

1889-1976

GERALD MELHADO could be considered a member of the so-called old school. He was born in Old Harbour, Jamaica, on November 22, 1889. His early years were spent there, attending private school and taking the Cambridge entrance examinations as well as completing requirements sufficient for him to come to Canada and to enter McGill University. He became a medical student in 1908 and he graduated in 1914. One year was spent as an intern, and this was followed by two resident years in general surgery: one of those was served under Professor Edward Archibald, considered by some to be the father of chest surgery.

Then came the first world war! This interlude witnessed him serving in the Canadian Army Medical Corps, where he was stationed in England and in Salonika. He returned to Canada in 1919.

It was then he came under the influence of Professor Walter W. Chipman. He completed one year as a fellow in physiology at McGill as well as three years residency training in the old Montreal Maternity Hospital and the Royal Victoria Hospital.

Under the direction of Dr. Chipman his most outstanding contribution was made when he inaugurated a comprehensive outpatient maternity service. This consisted of a central outpatient department plus five separate clinics placed in strategic areas throughout Montreal. Under this department, home deliveries were carried out by a team consisting of a graduate nurse, student nurse, intern, and medical student. In its heyday, well over 500 infants per year were delivered in their own homes.

Gerald Melhado had an extraordinary clinical sense as well as being a well-trained and dextrous surgeon. In his quiet way he was an outstanding teacher, equally competent in teaching undergraduate and postgraduate students. His investigative endeavors were limited to the clinical field, and he published many studies relative to the abnormal female pelvis and dystocia. He belonged to several scientific societies, being elected to the American Gynecological Society in 1937. Evidence of his accomplishments were degrees in the American, British, and Canadian Colleges of Surgeons.

His charming wife, Eleanor, must be mentioned. She graduated as a nurse from the Royal Victoria Hospital, and after one year as a head nurse, she enlisted and was attached to the Canadian and British Expeditionary Forces, where she served with distinction in France and in England. She had known Gerald during undergraduate nursing years. They became engaged just at the outbreak of war and they were finally married in 1922.

The Melhados have had no family, but they have raised and educated a nephew who is now a prominent pulp and paper executive. Although he was never officially adopted, he continues to refer to them as father and mother.

Gerald's interests outside of the hospital and his family were only two: his greatest love was fishing, especially for trout, and he was an avid hunter in the fall.

I received an information letter from a member of our staff, Dr. Thomas Primrose. A paragraph must be quoted.

From my own experience, and I am sure you will agree with what I am going to say, Dr. Melhado was truly a physician's physician. There was never a time that Dr. Melhado did not make himself completely available for consultations when we were stuck. He certainly used to worry me, as a good Scotsman, that the fees he received as a consultant for the advice that saved mothers' and babies' lives, were in no way commensurate with the skills and advice he gave and certainly were not a fraction of what some of our colleagues charged who were ostensibly in command of the case—but this is by the by.

A vague neurologic condition began about five years ago. It was progressive and he finally lost the power of speech. Nevertheless, he was mentally astute and quite clear in his comprehension until he died in the Veterans' Hospital on January 10, 1976.

He lived in a era of upset and turmoil that spanned two world wars. In addition, the upheaval occurring in medical procedures and practice never seemed to ruffle his quiet disposition. He must truly be labeled a *gentle-man*.

NEWELL W. PHILPOTT