THE JANEWAY MEDAL AND ITS ALLEGORY*

For over a third of a century a special committee of the American Radium Society has annually chosen a distinguished speaker to deliver a Lecture in memory of one of this country's pioneers in radium therapy—Dr. Henry Harrington Janeway. The idea originated with Dr. Burton J. Lee, President of the Society in 1933; the first Janeway Memorial Lecture was delivered that year in Chicago.

Dr. Janeway was a New York surgeon who had done work in bronchoscopy and gastroscopy, as well as in the pathogenesis of cancer, when he became, in 1912, Chief of the Department of Cancer Surgery and Radiation Therapy of the Memorial Hospital of New York. In collaboration with Duane, he developed the radon-containing capillary glass seeds that were used for interstitial irradiation of tumors. Among his various interests was the work with "radium pack" for external irradiation and the use of heat as a radiosensitizing radio-therapeutic adjuvant. Dr. Janeway died in 1927, from an adamantinoma of the mandible which had appeared 22 years previously.

In 1937, Dr. Edward H. Skinner, President-elect of the American Radium Society, conceived the idea of a Janeway Medal to be awarded to the chosen speakers. For the allegory of the medal Dr. Skinner and a young artist, Miss Stephanie Prince, of Kansas City, Missouri, sought inspiration in Norse mythology. For the pertinent facts, I offer the reader this synopsis:

In yesterdays of old there was naught, no earth, no sea, no breeze, no heavens above: only a huge yawning cleft. To the north of it was Nilfheim, the cold home of the dead, from which twelve rivers poured southward to fill and freeze-over the chasm; to the south was Muspelheim, the land of fire, whence came the clouds that produced the mist. The first drops of mist gave birth to the giant, Imir, and to the frost maidens. Imir had three sons; the sons quelled their giant progenitor: with his body they made the earth, his blood was transformed into seas to surround it, his skull became the vaulted sky.

The sun knew not his dwelling nor the moon her realm; there were no stars in the northern sky: from sparks of Muspelheim they were all created. From Imir's eyebrow a huge wall was fashioned to protect Midgard, the Norse Garden of Eden. The first man arose from an ash tree; a hard and tall elm tree was transfigured into the first lissome blonde woman. A wondrous ash tree supported their universe; beneath one of its roots there was a well of pure water, so holy that none might drink from it: it was guarded by Urda, Verdandi and Skuld (past, present and future). To this well the gods came each day to sit and pass judgment on the deeds of men.

The Valkyries were the divine maidens who waited on tables and kept the drinking horns full at Asgard, the home of the gods; riding their armored steeds, beckoning with their beautiful white hands and ethereal silhouettes, the Valkyries retained their right to a half share of the brave warriors fallen in battle. The slain were inveigled to Valhalla, the hall where they fought and feasted in Odin's honor.

Odin, one of Imir's sons, was the chief god of the northern pantheon, the giver of victory and the god of the dead. A solemn and aloof father figure, gifted in poetry and magic, Odin was distinguished by his wisdom, rather than by his martial prowess; supreme among gods and men, he constantly sought more knowledge: he went to the Well of Wisdom, guarded by Mimir the Wise, begged for a draught of knowledge and agreed to pay the price: one of his own eyes.

Odin had two ravens, *Hugin* and * Munin* (thought and memory) which flew each day through the world and returned to perch on his shoulders, bringing him news of men and their deeds. While others feasted at Gladsheim palace, Odin gave his food to the wolves that crouched at his feet and pondered the thoughts which his ravens had brought him.

No one could envision the plight of the morrow; the dream of remote happiness was meager sustenance against despair. Supreme sacrifices were often offered to Odin; he offered his life to himself by hanging from a tree of which no man knows.

The Janeway Medal’s allegory depicts Odin delivering his eye to Mimir in exchange for the privilege of knowledge (Fig. 1): a symbol of the sacrifice of the pioneers of radium therapy. On the reverse, Odin’s ravens are beautifully shown (Fig. 2): they have become the symbols of the American Radium Society. Miss Prince’s design was handsomely executed by Tiffany of New York.

The Medal was first awarded in 1937, during the meeting of the American Radium Society held in conjunction with the Fifth International Congress of Radiology, in Chicago. Five medals were struck in order to award them to Dr. Douglas Quick, Janeway’s assistant, and retrospectively, to four previous Lecturers: Doctors James Ewing, Francis Carter Wood, George E. Pfahler and Curtis F. Burnam.

Since 1933, the Janeway Medal has been awarded 34 times; the 1969 Lecturer was Dr. J. Franz Buschke, who received the Medal for his lecture: "Radiation Therapy: The Past, The Present, The Future."

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