
IN MEMORIAM

DR. J. HENRY CARSTENS

BY DR. JOHN N. BELL

JOHN Henry Carstens, founder, ex-president, and one of the most active and enthusiastic members of our Association, died August 7th, 1920, at his home in Detroit, after an illness of several months.

Born in Kiel, Germany, June, 1848, Dr. Carstens came to America in the early years of his life, his parents locating in the vicinity of Detroit where he received his education in the Public Schools and German-American Seminary. His medical education was received in the Detroit College of Medicine, from which institution he graduated in 1870. By dint of hard work, and an indomitable will, Dr. Carstens rapidly forged his way to the front ranks of his profession so that at the time of his death he bore an international reputation as a skillful surgeon and successful teacher, was president of the faculty of his Alma Mater and without a doubt the most highly esteemed member of his profession in the State of Michigan.

As a token of the respect and esteem in which he was held by the profession of Detroit, at a recent dinner tendered him in honor of the completion of his fiftieth year of active practice, over two hundred physicians and surgeons were present and by way of speech and kindly salutation expressed their sincere admiration for this truly great man.

Dr. Carstens' hobby was teaching. He was never quite so happy as when pounding home some truth in medicine to a body of interested students or practitioners.

Although he enjoyed an unusually large practice in surgery and consultation, Dr. Carstens was not wealthy, the question of financial remuneration for his services being always secondary to that of the welfare of his patient.

Dr. Carstens was intensely interested in the world wide warfare against cancer, and never lost an opportunity, in and out of season, to warn women especially against the insidious nature of this dread disease.

Notwithstanding a constant activity in the practice of his profession, Dr. Carstens still found time to be closely in touch with civic affairs in Detroit and Michigan, having at one time been a candidate for Mayor and even at the time of his death was an active member of the City Plan Commission.

A loving father and husband, he will be missed most, of course, by his own family, but he will also be missed, for many years to come, in medical circles in Detroit, and State and National medical conferences where he was so well known and highly esteemed.

To the members of this Society it seems hardly necessary to reiterate what is so well known to you all. His virile personality, his rugged honesty, his forceful antagonism in debate and with all his kindly smile and hearty salutation—these and many other characteristics had endeared him to us all.

To those who were more intimately acquainted with him, an even more tender bond of affection existed, for to know Dr. Carstens intimately was to love him.

And so it can be truly said of Dr. Carstens that his was a life of real service, and in the final summing up, if the estimate of a man's success is based upon the amount of service rendered to his fellow-men, then Dr. Carstens was indeed a monumental success.



Dr. J. Henry Carstens.

from: VALENTINE (RIDENBOUGH) 1897
Bio of McDowell with sketches of eminent
American ObGyn

J. HENRY CARSTENS, M.D.,

DETROIT, MICH.,

Was born June 9, 1848, in the city of Kiel, in the German province of Schleswig Holstein. His father, John Henry Carstens, a merchant tailor, was an ardent revolutionist, and participated in the various revolts in the memorable years of 1848-49. He had been captured and was in prison when his son was born; after some months he was released and began attending to his business, but, fearing that he might be again imprisoned, he packed up a few goods and, with his family, left in the dead of the night for America. On his arrival he settled in Detroit, where he has since remained. One of his grandfathers was an architect and builder; another a shipbuilder; many of his uncles, with other relatives, were officers in the army and navy, and nearly all of them participated in the revolution and were forced to leave Germany and come to the United States.

J. H. Carstens is the elder of two children. His earlier education was received in the public schools of Detroit, supplemented by six years' attendance at the German-American Seminary. While receiving instruction at the latter institution his parents lived on a farm four and a half miles from the city, which distance he was compelled

to walk twice a day. He evinced, even as a boy, an eager desire for intellectual work, excelled as a student, and took high rank in his studies, especially in those pertaining to natural sciences and mathematics. Before he had attained his fifteenth year he was compelled to engage in business, and, after some time devoted to lithography, he entered the drug store of William Thum, and afterward served in Duffield's drug store and with B. E. Sickler. He became proficient in the various details of the business, served one year as prescription clerk in Stearns's drug store, and then began the study of medicine, his name being the first on the matriculation book of the Detroit Medical College. Even before graduation he had charge of the college dispensary, and after his graduation, in 1870, he was immediately put in charge of the college dispensary, and a few years later held the same position in St. Mary's Hospital Infirmary. He was appointed lecturer on minor surgery in the Detroit Medical College in 1871, and afterward lecturer on diseases of the skin and clinical medicine.

He has lectured on almost every branch of medical science, the most important subjects so treated being diseases of women and children, differential diagnosis, nervous diseases, physical diagnosis, pathology, chemistry, materia medica, and therapeutics. His taste and practice gradually tended to the diseases of women; and, after holding the professorship of materia medica and therapeutics in the Detroit Medical College for some years, in 1881 he accepted the professorship of obstetrics and clinical gynecology, a position he has ever since held; and on the consolidation with the Michigan College of Medicine he was appointed to the same position in the Detroit College of Medicine. As a lecturer on medical subjects he has performed most satisfactory labors, is thorough in his investigations and in the application of knowledge gained by practical experience and unremitting research. He is

His advance as a physician has been steady and sure ; he has been a continuous student and a hard worker ; his practice has grown into an extensive and remunerative one, and he finds his time and hands fully occupied. He has given to certain diseases close and special attention, and has worked out for them peculiar, independent, and successful modes of treatment. Among his professional brethren he holds the place due to his talents and manly character, and is ever ready to aid any enterprise that may be originated for the good of the public. Although his professional duties are onerous, he finds time for general reading, and keeps well informed in a wide range of intellectual culture ; is thorough and earnest in all that he undertakes ; and has the undivided good-will and respect of the community in which he dwells.

He was married October 18, 1870, to Hattie Rohnert, who had for some time been a teacher in one of the public schools.

