

Konmarock, October 12, 1955

Lieber Kuid:

By your time it is quarter of three - I hope you are sound asleep with vaguely pleasant dreams to beguile the long, however unconsciously long hours of the night. As for me, I doubt that I can learn anything further from the medical journals tonight. Tomorrow I shall examine father thoroughly, then take some blood for examination to Abingdon, and provide myself with gastric tubes and fixative solutions for making gastric smears in the course of the next few days. I shall also try to get the X-ray films from Dr Gabriel. As soon as I have assembled all the records I shall take the train to Philadelphia. ~~for~~ I want to talk to Drs Hopkins, Raker, and perhaps Dr. Prendergast - if your father can make the introduction and to Dr Chamberlain if I can corner him. Then I shall go to N.Y. for an interview with Dr. Kirsch and then to Cambridge, where I hope to arrive no later than Thursday October 20. There I want to talk with Dr. Schatzki and Dr. J. Engel^{duffy} Dumphy. Would you please call Dr Dumphy's office - He is some sort of professor of surgery at Harvard Medical School and tell his secretary that I am an HMS 54 graduate, that there is a serious possibility of gastric carcinoma in my father's illness and that I should like to have his advice - on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday of that week (Oct 19, 20, 21,) if possible.

As I see the situation now, there is about one chance in ten - or one chance in seven that the ulcer is malignant or will become so within the next five years. ~~With~~ My aversion to violent interference of nature's - or God's way, my fear of the operation and its sequelae,

and my scepticism concerning its actual value, make me very reluctant to advise immediate operation. Dr Gabriel agrees - this was his opinion in the first place, and he wanted me to agree with him. We have instituted a very strict ulcer regime to last until the ulcer has healed, or until the decision is made to operate. Unless the doctor can convince me of the contrary, that question will again be raised about Nov. 11, when Dr Gabriel will repeat the X-rays to see what changes - if any, have taken place. I am not certain, but I believe my parents agree with my view about this as a religious matter. However there is great need for incisive and deliberate thought. That is what I have been doing.

We are keeping the extent of Papa's ~~conv~~ convalescence (at least 8-16 weeks a secret, for fear that old don't you see might garner some gutter physician for the interval. I have decided to adhere to the old Union concept of "no contract - no work." I will visit Dr Kinch and Dr Verberding, to find out whether they want me, and if they do, to try to work out a written agreement. I am fairly sure that something can be arranged. Otherwise a crisis of no mean proportions would arise for my parents - at the ~~at~~ worst possible time. Mother will be unable to help in the office while father is ill. Hence the Board must supply someone, if they want me to start before you are free. Barring a malignancy, ~~father~~ or a serious complication of operation - if there must be one - I think father will want to do some portion of the work in 6 or 9 months.

Until then I should be on my own, presumably I would be deferred from the draft if necessary.

You can imagine how I miss my books and my leisure. How I would like to find out just what he means by "potentially" but with all the responsibility suddenly upon me, I cannot be sad or depressed. Probably tomorrow, or the day after I shall start work again, and perhaps I can have a few more weeks in Cambridge. Please be nice to Miss Vallant. I fear we may have to return once more to Cambridge - some years hence, more humble and more resigned, but never wholly so while I am. Meanwhile fate seems to have put me in a pivotal position for my parents from which I cannot escape - nor would I want to.

I will be calling Kounaroch every other day to ascertain how well father is resting. Any complication that arose would make me come back immediately. I shall discuss the J.I. series with Dr Gabriel and probably come back toward the end of November unless operation were determined upon sooner, or unless New York and I could agree upon a document to sign. In that case he would stay in Cambridge until we could move South together.

And now good night - or rather good morning. In tonight's dream I shall be wearing mask and gown and firmly gripping a retractor. Please be good. Take care of yourself and do not

worry about me. My cold is somewhat better.

Dear

John.

Please send my suit to Philadelphia. No books.

P.S. This morning it looks as if I could not leave father and mother for any length of time, but should return after my trip. We will have to wait . . .