the interne is introduced to Dr. McCall, the Director, who outlines the various duties. The graduate dentist at once realizes that he is in a well-regulated institution, and under a man eager to extend his knowledge of the treatment of dental diseases for the maintenance of dental health. Dr. McCall is truly a fatherly man and compels the admiration of all who are privileged to meet him.

The Operative Clinic is usually the first assignment of a new interne, and, in this clinic he spends the greater part of the year. The first duty here is to become acquainted with the routine. The actual practice of dentistry in a clinic, important and paramount as it is, hardly supersedes the personal element so vital in all professions which call for contact with the public. Here, one's technique in dealing with a multiplicity of persons who have various complexes meets the supreme test, particularly in the matter of gaining the cooperation of twelve or fifteen children every day. This is quite an experience. Everything and everybody is new. It is human nature to be rattled on occasion. But what of that? Was this not the purpose for which the dental graduate was trained? Nervously, yet very cautiously, the interne goes about his first assignment, knowing full well that now he has not his favorite "Prof" to fall back on for advice. Thus, he is thrown upon his own resourcefulness and ingenuity. However, Dr. McCall or his assistant (Dr. Waas), is always available at a moment's notice. They give advice when needed and are a great help in developing self confidence in a young dentist. At no time do they ignore his diagnosis or opinion, but are ever willing to counsel and show the interne the things he possibly has overlooked. After a few days in this clinic, one finds himself. The experience obtained in the matter of X-ray diagnosis, cavity preparation and fillings, gingival disorders, pulpotomies and orthodontia is inestimable.

The interne's next assignment may be the Oral Surgery Clinic where procaine, nitrous oxide, or ethyl chloride (as the particular case indicates) is administered. This is truly a great experience, as most of the graduates have never had the opportunity to administer a general anesthetic or to operate upon a patient who is under its influence. The interne receives the opportunity in Oral Surgery to become dexterous with his surgical instruments, to discriminate between retained roots and tooth buds, and also to manage children who are highly nervous and excitable.

The young dentist who likes technique and is meticulous about sterility will enjoy the Root Canal Therapy Clinic. The process of ionization is carried out on a very elaborate scale. The interne's hands and arms are scrubbed, he is gowned, masked and gloved. The patient is draped and the field of operation is kept as sterile as is humanly possible. The efficiency of this procedure is manifested in the very enviable record of the Clinic, as it has not lost a single case treated in this department.

The interne may then go to the Oral Diagnosis Clinic for X-ray work, or to the Tooth-Brush Drill Room, where children are taught by the hygienists how to brush their teeth properly. And so I may continue at greater length to speak of further benefits to be derived. It is needless to say that one receives a training in this institution that is of invaluable benefit for his professional career.

At times, the routine of clinic life might possibly tend towards monotony were it not for the compensating element of humorous incidents and pranks that one encounters daily. It is not unusual to be sitting in the lounge room between assignments and to hear some fellow enlarge upon his achievements. I am reminded here of a recent incident. One interne said that while at school he plugged five Class III gold foils on one patient at one sitting, allegedly taking about three hours for the operation. But, in walked a classmate to refute this braggadocio with, "It is funny you needed fifteen of those points only one week before graduation." Or, again, to hear the interne from the Oral Surgery Clinic tell about administering ethyl chloride topically for an extraction. While doing so he found that the child was biting him. It had inhaled the ethyl chloride, and was therefore under general anesthesia. But for our very efficient nurse, the interne said he too might have passed out. Another incident that has occurred more than once concerns a slight misunderstanding. An interne seemed highly amused as he stepped off the elevator one afternoon. When asked to share his mirth, he explained that he was sent to see Mister Williger. On arriving at the office, he inquired of the lady whom he saw for Mr. Williger. She affirmed that she was Miss Terwilliger. The interne, non-plussed, soon realized that someone had been having fun at his expense.

In closing, I cannot urge too strongly upon new graduates the necessity for at least one year's internship in a dental clinic. Every medical man who loves his profession and has the welfare of his prospective clientele at heart seeks, before embarking on his professional career, a year's internship in a reputable hospital. Although not legally required in the dental profession, professional pride and that innate desire to ren-

der efficient service ought to likewise to impel the young dental graduate to seek an internship. He will gain experience which he can get in no other way. He will become, so to speak, acclimated to the work he has chosen as his career. He will come in contact with cases which will test his resourcefulness. He will secure an approach to his work and to his clients which will obliterate that feeling of "newness" and uncertainty so prevalent among young graduates. Patients will feel, when he approaches them, that there is no experimenting novice just out of school. In a word, the dental interne will find, at the end of his year's venture, that he has gained something surpassing his fondest expectations.

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