

# ABERDEEN DOCTORS



ELLA HILL BURTON RODGER

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THE  
NARRATIVE OF A MEDICAL SCHOOL

“ Nothing is denied to well-directed labour ; nothing is to be  
attained without it.”—REYNOLDS.

# ABERDEEN DOCTORS

AT HOME AND ABROAD

*THE NARRATIVE OF A MEDICAL SCHOOL*

BY

ELLA HILL BURTON RODGER

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

MDCCCXCIII



Dedicated to the Graduates of Aberdeen University

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A

CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMING

FOURTH CENTURY CELEBRATION

OF THE

FOUNDATION OF THE UNIVERSITY

OF ABERDEEN.

1 GOLDEN SQUARE,  
ABERDEEN, 1892.



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## INTRODUCTION.

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THIS book is offered as an addition to sketches of life in the past, chiefly from unpublished sources, and represents the popular progress of medicine in our country, illustrated by its history in the North of Scotland. Passing from doctors in old times and early Aberdeenshire physicians, the narrative of the Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical or Medical Society, founded more than a hundred years ago by twelve students of Marischal College, is given from its own Records. The chief actor in the founding of the Society, Sir James M'Grigor, has been called the maker of British Military Surgery, and he and his fellow-students also laid the foundation of the Medical and Anatomical School of the North of Scotland.

The Society possessed as members medical practitioners, army and navy surgeons, medical ministers, Aberdeenshire medical men of mark, and stranger physicians and professors of distinction. Its honorary members were noble patrons of medicine, and the Professors of King's and Marischal Colleges. Among remarkable Aberdeenshire medical men were, besides Sir James M'Grigor, Medical Director of the Allied

Forces in the Peninsular War, Dr Neil Arnott of London, Dr Milne of Bombay, Dr Kilgour of Aberdeen, Dr Abercrombie of Edinburgh, and Dr Matthews Duncan of London. Sketches of their careers are given, and also of the lives of Dr Adams of Banchory, Dr Cran of Tarland, Dr Watt of Old Deer, Dr Andrew Moir, anatomist, and other well-known town and country doctors. Life at school and college in Aberdeen in bygone times is described; and the influence of contemporary education is shown by reference to the medical schools of Edinburgh and London. Some account of "resurrection days" is also given. The author will be gratified if her work, a labour of love, finds favour with those who are interested in the story of the past, and she desires to thank all who have kindly helped her. Medicine mingles closely with human life, but the warrior and the statesman are often remembered when the physician is forgotten.

The progress of a Medical School, founded with much difficulty in a Northern University town, amid the great war of the Revolution, by a race noted for distinctive character and indomitable vigour and perseverance, shows to what success well-directed labour can attain.



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## CHAPTER I.

### PHYSICIANS IN THE PAST.

The primitive doctor—Before the Reformation and after—Aberdonian physicians at foreign Courts and at home in Bon-Accord—Physicians and apothecaries in Aberdeenshire two hundred years ago.

THE origin of medicine, hidden in the mist of ages, carries us back to the old home story of the world, and is more or less interesting to us all. The physician is with us from the cradle to the grave, and the primitive doctor of old history may have his modern representative.

A writer describes the early medicine-man of primeval tribes as old, grave, sedate, and cunning, with some knowledge of roots and herbs, and a little rough medical and surgical skill. He affected supernatural powers, and his victims sometimes revenged themselves for the deaths of relations by killing the doctor. The East was the first home of medicine, as of religion and civilisation, and physicians formed into a class apart and became priests. Mid-wifery was in the hands of women from the earliest time, and for

ages medicine remained with the priesthood, constituting one of its strongest holds over mankind. Under the reign of a medical priesthood cruelty and beneficence went hand in hand. When Christianity shattered the past, surgery became the art of monks in monasteries, who lectured on medicine in the universities. The Physician who was not a priest dabbled in many arts. Chaucer has in his 'Canterbury Pilgrims' a finely-drawn portrait of a worldly-wise fourteenth-century medical doctor, in these graphic words:—

“There was a doctor of physie,  
 In all this world there was none him like  
 To speak of physie and of surgery ;  
 He was grounded in astronomy,  
 And kept his patient wonderfully well  
 In hours by his magie natural.  
 . . . . .  
 Full ready had he his apothecaries,  
 To send him drugs and his electuaries,  
 For each of them made th' other for to win ;  
 Here friendship was not new to begin.  
 . . . . .  
 Of his diet measurable was he,  
 For it was of no superfluity,  
 But of great nourishment and digestible.  
 His study was but little on the Bible.  
 In sanguine and in perse he clad was all,  
 Linéd with taffeta and with sendal.  
 And yet he was but easy in dispense ;  
 He kepte that he won in pestilence.  
 For gold in physie is a cordial ;  
 Therefore he lovéd gold in special.”

It is surprising to read so thoroughly lifelike a description of a sagacious medical man, long before the day when a bishop, described as one of the best and wisest men of his time, “confessed that old wives and stars were his counsellors, his night-spell was his guard, and charms were his physician ; whilst he wore Paracelsan characters for the toothache, and a little hallowed wax as an antidote for every ill.”

With the Reformation advanced a great future for medicine.

The new Revolution produced for a time destruction of scholarship. Education could not at once be acquired by those whose struggle was for bare life; but the sons of the proprietor, the farmer, and the merchant seized the medical and other lucrative professions which dropped from the hands of the priests. As secular power grew, surgery became the speciality of the barber-surgeons, and the merchants claimed the sale of drugs. So slight appears to have been the craft of surgery that barber and surgeon were generally the same, and the old word *leech* represented the physician as a bleeder. The striped pole which, along with a gilt plate, barbers still sometimes display, was originally intended as a rude representation of a bandaged limb or the bleeding-stick. The history of anatomy does not date far from our own times, for natural repugnance to the dissection of the human body kept men thousands of years from the simplest anatomical truths.

What was, meanwhile, the condition in early days of the north-east of Scotland, in that far-off corner of Caledonia, which even then had its vigorous people—a mingling of Lowland Scot and fiery Norse with nimble Highlander? The scourges of disease were many and fatal here. The two great curses of the middle ages—leprosy and the plague—held their own in Aberdeenshire from a very early period: against their inroads medical skill prevailed not, and their depredations struck terror into the stoutest hearts. The leper hospital, from which the 'Spital between New and Old Aberdeen takes its name, eventually fell into disuse, but so late as in 1589 the records of Aberdeen chronicle the death of a leper living there. The city papers, kept carefully even in troublous times, tell an awful story of the plague. From the first year of the fifteenth century to 1647 it broke out ten times. The last attack was the greatest, and took place amid the horrors of civil war, whilst Royalist and Roundhead were struggling for dominion, when Aberdeen was the scene of warfare and confusion, and the battle of the Bridge of Dee was fresh in the memory of the townsfolk.

In 1647 the population of Aberdeen was 9000, and about a fifth of the inhabitants perished from the plague. For nearly six months there was no divine service in the great town's church of St Nicholas, and the college classes were removed to Fraserburgh and Peterhead. As in Edinburgh at the Boroughmuir, huts were built at Woolmanhill and on the links. A guard of soldiers separated the sufferers from the town, and any one who tried to escape was hanged on the spot. A great pit on the sea-shore received the bodies of those whom no physician could cure.

The burning of witches in Aberdeen continued past the close of the sixteenth century. Medical mesmerism was freely used by witch and wizard finders, when the devil's mark was sought. Needles were driven into the flesh of the accused, who felt no pain, and were forthwith condemned as guilty. There were long-established hospitals for the sick. Alexander Skene of Newtyle has recorded four in Aberdeen—one for decayed guild brethren; one, founded by dame Marion Douglas, Lady of Drum, in gratitude for the honour paid by the town of Aberdeen to her late husband at his funeral, for indigent women and the virgin daughters of burgesses of guild; there was a hospital for tradesmen founded by Dr Guild, preacher and sometime Principal of King's College, which contained, Mr Skene tells, "a spacious comely room"; and a hospital for litsters or dyers, their wives, children, and servants—"a goodly house with a stately entry."

In the first volume of the Miscellany of the New Spalding Club there is mention of early physicians in Aberdeen among the burgesses of guild. The first medical man mentioned is Mr Walter Pendargest, medicus, 1444.

Granite-land seems specially calculated to rear those fit to combat difficulties, as Aberdeenshire, in a long record of her sons' successes in the great Beyond, can show. Life abroad was more profitable and pleasant for the physician than life in his own town. The reign of King James I., which brought multitudes of needy Scots-

men to England, filled their empty pockets, and clad them in fine attire, produced three distinguished physicians from Aberdeenshire.

Dr Barclay, of the noble family of Barclay of Ury, in Aberdeenshire, was the writer of Latin poems in favour of tobacco,—“the only medicament in the world ordained by nature to entertain good company.” His praise of the Spa Well, afterwards at the foot of the painter Jamesone’s garden by the Schoolhill of Aberdeen, made it celebrated far and near. This well he considered equal to the Spa of Liège. Its fame as a health-resort lasted till the days of the Rebellion in 1745, when it was noticed in the diary of a soldier in the Duke of Cumberland’s army, who describes it as a little round hill in rural Aberdeen, with a fountain of clear water and a bubbling spring. Dr Barclay’s treatise on the Spa was very ornate. The following verse may be cited as an English rendering of part of his Latin exordium:—

“The sun at night sets in thy sight,  
And last with thee is seen;  
Long more then reign of fountains king,  
Brave nymph of Aberdeen.”

Mr Gavin Turreff, in his ‘Gleanings from Aberdeenshire Records,’ describes the versifying physician converting Jack’s Brae and Short Loanings, the immediate and most unromantic neighbourhood of the Spa, into “Parnassus’ forkèd mount,” and in poetic style conjuring up the Graces, Apollo, the Muses, a phoenix, silver wands, and Titan’s beams to frame his picture. The well had in Dr Barclay’s day a white stone graven with the figures of the apostles; and according to report, many influential citizens of Aberdeen were cured of illness by it, and among others George Jamesone, the painter, who enclosed it afterwards in his garden. “The poet,” said Mr Turreff, “would be sadly disappointed if he could look up and witness the chilling neglect to which the favourite nymph is consigned; and if his heart did not break with sorrow, he would certainly seat himself on the Infirmary dike and

sing a woful monody on the folly and fickleness of man." Beside the site of the old well now stands a greater infirmary, as if medicine haunted still the brink of the Spa and the Corbie Well in the Denburn Gardens, dear unto Aberdonian hearts. In the appendix to Dr Barclay's treatise on the Well of Spa is a long list of citizens of Aberdeen cured of "deadly colics and desperate hydropsies" by its means, including a sheriff-depute, a sheriff-clerk, and a bailie. The doctor takes occasion at the same time to denounce all "barbarous apothecaries, Highland leeches, impostors and mountebanks, mercurial mediciners, rubbers with quicksilver, and all who can give no reason for their livelihood." A side-light is thus thrown upon provincial Scottish medicine in old times and on old-world charlatanism. Curious to behold, the Aberdeen Almanac, a book of annual prodigies, has a sly hit at the town doctors. Having prophesied "uncouth sickness" for one year, it prophesies that "Monsieur Medicus his skill shall fail, and a merry, greedy man shall say in his sickness that he was not so anxious to make him quit of his malady as of his money."

Dr Barclay was one of those talented north-country physicians who did not give up their native land altogether for foreign Courts and honours, though those were days when Aberdeen was unable to educate her medical students. Aberdonians have generally been resentful of those who have left their town without some goodly work bestowed on "Bon-Accord," and its distinguished men have been remarkable for their devotion to "the silver city by the sea."

Dr Duncan Liddell, a physician of Continental fame, spent his latter days in Aberdeen. He was born there in the reign of Mary Queen of Scots, and was educated at the Aberdeen Grammar School and King's College. His medical studies were completed at Frankfurt on the Oder, and he settled in North Germany, at Helmstadt University, where he taught mathematics, and became physician to the Duke of Brunswick. Dr Meryon in his valuable 'History of Medicine' gives a vivid picture of popular medicine



in the days of Duncan Liddell. Astrology and alchemy ruled ; but the Aberdonian doctors had little belief in them, and were noted for that solid realism characteristic of their race, which leaves no room for imagination. Dr Liddell headed the advancing medical school of plain common-sense, though in his day people worshipped the stars, believed that the planets ruled men's lives, and dreamed of the stone that turned into gold. A German doctor wrote a pamphlet about a boy who had a golden tooth in his head, which he explained by the sun having been in conjunction with Saturn in Aries when he was born, and causing such heat that gold was created instead of bone. Two physicians were of his opinion, and Dr Liddell was looked upon with great animosity because in his treatise '*De dente aurea*' he suggested that, as the boy's parents would not allow the tooth to be examined, it was probably gilded.

In his older days Dr Liddell returned a wealthy man to Aberdeen. He was somewhat of a courtier ; his '*Medical Art*,' published in Latin in Hamburg, was dedicated to King James, and a treatise on Fevers to the Prince of Wales, afterwards Charles I. King James's eldest son, the hope of the nation, a youth of great ability and promise just entering manhood, had died shortly before of virulent typhoid fever, a disease ill understood by the physicians who attended him. A memorial brass, in the town's church of Aberdeen, is lettered, "To the eternal memory of Duncan Liddell, Doctor of Medicine, eminent in medicine and in all philosophy and mathematics." The drawing of the old worthy has all the minuteness of a photograph. Duncan Liddell is represented sitting in his study in a handsome chair at his table, writing with a quill pen in an open book. A diploma with two seals hanging from it is lying beside him. The old Scottish doctor has bushy eyebrows, and a shrewd Scottish face with a pointed beard, and is hard at work, carefully displaying at the same time a large ring upon the thumb of his right hand. He wears a warm

cap, which protects the back of his head from cold, and is dressed in a doublet richly furred. Around him are learned tomes and mathematical instruments.

Dr Arthur Johnstone, of Aberdeen, was a good type of the old physician. Learned with all the accomplishments that universities could give, yet withal a pedant. As was the fashion, he was one of the physicians to the king. In the Senatus-room in Marischal College hangs his portrait, by his friend George Jamesone, representing a pleasant-faced, plump man, with affectation of rural simplicity, holding a rose in his hand. Dr Johnstone was of the family to which belonged the estate of Caskieben, near Aberdeen, by Kintore and Inverurie, and employed leisure hours in turning into verse praises of his paternal land and the town of Aberdeen, celebrating in verse noble ladies, his patronesses, even their lapdogs. It seems as if he must have talked in Latin, and he was more celebrated as rivalling the historian Buchanan by translating the Psalms than by any medical work he wrote. He wrote a poem on a beauty of Aberdeen afflicted with skin disease, and another upon the death of a midwife, whose retirement into the Aberdeen Tolbooth for evil-speaking caused some disturbance to her patients. The honours of medicine remained in those days with a learned class, who joined with it the study of philosophy, belles-lettres, and others too numerous to mention. The practitioner in the small country town who dispensed his drugs, the "wise man" or "wise woman" of a rural district, were more useful to the public. Dr Arthur Johnstone writes grandiosely of his paternal domain and himself thus :—

" Here was I born ; o'er all the land  
 Around the Johnstones bear command,  
 Of high and ancient line.  
 Mantua acquired a noted name  
 As Virgil's birthplace ; I my fame  
 Inherit shall from mine."

Dr Joseph Robertson, in 'The Book of Bon-Accord,' follows



a short account of the Aberdeen Medical Society with a list of eminent Aberdeen doctors abroad in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Among them he mentions Robert Straloch, who practised physic in Paris, and in his later days in Aberdeen; also two Doctors Morrison, one of whom, an alchemist, wrote on the transformation of metals as well as on 'The Poppedom, and Increase of Depravity in Religion,' still considered a rarely learned work. He was the intimate friend of Lord Bacon, to whom he applied for Court favour, and is said to have given valuable information about Scotland to the English Government. A second Dr Morrison, who studied at Marischal College, was wounded in the head at the battle of the Bridge of Dee fighting for King Charles I. Retiring to France, he was made keeper of the Royal Gardens, and at the Restoration came to London, where he was appointed one of the king's physicians and professor of botany. Dr Gilbert Jack of Aberdeen, who wrote '*Institutiones Medicæ*,' became a professor at Leyden. Dr James Leith, of a good Aberdeenshire family, Rector of the University of Paris, practised in that city in the earlier part of the seventeenth century, "rich in praise and profit." Dr Chamberlain, an Aberdonian, was surgeon to the Queen of James VI. Dr Alexander Reid of Aberdeen, a remarkable man, was the first who read lectures on physic to the barber-surgeons in London. He lived in the city "in splendour," and, says a Latin epitaph, left "a monument of charity" behind him. Dr Thomas Forbes was professor of medicine at Pisa, and Dr Andrew Cadenhead practised in Padua. Another Aberdeen doctor who came to great honour abroad was Dr Davidson, Court physician to King Casimir of Poland, a brilliant alchemist, and a follower of Paracelsus. Dr Thomas Burnet, of the family of Burnet of Leys and of Burnet the historian, was physician to Kings Charles II., James II., William III., and to Queen Anne.

Doctors who remained at home in these days, and in the provinces, did not acquire so much wealth or so much distinction as

those who were brave enough to go abroad. Physicians in Aberdeen were also druggists, and sometimes were professors in King's and in Marischal Colleges. The history of the early "mediciners," or professors of medicine, in Roman Catholic days in King's College is shrouded in mystery. They had doubtless great medical practices. From the time that the first mediciner monk was sent to Old Aberdeen from the Continent by Bishop Elphinstone, a herb-garden was attached to the College. Dr Cumming, professor of medicine in the early part of the sixteenth century in Old Aberdeen, making a plea of poverty, acquired a right of salmon-fishing on the Don to eke out his income, the bulk of which was payable in "victual" or grain.

Some of the physicians in Aberdeen kept taverns—as Dr Urquhart, who, Spalding in his chronicles for the year 1638 tells, fell from a fore-stair or outside timber staircase in the Nether Kirkgate, where his wife kept an ale-house, and was killed.

Dr Gordon, apothecary in Aberdeen in the beginning of the seventeenth century, had a list of his wares published under the name of "Pharmaco-pinax; or, A Table and Tax of the Prices of all usual Medicaments, simple and composed, contained in Dr Gordon's Apothecary and Chemical Shop in New Aberdeen, together with certain approved Remedies against Diseases which now most reign among the Commons. *For the use of the people, both poor and rich; profitable to all.*" In 1675 Master Alexander Hay, Aberdonensi Pharmacopœa, addressed a high-flown Latin advertisement to the learned of Aberdeen, signed by Dr James Leslie, Principal of Marischal College, and six other physicians, the whole of the profession then in Aberdeen. Dr Joseph Robertson tells how Principal Leslie was in the year of the restoration of King Charles II. made doctor to the poor of Aberdeen with a salary of £60 a-year.

The roll of Aberdeenshire physicians abroad, as time went on, continued glorious.

Sir Alexander Fraser, physician to King Charles II., was an Aberdonian, and educated in Aberdeen. It is recorded of him that he celebrated the air of Durris as equal to the finest in England as a health-resort, and that he attached himself to the king's expedition into Scotland against the Covenanters as a Church of England man. He was celebrated for his learning and medical skill.

Dr John Arbuthnot, the "friend and companion of Pope, Swift, and Gay," was another notable north-country man. A native of Peterhead, educated at Marischal College, he is nobly sketched in one of Thackeray's masterly essays. Becoming famous by his writings, which it was said had the wit of Swift without his venom, he was appointed physician extraordinary to Queen Anne, having been happily on the spot when Prince George, her Majesty's husband, took suddenly ill. On the queen requiring medical aid herself, and being recovered by Dr Arbuthnot, who passed sleepless nights watching her, his friend the poet Gay, in advertising fashion, wrote :—

" Oh mayst thou henceforth sweetly sleep !  
Shear, swains, oh shear your softest sheep,  
To swell his couch, for well I ween  
He saved the realm who saved the queen."

During the civil wars that devastated Aberdeenshire, medical aid was readily given and well paid, as records tell. After the battle of the Bridge of Dee, when Montrose was punishing the town, the Lord Provost of Aberdeen disbursed moneys for healing the poor soldiers and townsmen left scattered about the country. John Brown, chirurgeon, got for curing four hurt and wounded soldiers £30 Scots, and Jonet Guild, for curing other two wounded "sojers," £13, 6s. 8d. During the war a chirurgeon was hired at £45 a-month, the same as the pay of a lieutenant in the army.

The medical practitioner occasionally resembled here as elsewhere the man of pomp and display of learning, who was at the same time very ignorant. Between him and the quacks who dealt in

charms and wizardry, and the boor whose house held his drugs and herbs and a tavern besides, the wisdom of the good physician was often hid. The following passage from a historical romance describes not inaptly the vanity of the fashionable medical charlatan of the day and the bareness of his pharmacopœia: "The doctor was a pompous little man, dry and smart in his words—he was withal self-conceited and ill-natured; . . . he cured everything with trash, and asses' dung was his infallible panacea. It was extremely simple, easily obtained, and universal in its application."

The Aberdeenshire poll-book for 1689 gives an interesting list of doctors in New Aberdeen. These were—Dr Patrick Chalmers, doctor of physic, his lady and family, taxed at £16, 3s. 6d. Scots; Matthew Mackaile, apothecary chirurgion, a lady, and a child named Matthew, also his household, rated at £15, 4s. Matthew Mackaile, appointed Professor of Medicine in Marischal College in 1717, styled himself "apothecarie and chirurgione, or chirurgico-medico," was a profuse writer on medicine, and exposed the quackery and the hallucinations of alchemists. He was the cousin of Hugh Mackaile, as 'The Book of Bon-Accord' relates, who was "a proper youth, extraordinarily pious," hanged in the Grassmarket, Edinburgh, as a preacher of the Covenanters. His cousin the apothecary "pulled his legs," as was customary, while he hung from the gallows, in order to shorten his sufferings. Mourning being forbidden for criminals, he showed grief, and thrift as well, by wearing the coat in which the unfortunate preacher was hanged. There is a portrait of Dr Matthew Mackaile in the hall of Marischal College, representing a man of courtier-like aspect in a wig and lace cravat, holding a large apothecary's spoon in his hand. The poll-book also chronicles James Strachan, apothecary, chirurgion in Aberdeen, wife, no child, taxed at £14; Mr John Dalgarno, doctor of physic, wife, no family; Andrew Donaldson, apothecary chirurgion; and Dr Lues Gordon, physician and Professor of Medicine in King's College, the only doctor in Old Aberdeen.

Country doctors in Aberdeenshire, as elsewhere throughout Scotland until comparatively recent times, were few and far between. And there were then few roads through which they could pass to reach patients. Nevertheless, in Peterhead two or three physicians are mentioned, amongst them Alexander Cruikshank, chirurgion, and his wife Grissell Farquharson, highly taxed. Fraserburgh, Kintore, and Inverurie were not without one doctor at least two hundred years ago.

Medicine was studied and practised then by landed proprietors and ministers, and there is mention made of an Aberdeenshire laird keeping a private physician of his own. The family of the Aberdeenshire Moirs, from which sprang physicians and learned professors, gives at this time two Moirs, lairds of Scotston, near Aberdeen, who were medical doctors, one having a professorship in King's College. Two medical ministers, the Rev. John Forbes, M.D., of Kincardine O'Neil, and the Rev. William Forbes, M.D., of Waterton, were two ancient worthy medical missionaries.

We learn from the poll-book that in Inverurie burgh, a small country town in Aberdeenshire, there was at the close of the seventeenth century a doctor of medicine, Mr James Milne, whose poll was £12, 6s. sterling. His wife, Marie Irvine, and her son were taxed at 6s. He had two servants, apprentices in medicine, valued at 16s. each, and a lower servant at 9s. 4d. There were two women-servants whose poll was respectively 10s. and 11s. The curious list published by the Old Spalding Club, and edited by Dr Stuart, shows the same names prevailing in town and country as still continue two hundred years after.

Having seen what high positions Aberdeen doctors abroad took in old times, and how they were honoured by their native city, and how they benefited it when they retired there, having made their fortunes, Aberdeen doctors in town and county approaching nearer our own time may be considered.

## CHAPTER II.

## OLD-FASHIONED COUNTRY DOCTORS.

The doctor at festival and funeral—Old medical accounts—In the '45—The Aberdeenshire country surgeon of the eighteenth century—Social customs—The minister as doctor—The student of medicine from the country.

IN early days the country doctor and his wide district, which as an autocrat he ruled, had peculiar histories of their own. In Scotland, and especially in isolated Aberdeenshire, the surgeon was a man of pronounced character. His people were, like himself, rough, strong-hearted, still of speech, firm of action, immovable of will, of aim, and endeavour; if narrow, yet deep and earnest.

The country surgeon represented often, as a man of skill and ability, the best of his profession, but is difficult to conjure from his all but forgotten grave. He was generally the great man of his district; took an active part at births, marriages, and deaths; and may still be traced amid past joys and sorrows of the country-side, from days when hearts beat high that long have ceased to beat, and griefs were living that are long dead and buried.

The toils of the medical man in Aberdeenshire in old days, amid mosses, boulders, mountains, and moors, were like the labours of Hercules. Remuneration was poor, and it was little wonder that the robust and gifted minister's or farmer's son or laird's younger brother preferred going abroad when he had the opportunity, to be a magnificent Court physician handling gold-pieces and wearing



marten-lined robes of silk and velvet, to leading the life of a country doctor at home. But the Court physician must be humble and obsequious that he may ride in his carriage; while his brother of the country, in his comparative poverty, was a king whose word was law, and who held the keys of life and death.

Social customs shed some light on the home lives of our forefathers. In great houses the doctor superintended the birth of the son and heir, but the midwife was in employment amongst all classes. It is not long since midwives were employed by royalty; and when a male physician was engaged for the first time, he was called a "man-midwife." The festival of the newly born had purely a feminine character in the country. The groaning malt and the mystic cheese or "kenno," made in secret and presented at the birth, was a women's symposium, which had its origin in ancient heathen rites. The men of the house were not allowed to interfere in the matter, and made a grave pretence of not knowing what was going on. The birth of the child was followed by a bath of cold water and crossing by a burning brand, for which the medical profession was not responsible.

At marriages the doctor was a welcome and honoured guest. Marriages in Scotland were, till within a comparatively late date, extravagant festivals. The eating and drinking at penny weddings, the feet-washing, the flinging of the stocking, the bride's pie, and the distribution of favours, have been described over and over again. Miss Ferrier, in her inimitable Scottish novel 'Marriage,' tells amusingly of the ancient gentlewoman who lamented the time when "a marriage was a marriage" and favours were "ruggit aff" the bride's dress. She regretted the days when fine ladies, at their lyings-in, sat bolt-upright in bed, with fans in their hands, in their stiffest corsets, finest dresses, toupees, and hats, to receive the doctor and their lady friends.

In the luxurious days of the Restoration there was much expense and show at the funerals of persons of condition in Scotland, as

may be seen in Captain Dunbar's interesting 'Social Life in Former Days.' Borrowing of necessities at these times went on between lords and ladies, especially of the pall—a costly mantle of velvet and gold, which covered the hideous coffins of the day. Widow Jean Campbell, of the north country, wrote to the laird of Gordonston on the death of her husband, inviting him to the procession of his funeral from St Giles' Church to Trinity, and adds—"I do likewise humbly entreat your honour for the lend of your mort-cloth, for it is more to his credit to have it nor the common mort-cloth of Elgin, seeing we expect sundry of his friends." A great nobleman writes to a neighbour, upon the principle that "giff-gaff maks gude friends"—"The Lord having removed my consort from her pilgrimage to her eternal rest in the bosom of her Redeemer, and purposing through His good will to have her corpse interred at Dunrobin, I entreat your lordship may be here, which will do me an singular courtesy, *and engage me to do the like upon occasion.*"

The Arniston memoirs, edited by Mr Omond, give a few particulars which show old funeral customs in Scotland in a strange light. In the seventeenth century there is an account mentioned as payable to the chirurgeon and apothecary Dr Arnot, for embalming the laird of Arniston. The pall or dool-cloth was carried on a horse, the widow and her daughters followed on a horse-litter, the widow wearing a veil and the young ladies holding black fans. The funeral procession was headed by trumpeters, heralds, pursuivants, and pages, with banners emblazoned with the family arms. At the funeral service the schoolmaster was the leading singer. The master of the song-school of Aberdeen was regularly hired out with his scholars to attend the funerals of the nobility and gentry of Aberdeenshire. The embalming of persons of condition was common until a later period, and the chirurgeon-apothecary engaged required to be accomplished in an art we are accustomed to fancy only employed upon the dead of prehistoric Egypt.



"Gilded biscuits" were a speciality at funeral banquets, and are generally mentioned. These were for the ladies, but drinking-bouts at funerals were long and deep. Pursuivants and banners, fans, physicians and surgeons for embalming bodies, and all the grotesque paraphernalia of woe, point to days which borrowed from an older Church pomp and ceremony. In Scotland funerals, as time wore on, became, with the worship of the land, plain and severe, but there was always a feeling that reckless expenditure showed a proper respect for the deceased. An old story told of such funerals may still bear retelling. The faithful old servant of a dead Scottish laird was seen at his master's funeral making prodigious efforts to intoxicate the guests. When remonstrated with, his answer, from which there was no appeal, was, "It was the wull o' the deid that I'se mak ye a' fou at his burial, and his wull maun be obeyed."

At the close of the seventeenth century a relative of the Barclays of Ury died, leaving in his will to his physician, Dr Robertson of Aberdeen, £3, New York money, for his care and pains, besides "payment of his accounts,"—adding, "and if he pleases, for his own satisfaction and future experience, to open and see the cause of my death, he may." The practice of medicine was in a sufficiently extraordinary state from the point of our modern view. So lately as the middle of the seventeenth century an old woman was condemned as a witch because she had taken a ling's head out of a dunghill, and given it, with some sagacity, as a cure for gout. Dr Clark at the same time was paid, no doubt handsomely, for giving the following prescription to Sir Robert Gordon of Gordonston, for his son, ill with a bad cold: "Give him, twice a-day, the juice of twenty slaters, squeezed through a muslin bag in whey: to be continued while he has remains of the cough." Sir Robert Gordon, of wizard celebrity, must have been a dangerous man to hazard a doubtful cure upon. It was only from motives of economy that he did not keep a gallows at Gordonston for the

purpose of hanging any one who did not please him—the loch of Spynie being only a mile distant !

The Lumsdens of Cushnie, in Aberdeenshire, kept their household papers in good order, as accounts for doctors and funerals show in their private history. In the earlier part of the eighteenth century Dr Gregory of Aberdeen's account for medicine to Mrs Bettie Lumsden came to £33, 18s. Scots ; Dr Gordon's, to £37, 16s. Dr Gregory was one of the celebrated Gregory family, Professor of Medicine in King's College, sent for from Aberdeen ; and Dr Gordon was Dr James Gordon, Professor of Medicine in Marischal College. Mrs Bettie had an oak coffin, and Provost Bannerman of Aberdeen sent in a large bill for wine—the favourite funeral wine being canary or sherry sack. "Calling names" for the funeral cost £1, 10s. Scots. 1s. Scots was about 1d. English money, so £1 Scots was less than 2s. One of the lairds of Cushnie, who was much impoverished by debt, was advised to make his wife's funeral as quiet as possible. He answered that he would be as careful as he could, but that "burials here of people that have any character are expensive." The lady's illness incurred a long bill from Francis Legatt, chirurgeon-apothecary. In it are mentioned 8 ounces of cordial mixture, at 4s. ; 3 vomits, at 2s. 6d. each ; 2 drachms of cephalick spirit, 4d. ; 2 bleedings, 2s. 6d. each. Mrs Lumsden died six months after of "wasting" or consumption. The bill continues to detail—eyewater, 1s. ; anodyne purgative, 1s. ; and "blistering plaster for your back," 1s. These and other items came to £1, 17s. Scots. The household accounts for the funeral include shortbreads, ale and brandy, and lyke-wake drink. The coffin cost £1 and the mortcloth 4s. 6d. A woman day and night in attendance for six weeks got 20s. Scots. In 1754, at the laird's funeral, twelve dozen of claret wine was ordered, one dozen madeira, one dozen sherry, three dozen of rum and lemons. Making grave-clothes cost £1, 1s. Scots. The funeral dinner, which was in the month of June, included two plates of roast-beef, the same

of roast mutton, moor-fowl, pigeons, ham, salmon, and pyramid tarts.

In 1715 and 1745 the families of consideration in Aberdeenshire were chiefly Jacobite, and the passion for "the auld Stuarts back again" swayed the laird, the minister, and the doctor. Captain Burt, in his rather spiteful letters from Scotland, tells how he was shocked to see a gentleman of quality embracing with affection a country innkeeper, and was told that he was a "mister," a younger son of good family, who, finding nothing better to do, kept a tavern. The poverty of the country may help to explain how doctors as well as innkeepers in Scotland were not unfrequently highly connected. A list of persons concerned in the Rebellion of 1745-46 in Aberdeenshire shows a strange list of partisans for the Stuarts. Lairds and their surgeons together followed Prince Charlie. At the head of the list stands Lord Lewis Gordon, governor of Aberdeen, Lord Pitsligo, and Irvine of Drum. The country surgeons were great Jacobites. From Fraserburgh, Dr Cruikshanks, surgeon, joined the rebels at Edinburgh. James Volume, surgeon in Peterhead, carried arms in the rebel army. Lady Errol's surgeon, Thomas Volume, a brother of James Volume, espoused his mistress's cause and marched with Prince Charlie. In Meldrum Francis Ross, surgeon, joined the rebels. These were all represented as lurking about the country after Culloden in terror of their lives. Dr Cameron, Lochiel's brother, was captured at Inverness, condemned to death, and shot. Some one listening outside the prison the night before his execution heard the unfortunate physician playing melancholy airs on the pipes.

Doctors were, as might be expected, in some cases worthy of the highest confidence, in others grossly ignorant. Medical education being impossible in many cases for those remote from a university, town success depended on the personal experience and natural disposition of the student of medicine. The houses of country surgeons in Aberdeenshire were rude in the extreme sometimes, thatched

in homely wise, as was too generally the minister's manse, and house and goods were liable to destruction from armed robbers and Highland caterans. In 1750 the doctor of New Deer was rescued from plunder by the intervention of a poor patient, whose life, after the robbers found the doctor's house defended and themselves defeated with bloodshed, would have been sacrificed to vengeance if he had not hid himself.

There are many interesting passages among the old letters of the Dunbars of Thunderton, quoted by Captain Dunbar, to their physicians. From these it would appear that the physician in the eighteenth century got his drugs from London, and charged for them well, but not for his visits. He was obliged to make the staple of his income from medicines, as the idea of paying for a simple visit would have been thought unreasonable. The story of the old lady who, on receiving her doctor's bill, said she would pay for his drugs and return his calls, showed that she understood the medical practice of her time. The country physician was invaluable in many ways to his patients, superintended their workmen, gave them advice about damp houses, and let them know, when he killed a "mart" or bullock, that they might buy a piece "very cheap," as he said. From his farm he sold salt-butter in barrels. As consulting physician he sometimes called in Dr Graham of Edinburgh, the fashionable physician of the day. In a pleasant letter to his patient Dr Graham would advise him to eat and drink what he liked best, with the remark, "I eat and drink what I like, I am never sick and never sorry, I am about your own age." It is curious to know that Dr Graham, who made the science of health his speciality, was proprietor of the once celebrated Temple of Health in Edinburgh, and wrote a treatise on earth-baths. After a successful and extravagant career he removed with his Temple to London, where he went mad, and ended his days in an asylum. All the great county families were mostly in the hands of the nearest country doctor, who had the entire cases of his district without interference or

rivalry. No officious young unmarried man settled in the neighbourhood when the doctor was struggling to save a little for old age and ousted him from the best families. The young doctor was the old man's apprentice and servant, and his gains went to his master.

In dress country surgeons were often rough and shabby, style and fashion being out of the question. An old engraving shows a clever representation of one who wears a battered cocked-hat like an old admiral's, an old rough coat, and great top-boots, and who is seeing a patient before mounting on horseback to go his rounds. In the *Memoirs of Professor Goodsir* there is a graphic description of his grandfather, born in 1746, who had a country practice in Scotland, and who was a good type of the old country surgeon—kindly and energetic, devoted to his Kirk and to his politics, as well as to his patients. Old Dr Goodsir's country rounds took him a week. He used to start on horseback on Monday morning from home, taking drugs with him and surgical instruments. At night he carried a lantern with horn windows, which was fastened by a strap above his knee. In the daytime his saddle-bags were so like those of the mail, as was his speed and his rough-clad form battered with wind and rain, that people cried as his horse rushed past their doors, "The doctor or the post!"

Of the practice of the old-fashioned country physician there is not much discoverable. A north-country doctor's case-book, written in the beginning of last century, shows a record of simple medicines and articles of diet, except when viper's broth is mentioned as if it were a not uncommon medicine. Each case was treated by itself, and was the result of special investigation. The writer's medical theories are strange to our ears: he speaks of "humours" and other terms of a bygone school in a vague and mysterious way. 'A Collection of Receipts in Physic, being the entire Practice of a late eminent Physician,' printed in 1752, and presented to Marischal College by the Lord Bute of the day, is

just the sort of book, well-thumbed and printed in large type, to have done duty as a valued friend in need, in country-houses. The author in his preface speaks of the receipts as being for family use, and as particularly suitable for clergy and charitable ladies. The prescriptions of the eminent physician are sufficiently appalling. The first is for the cure of consumptions, vapours, and the "nerves." The dose 3 ounces, morning, noon, and night. The decoction as follows: "Take live snails, cleared from their shells, 4 ounces; wash them three or four times in water, and lastly in a quart of small-beer; bruise them and put them in two quarts of red cow's milk, and add dried leaves of red roses, and herbs, rosemary, marjoram, balm, and mint. Put them in a still, and run off upon white sugar-candy." Other receipts in the book deal in crab's eyes, bluebottles, live swallows, hog's lice, and cow's dung mixed with innumerable garden herbs, for the cure of this and that disease. The medicines, however unpleasant to the taste, commended themselves to economists, and as they were worth nothing, cost nothing. A bath of river-water for "the dropsy and paralysis" of an extravagant nature is recommended; seven sheeps' heads, a leg of beef, and four calves' feet, with a quantity of vegetables, are directed to be boiled in it.

Bleeding for every complaint was in vogue, and periodic blood-lettings were performed by the country doctor. Some believed the barber-surgeon, who was rapidly becoming a barber pure and simple, to be the only proper person to let blood. A wealthy lady in the country always sent to the county town for her barber for this purpose, and would never allow the operation to be performed by a physician. Bleeding was resorted to for every ailment. A gentleman broke his leg by falling from horseback, and the accident was described in the county newspaper, with the remark that "fortunately a doctor was at hand, who bled the patient on the spot." People dying of consumption were systematically bled to death at considerable expense to their sorrowing relations, who were



glad to avail themselves of the best medical advice. The custom of universal blood-letting lingered long in the country, and people taking suddenly ill were immediately bled by the "wise woman" of the nearest village as a safe precaution. Doctors were ill to get, and there was no question of sending for any of them till people had tried everything themselves, and, after all, were at death's door.

When the country was undrained, and smallpox, typhus, and scarlet fever mowed down whole families, the country doctor was appealed to with a child-like belief in his powers; and in the old plague days few but he pitied and assisted the wretched victims, and he often fell a victim to his humanity. Full livers among the higher classes, and especially the landed gentry, had recourse to the family doctor. Goats' whey and asses' milk were cures by which the encroachments of gout were held at bay, and were strongly recommended by the medical profession. The bill of fare of the landed proprietor in comfortable circumstances was, though homely, no plainer than the alternate "roast and boil" of the present day. To counteract heavy dinners, the rich man went to a remote spot on his own estates, where, living in summer in a cottage on hind's fare, he drank goats' whey. The origin of the hydropathic establishment is found in such primitive resorts and in once fashionable mineral wells.

Vulgar charms had their votaries among persons of distinction. A laird of Cushnie had a curious charm for toothache, which he kept in his pocket along with an "accempt" for "bier" (barley), and a memorandum to buy lemons, pepper, and pins when next he went to town. This spell, which would at the present day disgrace an Irish beggar-woman, was written in Latin, and began with the words, "*Sanctus Petrus sedebat supra petram*" (St Peter sat upon a stone); "*Jesus dixit Petrus, quo doleo? ait Petrus, doleo dentibus*" (Jesus said, "What is the matter?" and he said, "I have got toothache," &c.) By repeating the names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost at the end of the charm, the "venomed

fang" was exorcised. It must not be supposed from this that in the north of Scotland medicine was in a backward state. The country doctor of old days may appear rude and ignorant, but he was frequently the younger son of the laird, and was a farmer as well as a doctor, and was at any rate generally as good a doctor as could be had.

Aberdeenshire physicians made sometimes remarkable marriages. The lady of Brackley, Peggy, the heroine of the old Scottish ballad, who with sharp words drove forth her noble husband, Gordon, to be slain by his hereditary foe, "Inverey," married his murderer, and took as third husband Dr James Leslie, a country Aberdeenshire surgeon, who at the Restoration was made Principal of Marischal College.

The medical men of smaller towns sometimes failed to keep up the prestige of the profession. The little town of Stonehaven by Aberdeen, pronounced "Steenhyve," with its green hill, blue sea, stone bulwarks, and fisher population of Norse descent, presented in the middle of last century a strange specimen of a physician. A traveller gave a graphic account of the house of Dr Lawson in 1745. The doctor kept a public-house. "His wife," said the traveller, who halted there, "was lame, and he none of the wisest of his profession; but great quantities of wormwood, sage, and other herbs hung up in the room where we supped, the dust of which diffused itself amongst our victuals, and gave it no small relish." A not very agreeable drug-store was thus established which cost little, and was no doubt profitable.

In the country the laird's and the minister's wives rivalled the doctor. Their gardens were full of medicinal herbs, and they undertook the cure of common complaints. It was a matter of necessity for them to supply home-made medicines for their families rather than call in the physician or the "wise woman." Prescriptions passed from house to house, from one lady to another, describing what had done "the gudeman so much gude," and were



preserved like State secrets. Amusing stories are told of this home-doctoring. An old Presbyterian laird who had a Roman Catholic wife received from her on his deathbed extreme unction. Never doubting but that it was for the cure of his body and not of his soul, he was heard to say, "Nanny, that wafer o' yours has done me nae gude." A lady who was in the habit of collecting medicinal herbs for the use of sick tenants on her husband's estate was asked how she knew when the herbs were not poisonous. Her reply was, "Fine that ; I try them on the laird first."

Much as medical missionaries are nowadays equipped for India, were the old Scottish ministers prepared for the cure of soul and body in rural places. The manse, in many cases, after the old barnlike place, with its thatch or heath covering, was swept away, along with a church similar, was replaced by the well-known ugly square house, wary of the window-tax, bare, built of uncut stones, with gaunt chimneys standing at each end. Such a house in granite was indeed frightful. But the manse was often in a lovely country, and the manse glebe, with its cow, its bees, its herbs and simples in its old-fashioned garden, a healthy and happy spot. It was quite usual to apply to the minister's wife for cures and remedies, and when the minister was also a doctor, which he frequently was, the country people naturally thought his value doubled. The physician who was also a minister was common in Aberdeenshire, and a most invaluable person he was in a country district, skilful and devoted to his flock.

The "skeely woman" and the "wizard" were a prominent feature of Scottish country life. Of such was the Prophet of Bethelnie, depicted so skilfully in Dr William Alexander's 'Northern Rural Life.' The prophet was an ignorant, cunning, deformed being, who not only affected to cure diseases but to physic animals, to restore lost goods, and to ward off witchcraft. There was only one medical man on the main route for fifty miles north of Aberdeen even in the beginning of the century, Dr Beattie in the Garioch.

In his later days he used to be seen visiting patients mounted on a shaggy pony. His professional dress was a greatcoat so frayed by time and weather that its original colour was undiscernible, and he wore a yellow wig.

Country doctors had almost insurmountable difficulties to meet with in going from place to place. It was only where there were roads that they could even travel on horseback, and a conveyance was out of the question. In such a state of matters the upbringing of a young family represented a problem which parents allowed to solve itself as circumstances permitted. The child who was destined to be physician or farmer or man of law, and the laird's son, went with the cottar's son to the country school, which was for both sexes. Each child brought a divot of peat with him to light the school fire and to help to pay the school fees. The love of scholarship was strong, as ever in Aberdeenshire, in these old days, when school boards were undreamed of. A youth in the country wishing to study medicine, might prepare himself for the life of a medical practitioner as well there as in town by apprenticing himself to a country surgeon, who had sometimes as many as a dozen young apprentices. Such training might suit young men of ability and industry, but could not fail to produce in many cases a poorly educated man. It was sometimes possible in a small country town to find an old graduate of Aberdeen University willing to teach "young gentlemen" all the necessities of a medical curriculum. An early newspaper advertisement mentions such a person to be found in Elgin.

The best students of medicine were the laird's, the minister's, and the farmer's sons. Vigorous and active, inheriting health as it were from the soil itself, the farmer was frequently the younger son of the laird. His home was simple, and farm work mingled with his son's school lessons. Burns has sketched to the life in his "Cottar's Saturday Night" the farmer of an earlier generation of the best type—careful, thrifty, industrious, and

pious. The goodman in blue coat and hodden grey, and the goodwife in stuff skirt and short gown and cap with tidy snood, brought up in stern frugality their generally numerous family. In the laird's house it was customary to have a tutor, a graduate of King's or Marischal College, for the sons, who was only too happy to have this mode of livelihood. The boy of thirteen was thought old enough to go to college in Aberdeen, and emerged therefrom with some education but no direct medical training. The little lad of thirteen coming into Aberdeen to go to college had a difficult road before him. The Rev. Mr Sage, in his old-fashioned diary, tells of his own journey on foot from Caithness to Aberdeen, where he was to attend college, and of his fainting with exhaustion when he reached Inverurie, where he was revived by a drink of hot milk and pepper. Aberdeenshire was scarcely cultivated at all, and in some parts was still a wilderness. Morass, moor, and boulder formed its greatest part. The forest of Stocket approached Aberdeen, and the road from Old Meldrum was a mass of boulders a hundred years ago. To the south stretched the five-mile moor, facetiously called by Sir Walter Scott "Drumthwacket." The question of "Aberdeen and twelve miles roond, and whaur are ye?" was not easily answered in those days.

Having considered the country doctor and the country student of medicine, let us pass to town life and town physicians.

## CHAPTER III.

## OLD-FASHIONED TOWN DOCTORS.

Town medical practices in the eighteenth century—Dr Thomas Livingstone—  
Early days of the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary—Dr John Gregory—Drs Andrew,  
David, and Francis Skene.

THE doctor of last century had a comparatively easy life, save when war or epidemic startled him out of his quiet. The employment of physicians was by no means so general as it has since become. The laws of medicine were fixed, and facts made to fit theories, though, according to Locke, "This be the beginning at the wrong end, when men lay the foundations in their own fancies, and then endeavour to suit the phenomena of diseases and the cure of them to these fancies." Some flung aside theory and followed the wisdom of common-sense, and in his practice the old-fashioned doctor was mystical or practical, generous or sordid, as disposition dictated. That there were in the good old days good physicians, let us not doubt. In Aberdeen, as elsewhere, there were two degrees of the medical doctor,—the practitioner who waited on nobles, who was professor of medicine and physician to the infirmary, and who had a large town and country practice; and the doctor who derived his income from his drug-shop. Some got their learning abroad in foreign schools, and those who could not go abroad picked up what they could at home. In the early days of King's College in Old Aberdeen the University of Paris held many Scottish students.

The Belgian anatomist Vesalius was a grand tradition to the Scottish student of medicine in the eighteenth century, but the Dutch school chiefly influenced him through Boerhaave of Leyden and his pupil Van Swieten. Scottish students flocked in numbers to Leyden, where Boerhaave was professor of medicine and had a world-wide reputation. They had the greatest veneration for their teacher, and bore away with them a lifelong belief in his greatness. Boerhaave was specially dear to students from Aberdeenshire. His lectures presented something more interesting than the worn-out theories of a former age. His aphorisms were plain-speaking. Discoursing among other matters on "health and longevity," the Dutch physician gave homely, wholesome advice, as when he said, "Water is certainly more healthy than wine;" "when great people ask a physician to order them a restorative diet, it is always safe to recommend plain living." It was long before medicine escaped from the thralldom of delusive theories, in spite of the memory of Boerhaave. Fashionable physicians still loved display, and display was often meretricious. The medical profession, however, ranked highly. The dress of the last-century doctor, according to Sir Walter Scott, was that of a gentleman; he was entitled to wear a wig, a sword, and a scarlet cloak, and the physician's wife ranked with that of the noble. An equipage the old-fashioned doctor seldom had. In London he might possess a chariot, and might sometimes be seen on horseback with a "footcloth," followed by his man-servant, and it was always understood that the surrounding of gentility must be kept up by him at any sacrifice.

The doctors of Aberdeen, following the habit of their country, loved that southern culture which came north after the union of Scotland with England. Scotsmen were doing their best to be as well educated and as learned as their English neighbours, and bade fair to surpass them.

The name of Livingstone produced two notable physicians in Aberdeen. The family had been settled there for several cen-

turies, and the two Livingstones came, like other physicians of standing, of a good stock. In 1752 Provost Livingstone, of Aberdeen and of Countesswells, sued James Smith, saddler, for accusing him of being the cause of a dearth of meal in the town. The town council stood by the provost and found James Smith guilty of libel, also that Provost Livingstone had sold meal cheaper than any one else in Aberdeen during the time of dearth. In the same year Dr Thomas Livingstone of Aberdeen performed wonderful cures in the infirmary. The 'Aberdeen Journal' tells that as it has "frequent solicitations from the country for information concerning success in cutting for stone, and gentlemen from a distance are anxious to know the fate of those poor people whom they are pleased to recommend to the infirmary, we take the opportunity of acquainting them that a young man of twenty-two and a boy of twelve years of age were both operated on at the infirmary by Dr Livingstone, and at present are in a very promising way of speedy recovery; and on Thursday last a gentleman aged fifty-two underwent the operation in a private room, and is in a fair way of being well." Dr Livingstone the elder was accoucheur to the Duchess of Gordon in 1768, when she had a son at Gordon Castle; and he also attended, while she lived in Aberdeen, Lord Byron's mother, Mrs Gordon of Gight, in Long Acre. He had some plan for curing her son, the little Lord Byron, of his unfortunate lameness, by ordering his leg to be tightly bandaged every night when he went to bed. The bandaging was given in charge by the sprightly mamma to Byron's nurse, May Gray, an Aberdeen girl. The little lord's sleep being disturbed, he induced the girl to teach him the Psalms of David and tell him Scripture stories every night after he was in bed. These afterwards found voice in the celebrated "Hebrew Melodies." Dr Livingstone was unable to restore the deformed limb, but corresponded at some length with John Hunter, the famous surgeon, about the case, and gave the lame boy all the benefit of his skill and experience. From those



who saw Lord Byron's body after death, it was evident that his deformity was incurable; but Dr Livingstone, by bandaging, so assisted it that the poet as a young child wandered freely alone all over Aberdeen. He left behind him a valuable recollection of the Granite City, wonderful for a boy of tender years. Byron, in older days, was fond of saying that he was "born half a Scot" (an Aberdeenshire Scot) "and bred a whole one." It is not an unpleasing reflection for the folk of Bon-Accord that "She walks in beauty like the night" and other lovely "Hebrew Melodies" were inspired by "the silver city by the sea." In "Don Juan" the Aberdeenshire influence shines forth in the words—

"Auld lang syne brings Scotland one and all—  
Scotch plaids, Scotch snoods, the blue hills and clear streams,  
The Dee, the Don, Balgownie Brig's black wall—  
All my boy feelings, all my gentler dreams."

Moore, in his Life of the poet, tells how, taken from the care of Dr Livingstone, Lord Byron had his lame leg tortured by a "mere empirical pretender" of a doctor in an English town, who turned his foot round by force and screwed it up in a wooden machine, causing him exquisite torture and doing him no good.

Dr Thomas Livingstone—he wrote his name *Levinstone*—died in Aberdeen, an aged man, in March 1785. He was the kindly friend and adviser of many, and amongst others of the poet Professor Beattie, whose sensitive mind he comforted amid domestic afflictions and the unhappy madness of a beloved wife. In Sir William Forbes's Life of Beattie, Dr Thomas Livingstone is mentioned as "an intelligent, prudent, affectionate friend, and one of the ablest of his profession." He was the medical attendant of the "Friends" or Quakers of Aberdeen, who were a considerable body, and once had great influence there. Dr Beattie in one of his letters says he has just been dining "with Dr Livingstone and three cheerful Quakers." At another time we read of Dr Livingstone ordering Montague Beattie—Beattie's delicate son—"bark and

vitriolic acid, with happy results." These brief words about a "beloved physician," of whom there are valuable remembrances in the history of the Aberdeen Infirmary, describe him as able, skilful, mingling with the best society, of sufficient means, yet generous and nowise greedy of gain. Kindly and truly pious, he recalls the early days of northern Scottish culture, when scholarship went hand in hand with true piety.

The Aberdeen Infirmary, estimated to cost £500, was built by the Town Council and subscription some years before the rebellion of '45, under Provost Chalmers—who sold his farms at Halheads at low price for the good of the town's poor in a year of famine—and was opened in 1741 without public funds. The principal inhabitants, "taking under their consideration the miserable circumstances their fellow-creatures were reduced to by bodily distemper, and that for want of proper care by physicians they were rendered altogether useless and consequently burdensome to society," determined to have a public hospital, as had been built in Edinburgh. A sum of money was collected for the purpose, subscribed to by the Provost, Dr George Chalmers, James Abercrombie, Lord Pitsligo, Alexander Gordon of Gight, the Principals of King's and Marischal Colleges, Aberdonians settled in London, and others, assisted by subscriptions from noble ladies. The infirmary was built on "the Woolmanhill, to the west side of the town, on account of the goodness of air of said place." The price of building, £500, exhausted the supplies, and the hospital trusted for its income to charity. The history of the infirmary shows the greatest devotion on the part of its physicians. Rule was strict. Patients were ordered to take medicine and undergo operations as desired, or take the alternative of being turned out of doors. The physician went round the hospital at one o'clock with the students, but it was many years before a hospital staff was formed. Dr James Gordon was appointed physician to the new infirmary for a year, with the salary of ten guineas, which he generously returned for the good of



the house. When the infirmary had no money, the chaplain was content to go without his small portion. Lunatic patients, or "bedlamites," lived in the infirmary vaults on the basement, and a charge for the board of a mad woman was made of 1s. a-week. Clothes were ordered for "a naked bedlamite." The charge for burying a pauper was 12s.

The infirmary awakened great interest in the people of Aberdeen, who numbered about 15,000. It was conducted with the utmost economy. The infirmary garden stretched north and south, and in its grass field browsed the infirmary cow. A fragrant hawthorn hedge surrounded the house. The lands stretched to the banks of the Denburn, amid rural seclusion in the near neighbourhood of a city. Scrofulous and consumptive cases were excluded from the infirmary. The new hospital endured hard times at the hands of both Jacobite and Hanoverian. When, as the minutes say, "the rebellion had grown to a head and turned all things to confusion," Prince Charlie's soldiers took possession of it for their wounded; and when the Prince's army left Aberdeen, the Duke of Cumberland held it for six months. The infirmary doctors showed themselves indifferent to politics, but not mercy. Friends and foes were alike nursed into health, but there was seldom a quorum at the infirmary meetings.

The year of the rebellion was chiefly occupied by considerations "anent a fine of 10,000 merks."

In 1755 the east wing of the infirmary was built, and Dr David Skene became one of the infirmary managers, along with Mr Thomson of Banchory, and other men of note. In 1760, Dr Thomas Livingstone, for many years physician, took as assistant in the infirmary Dr Alexander Robertson, surgeon, late of his Majesty's navy. Drs Forbes, George Skene, John Gregory, Professor of Medicine in King's College, and Dr Donaldson, Professor of Oriental Languages in Marischal College, are mentioned as infirmary managers. The infirmary struggled on, always increasing its

revenue, advertised deficit church collections in "John Chalmers's Papers," and gave its matron an assistant on account of her "tender health."

The figures of Dr Thomas Livingstone and of his son William rise from among the dry infirmary minutes those of honourable men, loving and self-sacrificing, subject sometimes to cruel detraction and slander. Long have they, faithful to what was noblest in their profession, passed away. Their very names are all but forgotten in the city for which they laboured, but no one can read of the old infirmary times, or study its business history, without feeling that father and son were the makers of the hospital.

Dr Thomas Livingstone supplied the infirmary with drugs and medicines during the time of his physicianship, and it was slanderously said that he was making a fortune by his sales, and that his medicines were given at extortionate prices. Dr Livingstone was much hurt that this should be said of him, and desired that his account books should be examined, "for the satisfaction of the public and the good of the house," by his brother physicians. His books were thereupon overhauled for the last three years, and his charges for drugs and medicines found to be only one-fourth of the usual charge. Having vindicated himself, Dr Livingstone gave up selling medicines to the infirmary. Feeling the burden of years in old age, and his inability to visit the infirmary daily, he asked the managers to appoint his son William physician in his place, with two assistants, Dr John Ligertwood and Dr David Stewart, which was accordingly done. The infirmary was increasing steadily, but its yearly income was £300 and its expenditure £1300. Dr Moir of Scotston, Dr Thom, and others were elected as a committee "to digest a proper application to be made to those friends in England and abroad of Aberdeenshire birth or connection." The appeal was very successful, as it has always been when Aberdonians have been called upon to help each other. Among distinguished Aberdonian physicians addressed in London were Sir William

Fordyce, M.D., Sir Walter Farquhar, surgeon, John Lesley, surgeon, and Dr Saunders. Begging letters were sent with success also to Aberdonians in the East Indies. Before the money thus gathered was paid, the treasurer of the infirmary intimated that he had no money in hand whatever. £100 was thereupon borrowed from the Aberdeen Bank, which was immediately repaid by James Duncan, "now of Kenton, in Northumberland."

After the death of old Dr Livingstone a circumstance took place which showed him to have been a faithful steward of the infirmary revenues. General Mackay, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, wrote in brief uncourteous style to say that the 5s. a-day allowed to the Aberdeen Infirmary by Government for a military ward must now cease, and desiring to know if Dr Livingstone had ever paid any of it, or if it was kept for the doctor's private use! He also desired to know, "candidly and fairly," whether anything had ever been done to maintain the military ward in the infirmary. Provost Jopp replied, with some fervour, "that Dr Livingstone had never taken a penny of the money, and that the soldiers' ward was clean and in good order, and often contained more than the number of patients paid for." The General was thereupon petitioned to help "this successful charity," which as yet had only lived by individual aids at home. There was no military hospital nearer than Edinburgh, and the people of Aberdeen during the late rebellion had nursed many sick and wounded men of the Royal army. The 5s. daily was continued.

In 1769 the names of Dr More and Dr Menies shortly after figure in the infirmary minutes, and Mr George Skene of Rubislaw was appointed a perpetual manager. A good deal of money was spent on a bath for the infirmary, which the managers became afterwards anxious to sell.

The town churches were not zealous about hospital collections, and St Paul's Episcopal Church in the Gallowgate, the aristocratic church of Aberdeen, was at first about the only one that sent money

to help to keep up the infirmary. The hospital had its enemies, and some people did not scruple to "reflect," as they said, on the physicians and their management. The answer to this was that the success of the institution was its best testimonial.

A brief notice of the principal physicians in Aberdeenshire is found wherever lamentable misfortune occurred. Drowning accidents were many, as they still are, on the coast of Aberdeen. Towards the close of last century seven students from St Andrews one day set out in an open boat for a pleasure sail. Drifted away, they were wrecked at a point then four miles south from Aberdeen, called Earnsheuch, where the survivors took refuge in a shepherd's hut. The town sent out Dr Gregory as physician, and Dr Gordon, surgeon, to their rescue. All the lads were saved by their efforts but the two youngest, who were mere boys, and who sank from exhaustion. They had been six days and nights without food, drink, or shelter on the open sea.

The distinguished family of Aberdeenshire Gregorys, which produced so many remarkable men, was at this time notable in the person of Dr John Gregory, who was one of the early physicians of the Aberdeen Infirmary, and had a large practice. Having been trained as a chemist in his brother's shop in Aberdeen, he had a thorough knowledge of drugs. He was the friend and medical adviser of many distinguished men; amongst others, of the eccentric Lord Monboddo, who in his old age said to Dr Gregory that he owed to him the happiness of a long life. In the Autobiography of the Reverend Dr Carlyle of Inveresk are many interesting particulars about Dr Gregory, whom his patients found, though he was accused by enemies of being selfish and crafty, a generous and kindly physician, full of shrewd and good sense. He studied at Leyden, of which, with its little knot of Scottish students, medical and divinity, and their merrymakings, there is an amusing description given by the reverend Doctor of Inveresk. We see them frugal, industrious, and full of animal spirits and energy. The modest suppers at the boarding-house of Madame

Van der Tasse,—the coffee, the claret, eggs, and salad, and Dutch red-herrings discussed, and the talk that went on around the board,—are amusingly described. The figure of Dr John Gregory, awkward and ungainly, and his shrewd sensible talk, light up the scene. He advanced rapidly in his profession, acutely observing men and things, by studying the characters of Scots and English abroad around him in Holland. In conversation Dr Gregory was distinctly “pawky,” never contradicting others or obtruding his own opinion on them, thereby inducing people to believe in their own superiority, and Dr Gregory’s wisdom in recognising it. At Leyden he studied more the world around him than the lectures of the great Dutch professors. Aberdeen he found too small for him, and, trying London for twelve months, eventually settled in Edinburgh, where the Monro School of Anatomy was fast succeeding that of Leyden as a resort for British students of medicine. Dr Gregory is chiefly remembered now as author of ‘A Parent’s Legacy to his Daughters.’ From his youth he was a devoted and chivalrous admirer of the female sex, which he contended was superior to the male. This subject was so often brought into his conversation and speeches that it sometimes afforded merriment to his friends, especially in his younger days. Dr Gregory was not without poetic tribute from his literary friends when death took him, after a long life. He passed away quietly in his sleep, and his old friend the poet Beattie has these worthy lines to his memory in his poem of “The Minstrel” :—

“ Art thou, my Gregory, for ever fled ?  
And I am left to unavailing woe,  
When fortune’s storms assail this weary head,  
Whose cares long since have shed untimely snow.  
Ah ! now for ever whither shall I go ?  
No more thy soothing voice my anguish cheers,  
Thy placid eyes with smiles no longer glow,  
My hopes to cherish and allay my fears.  
’Tis meet that I should mourn—  
Flow forth afresh my tears ! ”



When Dr Gregory died in 1773 the Musical Society of Aberdeen, which had always found in him one of its greatest patrons, gave a mourning concert in his honour in the Concert Hall, vocal and instrumental, which, 'The Journal' said, "did honour to the taste and sensibility of the performers and the company." Both music and singing were declared to be "in all respects worthy of the place which had the honour of the birth and education of this gentleman, of whom it is but justice to say that he was one of the most amiable and accomplished of his time."

Dr John Gregory was succeeded by his son James, who became a distinguished physician in Edinburgh. Dr James Gregory, a man of great character as well as talents, when a youth assisted his father in his medical practice in Aberdeen and its infirmary, and assisted him as Professor of Medicine in King's College. His energies were early withdrawn from his native town, but not before he had left a record there in his medical writings as well as his practice. With the names of John and James Gregory the young men who founded the Aberdeen Medical Society were familiar, and they were among their cherished great names.

Another Aberdeen family produced at this time medical men of some mark in the north of Scotland. The Skenes of Aberdeen belonged to a far-branching race, rooted in the past and stretching beyond local fame. The baronial house of Skene dates from ancient days, and its history forms a volume from the hand of the Historiographer-Royal for Scotland, Mr Skene. The Skene estates merged by marriage into those of Lord Fife, who acquired the baronial title. In every battle and turmoil in Scottish history the Skenes shared. A Skene fell at the battle of Harlaw, one at Flodden, another at Pinkie. A Skene suffered as Royalist in the reign of Charles I., and another later as Covenanter. During the Reformation Gilbert Skene was Professor of Medicine in King's College, and practised in Aberdeen; another of the same family became physician to the King, and Lord Clerk Register. Professor Gilbert Skene wrote the treatise on "the Pest," and began the long

list of Drs Skene in Aberdeen. Dr Andrew Skene, apothecary, and his son of the same name, are mentioned as practising in Aberdeen in 1736. The apothecary was remarkable as having on good authority been said to have married Margaret Kirkton, a granddaughter of John Knox.

Dr Andrew Skene, the younger, made a runaway marriage with an heiress, Miss Lumsden of Cushnie. Carrying off an heiress was a grave offence, and it was not long since young Johnston of Hilton, near Aberdeen, had been hanged for being merely an accomplice in a similar elopement. Miss Lumsden's guardian was very angry, and withheld her dowry. The young lady herself, a damsel of spirit, entered into her lover's project with good will, and was married from the house of Mr Vernier, a Regius Professor in Marischal College, where she lodged, and whose wife she described as "a discreet and civil person," and informed her relations that she married to please herself and not them. This couple were the parents of Dr David Skene, a distinguished botanist who lived in the Gallowgate of Aberdeen, and practised as a doctor. He was, as his father had been before him, physician to the infirmary. The late Mr Thomson of Banchory read an interesting sketch of the life and work of David Skene to the Royal Society of Edinburgh. He was a great naturalist, and held much correspondence with the learned men of his day, and especially with Linnæus. His early death took place before his work was given to the world, and his manuscript is being edited by Dr James Helenus Trail, Professor of Botany in the University of Aberdeen. Had death not cut short his gifted life, Andrew Skene might have possibly rivalled the great Swede.

Among David Skene's copious notes in manuscript, of which he left many behind him, there is ample testimony that he had a widespread medical practice in Aberdeenshire. Letters about patients he preserved economically, his botanical notes being written on their blank sides, and from them we learn that he attended Mrs Forbes of Blackford, ill of "a slow hectic fever."

From Brodie House Ann Duff wrote to Dr David Skene engaging his services for her sister, Lady Margaret Brodie, at her "inlaying," because, as Miss Duff states, of "the opinion I have of your skill and ability." The doctor had only a fortnight's notice of the interesting event. From Castle Fraser Miss J. Fraser of Inverallochy writes inquiring how she may see him for medical advice, so that she "may not be unnecessarily detained in town." During absence from Aberdeen, his brother and sister looked after his patients, and his brother George writes to him that "Peggy Irvine is a great deal better." A letter from George Hay, Banff, requests Dr David Skene to procure for him in Aberdeen "a mourning ring, a house bell of moderate size, and a receipt for raisin-wine"! David Skene was of delicate health, and died a young man before his writings were printed and his fame established. He pursued at every opportunity with indefatigable industry his favourite subject, botany, finding rare plants amid the shelter of the Den of Craigston, and by the Aberdeen Links, *Viola tricolor*, *Bellis perennis*, and *Arabis verna* among the sand. He wrote out long observations on the Linnæan system, with which he found some fault. He found time, also, to criticise in uncomplimentary fashion Hume's History, Whig principles, and infidelity generally, and has left behind him a most interesting general history of Disease in its relation to weather and season.

The Skene family produced many physicians. Dr Francis Skene of the same family, son of the minister of Kinkell, of the Skenes of Dumbreck, by his wife, Mary Gordon of Craig, died in 1781, aged sixty. Dr Skene taught Civil and Natural History for forty-one years in Marischal College. His life was passed in the middle of last century, and he had an extensive medical practice, in which he showed, says tradition, high ability. The doctor, as his portrait in the house of a descendant shows, wore a queue, a brown silk coat with showy gold buttons, and a sword dangling from his waist in a crimson sash!



The Donaldsons of Auchmull represented an old medical family in Aberdeen, related to the Aberdeenshire Moirs, and descended from Professor Donaldson of Leyden University. The Donaldsons had a drug-shop and house in the Gallowgate of Aberdeen. Dr James Donaldson, who died in 1761, married Katherine Gordon, sister of Dr John Gordon of Hilton, and daughter of Dr James Gordon, first Physician to the Aberdeen Infirmary. He was succeeded by his son, Dr Alexander Donaldson, married to Miss Hope Burnet. Both father and son were intimately connected with the Aberdeen Infirmary.

In 1755 the 'Aberdeen Journal' says: "Last Sunday night was married Dr Alexander Rose, physician in this city, to Miss Nelly Middleton, daughter to the late Alexander Middleton, comptroller of the customs at this port, and niece to Brigadier-General John Middleton of Seton (Old Aberdeen), a young lady of distinguished beauty and superlative merit." It was customary then to give young ladies an advertising compliment on the occasion of their marriage, instead of the present "Marriage in High Life" or "Fashionable Marriage" paragraph. Dr Rose was one of the first subscribers to the Aberdeen Infirmary. Brigadier-General John Middleton, the bride's uncle, was a man the history of whose ancestors fills a volume on 'The Earls of Middleton.' John, first Earl of Middleton, was a soldier in the Commonwealth, and afterwards a Royalist with the great Montrose. He was ennobled by King Charles II. The last earl was for many years minister and general factotum to the exiled King James II. at St Germain's, where he kept up the ghostly semblance of a court. A faithful servant to the house of Stuart, he received, in return for his devotion, coldness and neglect.

Such were the leading physicians of Aberdeen when it became necessary to consider the need of a Medical Society for the education of students of medicine in the north of Scotland, who at this time had no help from Universities.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE MAKING OF THE ABERDEEN MEDICAL SOCIETY, 1789.

The French Revolution—Social life in Scotland—Aberdeen a hundred years ago—  
The Grammar School—Dispensary doctors and their apprentices—Sir William  
Fordyce, M.D.—The Medical Society's first meeting.

A GREAT event took place towards the close of last century, which shattered old dynasties, rent empires, and in Britain gave life to many an intellectual movement. With the French Revolution, which then convulsed Europe, came a radical change in social life all over Europe. Itself a horror, the Revolution gave freedom, and heralded great days for education, medicine, and science in our land. Many welcomed the change, glad that the spirit of progress inspired the world, and not knowing that the torch of freedom was to become an incendiary's brand. From these days sprang the greatest discoveries in science.

The year 1788 had passed away, that year of which Scotland's poet, Robert Burns, chanted the requiem :—

“ O eighty-eight, in thy sma' space  
What dire events have taken place !  
Of what enjoyments thou hast reft us !  
In what a pickle thou hast left us ! ”

Many memorable events happened in this year : amongst others, the bonds of conventionalism were loosed, and Burns the ploughman became the greatest man in Scotland. It had become possible for

men of the humblest class to rise to pre-eminence. As was said in later days by Thomas Carlyle, "The largest soul of all the British lands came before us in the shape of a hard-handed British peasant." The old belief in the divine right of kings was dying out. There expired, in 1789, Prince Charles Edward Stuart, and with him the worship of a royal house. The State prison of France, the Bastille, was taken, and the whole civilised world was in commotion.

While the spirit of revolution was spreading its wings in France, the rising masses of the people were excited by a certainty of power, and desire for knowledge was universal. In far Aberdeenshire, in the isolated northern point, the desire for freedom was mainly a striving after better training for crafts and professions by which bread might be won. Liberty was welcomed everywhere for her own sake by all intelligent men, enthusiasm for better things reached a *furor*, and here, even in Aberdeen, youths donned the red cap of liberty, and raved about fraternity and equality. George III. was king, but the country was in the hands of his ministers. His mind was clouded by age, he sat a blind old man upon the British throne, and his son, the Prince Regent, was "the first gentleman in Europe." Every class, from the humblest to the highest, suffered change. The old-fashioned empirical physician disappeared, and the medical profession assumed boundaries and became concise. The want of proper medical instruction was greatly felt in the north of Scotland, despite the two colleges in Aberdeen. The old order of things died hard, and established customs were not done away with without a protracted struggle. Society still represented the old *régime*, and the old ideas of caste were not yet flung aside. Dress and ceremony still marked class from class. The men and women of Scotland in the upper ranks were often ignorant and bigoted, stiff and stilted. Pompous old gentlemen with gold-laced hats, powdered hair, showy silk coats, kneebreeches, silk stockings, and diamond buckles, with their

consorts in hoops and high head-dresses, were the Mr and Mrs Grundy of the day. In great people the spirit of liberty found no response, and many were of the loudly pronounced opinion that a young man should never cross the English Channel, as he would only learn atheism and lying in France.

At home in Scotland, among many evils, the "influenza" was said to be busy. The professions still stagnated, and medical posts were, like others, purchasable. Aberdeen, like many other towns, was extending and growing as time went on, and "better times" were foretold. Joseph Robertson, in his 'Book of Bon-Accord,' says that for 100 years the town had remained the same. The last of the old picturesque gateways or ports, "the four Bows of Aberdeen," crumbled away, and the city was growing fast a hundred years ago. Gilcomston was still a "village," but the shorelands were occupied, the town had stretched beyond the Denburn, and the suburb of the Hardgate was built. George Street was begun, ten great streets were following, among them Virginia Street, Marischal Street, Belmont Street, Queen Street, and St Andrew Street. Nevertheless, we are told the entrance to Aberdeen was "mean, filthy, and inconvenient." People coming from the south had to go down the Windmill brae, cross the Green, and reach the Castle-gate or great market square by tortuous and ugly paths. There was no grand Union Street. Those coming from the north reached the principal part of the town by way of the 'Spital and the Gallowgate. Yet it had its own beauty. Aberdeen, still rural, was so surrounded and embowered in trees that it was as if set in a garden. "Blythe Bon-Accord," as poets loved to call it, was always a pushing little place. In these days when there was no railroad, and when canals stretched their sleepy length to the south, the blue North Sea beside it gave an open path abroad. Aberdeen was always a perfectly contented town, delighted with herself and her ways of managing things; and her inhabitants, who had never been elsewhere, thought everything perfection within her "four Bows." It

was a picturesque medieval town, complete within itself, with a deep and strong, if narrow, life.

Aberdeen being rural, the ways of its people were primitive. Life was simple, as in our remotest country parts. There was no water-supply, and stalwart women bore heavy buckets from house to house. As for drainage, a drain was a luxury of civilisation ; no drains at all were the general custom, and what the Hindoo calls "the new-brand nuisance sanitation" was not dreamed of. In the midst of the city an ancient loch lay, still scarcely better than a morass. Noblemen and gentry were still in the Gallowgate, whilst the Kirkgate, the Guestrow, and the Shiprow were thought good positions for the doctor's house and drug-store. The Castlegate, wider than Edinburgh Grassmarket, though vast, was like the square of a country town if it had not been for relics of noble mansions round it, its historic Town House and Tolbooth, its city cross, and raised pavement promenade of the Plainstones. Here markets, trades, business, fashion centred. In an interesting picture of the time the laird and his lady, the professional man and his wife, are represented as mingling picturesquely with the market people. The Athenæum reading-room in the Castlegate was an intellectual centre for the Aberdeenshire doctor until he had a hall of his own. The most important shop in the Market Square to the medical student was the laboratory of Neil Maclean on the south side of the Castlegate. Neil, amongst others things, sold gum-arabic, saltpetre, and honey. His advertisement displayed a large mortar and pestle, and he notified that he would visit the inhabitants of Aberdeen and neighbourhood three times a-week for 15s. a-year, medicine extra. He was also a man-midwife, and attended with "attention and delicacy." The laboratory became "Maclean and Robertson's." Advice gratis was given by Mr Maclean from 8 to 10 A.M. Among the drugs were senna leaves, 3s. 3d. per lb., borax, 4s., and hog's lard, 7½d. Pots of essence of spruce were a speciality. Here was a rival to the purely practising

medical man, had such a person been common then in the north of Scotland. Mrs Thomson, bookseller, turned honest pennies near hand by selling Mr Spillburn's pills at 5s., which cured "rheumatism and the measles."

The Aberdeen Infirmary was not able to provide lecturers, and clinical classes were delivered there by Dr James Russell, of the Edinburgh Infirmary. Dr French advertised his lectures on chemistry. Dr Alexander Gordon, of the Aberdeen Dispensary, "who has been at considerable expense in procuring all the necessary machinery and apparatus for teaching midwifery," began his lectures on "the Theory and Practice of Midwifery," and had two separate classes, one for "gentlemen" and another for "women"!

People desirous of paying neither doctors nor druggists were provided by the 'Journal' with prescriptions, as, "Cure for dropsy," suitable to the tastes of some. "Mix jalap and cream of tartar in a quart of good Geneva or old whisky, and take a quarter of a *noggin* night and morning. The patient to take only roasted food." So said the old 'Journal,' at the same time praising Mr Hutcheon, jailor, who did not allow into Bridewell "a drop of spirits, that bane of health, happiness, and morals to the lower class."

Lively though rural was the little old city, with its hills and its shipping, the blue North Sea and green links and grey sand-dunes beside it. Beyond it stretched the old town—a separate city, with the double-crowned belfry of King's College rising proudly above it. Aberdeen, which in years past, when Glasgow and Dundee were in their infancy, ranked second in Scotland, had, however, this said of her a hundred years ago, that she had no medical classes, though she had two universities. Boys at home were well brought up, and the schools were as good as could be expected. A glance may be given at the home surroundings and education of Aberdeen lads before they went to college, at an age when they would now be thought only half through their school studies.



The homes of the boys trained to go into King's and Marischal Colleges, sons of well-to-do citizens, were simple and homely enough. An old Aberdeen provost's house, built in the last century, may still be seen down a close off the Upper Kirkgate. Hospitably it presents its open door, with the initials of the provost and his wife newly carved above it. It still wears an air of condition; and a little pipeclay and whitewash partially restores the place to the look it had when all about it was new and bright, and it held within it the first of the citizens, his thrifty wife, rosy girls, and burly boys. The provost was also a farmer, and rented land on the marshy lochlands, "on the west side of the town, at £3, 10s. per whole." The first crop was little worth, but afterwards brought a rent of £10 sterling. Similar to the provost's house were the houses of the better class physicians of the town, to whom the student of medicine looked for patronage and promotion.

To school the town boy went as soon as he could walk. Having passed the dame's school in Jack's Brae—Miss Hogg's school for young children—or some other such place, where the boys learned Scripture texts and the girls did "shanking" or stocking-knitting, he went to Mr Bower's Academy in Long Acre, familiarly known because of the dapperness of the "body," its master, as "Bodsie Bower's" school, where Lord Byron learned, and where a large "tards" maintained discipline. He was generally sent to an English or writing school: elegance in penmanship and correct spelling were difficult to acquire, and marked the gentleman. Finally, he went to the Grammar School of Aberdeen, a time-honoured place, built before the Reformation.

The Grammar School was then a plain and ugly building, which had somewhat the look of a cottage hospital, and stood on the Schoolhill. It became too small for modern use, and looked in its latter days desolate and forsaken. A fine new school was built to the west, leaving the poor broken place to look as if the ghosts of departed boys were playing pranks in it. When the young founders

of the Aberdeen Medical Society went to the Grammar School it had a high reputation, and Doctor Dunn was its rector. There the youth of the town was brought up in the best Scottish educational mode of the day. The fifth and sixth classes were taught by the rector, the inferior ones by monitors or pupil-teachers. The drill of the Grammar School, with its classical learning, produced, whatever may be said now against the teaching of Latin, well-trained wrestlers for the victories of life. Sir James M'Grigor describes, in his 'Autobiography,' the annual giving of prizes in the Grammar School.

The "version" was as fully installed then as in after days, and the great version of the visitation or public examination, and the prizes and bursaries depending thereon, were the great questions of the year to Grammar School boys. James M'Grigor looked back upon one of these examinations as the greatest epoch in his life. In these days pupils were not left to languish in suspense about the result of examinations. On the evening of the same day as the versions were written, the names of the prize-winners were read aloud in the public hall of Aberdeen in George Street. The elder boys got "prizes" and the younger ones "pokes" of sweeties, before the Lord Provost, the Magistrates, and the Professors of the Universities, and the population of the city. James M'Grigor had the first prize of his class awarded to him, which the rector announced in a Latin oration. Having presented him to the Lord Provost, that dignitary complimented James in an address in the native Doric, giving him at the same time the prize book awarded, the whole hall applauding; while the distinguished physician of the future, a boy of fourteen years, rushed home quicker than he ever after ran in his life, to show his prize to his mother. He often declared that no honour in future days gave him so much pleasure or made him nearly so proud as the prize he got at the Aberdeen Grammar School. The "visitation," according to another old pupil, was universally looked upon as a great and awful time. The floors of the



school were newly sanded ; the rector had a robe on, and looked as grand as a professor ; the procession was headed by the red-coated town sergeants. After the versions were written the crowd retired, and returned at night with the sergeants bearing lights before them, consisting of lanterns with candles stuck in them. The town-clerk's powdered head towered, when he sat down, between a blaze of lights, and the prize names were read amid cheers ; the assemblage parted after a general smash of windows on the part of the junior members of the company, and quiet returned to the town.

Boys left the Grammar School to go to college with grand traditions of great men who had been Aberdeen students. Fortunes were being made, as in earlier days in medicine, by townsmen who went up to London, became physicians to his Majesty, and died leaving wealth behind them in legacies and scholarships to Marischal College. Students of medicine felt inspired by the example of such men as Sir William Fordyce in London. What triumphs might be in store for those who should go south with a better equipment of learning than was to be had in the meagre college curriculum !

Sir William Fordyce was one of a family of sixteen, and son of Provost George Fordyce, proprietor of Broadford, a farmer from Buchan, distinguished for "integrity in public and goodness in private life." After studying at Marischal College, Sir William became an army surgeon, and when afterwards in London practice, is said to have got the largest fees and to have been taken the longest distances for consultation of any doctor ever known. A pleasant address and agreeable disposition made him widely popular. He was not what could be called "a starving doctor," for whatever may have been his advice to others, he is reported to have had for dinner every day at a London chop-house a pound and a half of rump-steak, a tankard of strong ale, a bottle of port wine, and a quarter of a pint of brandy ; but perhaps this was scandal.

The infirmary and the dispensary, especially the former, were the most valuable assistants to the student of medicine in Aberdeen when the new Society began. In the infirmary Dr William Livingstone was senior physician, and Dr French his assistant. Dr Alexander Gordon, lecturer on midwifery, was physician at the dispensary. The dispensary was proposed in 1781 for the benefit of the poor in town who could not afford to pay for a physician, and the opinion was expressed by the chief citizens that "every good man would wish the scheme to be tried." When tried, the dispensary was found eminently successful, and was in close connection with the infirmary, which was meanwhile so reduced that it could not pay its chaplain, the Rev. Mr Anderson, his small stipend. He volunteered "cheerfully," say the "minutes," to go without it for half a year.

Among the infirmary managers for 1785 were George Auldjo, Bailie Black, Provosts Duncan and Jopp, and George Moir of Scotston. The townsmen were working with a will to improve the condition of the sick by every means in their power, and steadily advancing through difficulty towards some assistance to the student of medicine. There was a complaint that there was no clinical ward in the infirmary, and no clinical lecturer. It was some time before such instruction could be hoped for, but meanwhile the infirmary doctors gave two lectures a-week to medical students for six months in the year.

Those who could not go abroad after studying at one or other of the colleges had an opportunity of entering the medical profession at home, which entailed a deal of drudgery. This was by apprenticeship, for which a heavy fee was charged, and which was entered upon often without a university education, the colleges having no regular medical classes. The Aberdeen Medical Society has in its possession an interesting old indenture of apprenticeship entered into in the year 1782 between Dr William Chalmers, Professor of Medicine in King's College, physician in Aberdeen, and the son of

John Ross, weaver in Old Aberdeen. William Ross binds himself therein as servant and apprentice in Dr Chalmers's business as a physician and surgeon for five full and complete years, in these words: "William Ross shall faithfully and honestly serve and obey the said Dr William Chalmers, his master, in the capacity of house servant and apprentice." The apprentice was forbidden to absent himself without leave, under the penalty of two days' extra service at the close of the indenture, or the payment of a shilling a-day during absence. It was also ordained "that he shall do all the business of an ordinary house servant in and without doors." He was bound to conceal from his master nothing that tended to his prejudice, and to reveal to none the secrets of his business; to abstain from "gaming, debauchery, and bad company," and "behave himself decently and properly in every respect, as becomes a servant, apprentice, and citizen." There is a curious resemblance between this and the apprentice deed binding a lawyer's clerk, domestic service only being excluded. The father of the doctor's apprentice was bound to supply him with shirts, stockings, and washing; and Dr Chalmers agreed to dispense with the payment of the usual sum of three hundred merks of apprentice fee, and to maintain William Ross in board and lodging, and all further necessary clothes. Dr Chalmers also, says the indenture, "binds and obliges himself to teach and instruct his apprentice in everything relating to his business that he himself knows or his apprentice is able to conceive." A penalty of ten pounds was incurred by either side on breach of contract. This curious paper gives a strange glimpse into medical life a hundred years ago. Dr Chalmers had a chemist's shop on Mount Hoolie, where it was the apprentice's duty to take down the shop shutters every morning.

There is a great difference in the standing of the medical profession since these old days, when the young assistant played the part of general servant. Apprenticeship had to be gone through nevertheless, and was thought honourable, as the apprentice fee

was large. The old system of apprenticeship, though it had some faults, was indispensable in medicine for giving practical knowledge which otherwise could not be got.

Help was coming to the student of medicine, and from himself. On the 15th of December 1789, twelve young medical students from Marischal College, from seventeen to twenty years of age, founded, under the guise of a youthful debating school for mutual benefit, the Aberdeen Medical Society. Their names were Alexander Mitchell, Colin Allan, George Kerr, George Rose, James M'Grigor, Robert Harvey, James Robertson, James Smith, John Gordon, John Grant, James Moir, and William Shepherd. They represented fairly the substantial burgher class of Aberdeen; and their meetings, at first in the houses of the members' parents, were a great pleasure to the young men. James M'Grigor, and his companion James Robertson, were the suggesters and organisers of the society. They had completed their studies at Marischal College, and, travelling down to Edinburgh together, passed a year at its university, where they studied under the great *Monro Secundus*, Professor of Anatomy. Attending meetings of the Edinburgh Medico-Chirurgical Society, they thought of a similar society for Aberdeen. Returning home, they found their friends very anxious to have one, and James M'Grigor planned the Medical Society of Aberdeen. The society was to meet once a-week; and it was thought well to apply to Marischal College for accommodation, as Professor Beattie had already given his consent to a literary society meeting in his class-room. The professor of Greek was the first to encourage the medical students, and meetings were held in his class-room for eighteen months. A paper was read every evening on some medical subject, and criticised. The theories of Dr Cullen of Edinburgh were admiringly discussed; and the great Boerhaave was looked upon as old-fashioned, it being the popular belief of young men that our forebears knew little of medicine. The essays were scathingly criticised. Fact was faithfully followed, and no authority, however great, was above criticism.

The more gifted of the young men lessened their trenchant views in after life, and found that it was possible to learn something from the experience of those who have gone before us.

The Medical Society chose the most striking moment for its commencement. War was declared with France. The country, some time in depression through the sad state of George III., had just celebrated in every town a grand thanksgiving day for his recovery, and the prospect of war delighted the country. It was only a few months since the present Edinburgh University buildings were founded with great pomp and ceremony. We see the little band of pioneers earnestly seeking knowledge in their useful craft. We see them before us, young enthusiasts, burning with ardour, and full of hopes for the future, and shall see how the Society upheld itself as time went on.

## CHAPTER V.

## EARLY DAYS OF THE ABERDEEN MEDICAL SOCIETY.

Early meetings—Essays and criticisms—The call to arms.

THE early days of the Medical Society are quite unique, and one feels inclined to pause before its meetings of earnest youths. Each was so enthusiastic, so sincere, and the powers of all were employed without reserve for the good of the whole. There was no unkindly rivalry, no ugly jealousy. Glancing over the first volume of the secretary's minutes, the reader seems to see the young men eager to seize the secrets of science, to see the light shining in young eyes, and to hear the confident essays of the tyro in medicine. One hardly can believe that the glad young lives have been long ago lost in the double oblivion of old age and death, that youth grows old and wise, and that lives of men, more true than romance, are unknown to their great-grandchildren.

The father of James M'Grigor was a useful supporter, being a man of some influence in the town. He was a Highlander, and was greatly interested in Highland students who came to town; he was also a director of the Gaelic church in Aberdeen, and has been described as a stocking and general merchant in Aberdeen. One of the staple employments of the town was stocking-knitting, and many a fortune has once been made by it. Young James M'Grigor presented a happy mingling of Highland and Lowland character and



Aberdonian shrewdness, and had that rare social gift which at once rules and pleases. The twelve medical students began work in earnest, and agreed to meet at three o'clock in the afternoon, every Tuesday, in the Greek class, at Marischal College, offered for their use by Professor Stuart. Equality was preserved by each member in turn becoming president. Each stood up and gave his opinion as to the subject of the previous night's discourse. This was given up when other members joined—the Society, like other societies, forming itself into a group of brilliant talkers and an audience of what are impolitely termed “duffers.” This old-fashioned courteous society called them *mutes*. The mutes were ordered to call over the roll of members at meeting, and to collect fines.

The parents of the young men who founded the Medical Society for a time gave house-room to the meetings, but none of them came forward with that first necessity—money. The members, happily, had a means of obtaining supplies from each other which enabled them to meet necessary expense.

The office of treasurer was permanent, and the entire funds of the Society consisted of fines, and the most ingenious fines. The fine for absence at meeting was 6d. The president was fined at the rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a minute for being late, and after a quarter of an hour he was fined 2d. a minute : a  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. was in those days a sum the loss of which was not to be despised. Making grimaces, or in any way putting the president out of countenance, was expiated by expulsion, “if the heinousness of the fault shall require it.” When the levying of fines did not produce money enough to pay expenses, the members paid equal shares all round till the money was got. A seal was designed for the Society by James M'Grigor, and executed by an artificer in King's College. Seven of the members bound themselves to lend to the community a book in turn every fortnight to supply the want of a library. In 1790 a dozen more names were added, amongst them those of William Hendrie and James Bannerman, afterwards Professor of Medicine in King's College. In 1791



Patrick Ogilvie, who became a physician in Aberdeen, joined. Also John Laing of Peterhead, afterwards Dr Laing of Golden Square, Aberdeen, Roger Pemberton from the West Indies, and John Milne of later Indian fame, who afterwards "deserted."

The Medical Society monopolised Aberdeen medical students, but it was still essentially a juvenile association in which the spirit of the debating society prevailed. The first meeting had for its subject, "How far is the knowledge of Mathematics consistent with and useful to Medicine?"—preses Alexander Mitchell, proposer James Robertson. "Is an accurate knowledge of Anatomy absolutely necessary to Medicine?" is the title of an early subject of discussion by James M'Grigor. It was followed by "What parts of Anatomy does it concern the Physician to be best acquainted with?" It is easy to see, in running over the list of papers, who were the bright spirits of those early days. Foremost came James M'Grigor, who propounded "The history and treatment of Gangrene and Mortification;" "The history and treatment of Cancer;" "The history of Bloodletting, when requisite and when hurtful;" "The history and treatment of Synanchus or Fever," and of "digestion." Once a-week a dog was dissected, and the parts divided, each man demonstrating on his own portion. This was all the anatomical instruction the medical students of Aberdeen received. The place of meeting changed from the Greek to the Magstrand class-room in Marischal College. The debate, "Are Potatoes more conducive to Dropsy than any other vegetable?" was answered by Dr Alexander Gordon and the town physicians, represented by their apprentices, in the negative.

On the birthday of John Hunter, the great surgeon, and a Scotsman, now at the climax of his fame, the secretary hilariously reports, "We proceeded to the tavern, where we spent the greater part of the night in mirth and jollity." James M'Grigor, who was first secretary to the young society till 1790, when he went to Edinburgh, gave a discourse which aroused the following criticism

in the minute-book, "The exordium and conclusion were very pathetic, he being about to leave the place for some months. If the author had done it justice by a good delivery, it might have brought tears to our eyes." James M'Grigor, with all his brilliant gifts, was never a good speaker. Patrick M'Kinnon gave a paper on Apoplexy, and read, say the minutes, "a trifling letter" he had received about people of great longevity who had lived near Edinburgh for several generations. *N.B.*, says the secretary, "*No physician near the place.*" The letter was received by the members with very proper scorn and contempt!

A good deal of youthful criticism is contained in the minute-books, a collection of rough-skinned volumes carefully preserved, full of crabbed handwriting, and showing that the intelligent medical student a hundred years ago with some difficulty could write and spell his own language. The spelling often, in spite of best efforts, was at fault. Latin, not yet despised, was pedantically paraded, and considered preferable to simple direct Saxon or honest Aberdonian Scotch. But here were the men who, without bursaries and scholarships, and with the barest medical training, and that self-given, were to make reputations for themselves all over the world, and at home a medical school. The secretary's minutes very critically called to account the givers of essays. John Grant, on the occasion of being president, was said to "deliver his discourse with great modesty, and treated the subject rather superficially, but was clear in what he advanced." The secretary was no respecter of persons, but when the young members grew older, these little critiques disclosing the dry sententious spirit of Aberdonian humour disappeared, the secretary learned courtesy and the ways of the world, and was not nearly so amusing.

The best discourses were ordered by the president to be copied into the Society's Thesaurus, and with this remark, "It is hoped that every man will divest himself of all prejudice, and not be carried away by the flowers of eloquence in preference to a discourse

composed or compiled with greater medical exactness." The fines, meanwhile, were not doing their duty, and an effort was made to charge interest from tardy payers. Those who owed  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. were to be charged 2d. after a week's delay, and when arrears reached 1s., the awful sum "was to be intimated to the Society" by the treasurer, George Kerr. The first gift of books was received at this time for a future library, and a librarian, John Grant, was elected, and intrusted with three volumes of the writings of Sydenham and the works of Hippocrates in Greek and Latin presented by himself. The 'Physiological Essays' of Dr Graham, the fashionable Edinburgh practitioner, was one of the first books presented.

The Diploma of the Society had its rise in a card presented to members who had joined for a year, from a design by James Hendrie, on copper, of the head of Hippocrates. In a circle around it was written "December 14, 1789," and "*Societas Aberdoniæ Medicæ Institutæ.*" Below was the old enthusiastic distich, "*Res medica floreat.*" The fee for admission to the Society was fixed at half-a-crown. As first gifts for a museum were presented a skeleton, a dried serpent from James M'Grigor, and "a polypus from Janet Carnegie's heart," presented by the infirmary.

The Medical Society of Aberdeen became gradually known and appreciated as time went on. Some older men from the country joined it in 1791,—amongst others James Smith, surgeon in Banff; James Ord, M.D., from Fochabers, who went out to Demerara as a staff-surgeon; and Charles Leslie, M.D., from Aberdour, who afterwards practised in Fraserburgh. These additions marked the passing of the new Association into some recognition, the medical public was interested in it and wished it well. Some choice became necessary in the selection of younger members, and a set of questions before admission was framed, as follows: What is a skeleton? How is it divided? Where is the cerebellum? What is the general division of the spine? How many ribs are there? What are the bones of the hand called?

A young student, Robert Turner, from Pannanich Wells, near Ballater, much frequented in its day, and yet remembered as a health resort, wrote a pathetic letter on being elected a member of the Medical Society. On recovering, he said he meant to go abroad, when "I shall devote my slender abilities (if I have any), wherever I be, to the Society." A few days later came the news of his death; and we are reminded that fate dealt his shafts among these youths, hard-working and exposed to many a danger amid a town often scourged with typhus, smallpox, and cholera.

Mindful of its poverty, the young Society showed a laudable wish to court the great with a view to subscriptions. Amongst its first honorary members was the private chaplain of the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV., Mr Wynne. It was arranged "that the Society should write to the gentleman conveying its offer of membership." There was a dispute how the letter should be worded. It was thought improper to cut it too short, to begin with "Sir," to wish the compliments of the season was deemed impertinent, and it was decided that a committee be formed to write a Latin letter. James M'Grigor, who was going up to London to try his fortune, took charge of it to save the postage.

The Revolution, which had become European, was meanwhile whirling madly around quiet town life. Empires were rent, and crowns torn from heads which the guillotine rolled in the dust. Provincial people were generally much more interested in their own small affairs than in great foreign events; and though the Medical Society was about to be called *en masse* to the great war, John Hunter's birthday, and the funeral days of members of the Society, are the only remarkable events that disturb the routine of the minute-books.

In October 1793, the Reign of Terror, an event took place which plunged the young men in grief, the sudden death of John Hunter. It was agreed that "for six weeks the president's desk be hung with black cloth, to show respect for that great man, whose death is unanimously regretted by all ranks of people."

The levying of army and navy surgeons, conducted with great vigour at this critical time, could not go on without rousing the interest of medical students seeking careers for themselves. The "romance of war" had its peculiar charm, besides presenting a grand field for experience and promotion before the eyes of youth. A young man named Farquhar received the post of assistant-surgeon to a regiment in Jamaica, and his companions, envying his fate, admiringly watched him strut to the Aberdeen Infirmary in a smart cocked beaver hat with a cockade in it, at twelve o'clock every day, when the students went their rounds with the physicians. The cocked-hat inspired James M'Grigor and his companions with a burning desire to lead a life of adventure and become army surgeons. Some were fated to grow rich and powerful, some to wander homeless from one country to another and to come back as poor as they went away, and some to fall in the weary fight. The young men saw, we may be sure, only the bright side of the great war, and their hearts beat high through fears and hopes of what in the book of Fate stood written for them, as they held firm faith in Nature's smiling promise to youth, thus charmingly described:—

"The flags of war like storm-birds fly,  
The charging trumpets blow ;  
Yet rolls no thunder in the sky,  
No earthquake strives below.

And, calm and patient, nature keeps  
Her ancient promise well,  
Though o'er her bloom and greenness sweeps  
The battle's breath of hell."

## CHAPTER VI.

## ABERDEEN DOCTORS A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

Dr William Livingstone—Dr Livingstone and Dr French—Dr Chalmers—Sir Alexander Burnett Bannerman, M.D.—Dr Robertson—Dr Alexander Gordon—Dr George Skene—The infirmary and the infirmary shop.

As time went on the town doctors varied and changed, but none were better patrons to the young band of students than those who were at the head of the profession in Aberdeen during the early years of the Medical Society. The best friend the young men had was Dr William Livingstone, the son of Dr Thomas Livingstone, now gone to his rest. The year 1793 brought the appointment of two already well-known teachers to the professorships of medicine and chemistry in Marischal College, Dr Livingstone and Dr French. Dr Livingstone, who became Professor of Medicine, was in affluent circumstances, lived in the Upper Kirkgate in a house a little back from the street, with a railing in front of it, still to be seen. He was married to Miss Gibbon, daughter of an Aberdeen shipowner, and had all the prestige of town influence. He proved a friend in need, for the medical students required both money and good advice. The “bigwigs” of Aberdeen must be solicited, if it were possible, for subscriptions and patronage, otherwise the Medical Society must fall to the ground. Dr Livingstone belonged to Marischal College, which was another advantage, as it was the seat of educational progress, though, as “the Marischalian Academy,” it was looked



on with scorn by old King's College. The Medical Society addressed the following letter to Dr Livingstone through its secretary, George Kerr, which tells its story very plainly, and with humble dignity :—

“15th February 1791.

“SIR,—The Medical Society of Students in this place finding that, unless they are countenanced by some physician of eminence in the place, their Society must soon decline and at last fall to nothing, and sensible of the great kindness lately shown them by you, they all unanimously desire that I should address you, and join with them in requesting that you would honour them so far as to allow them to nominate you their honorary president. Your eminence in your profession, your concern in the hospital, the number of students more particularly under your care, and your residence in town, make you a person most fit to apply to ; and your obliging behaviour and attention to the improvement of the students in general have encouraged them to make this application. Thus, sir, I have communicated to you the desire of the Medical Society of Students, and I flatter myself that an institution calculated as this is to facilitate medical improvement will meet with your approbation.—I am, sir, with the greatest respect, your most obedient servant,

GEORGE KERR.”

Dr Livingstone gave a speedy answer thus :—

“ABERDEEN, February 16, 1791.

“SIR,—It has been with much pleasure that I have seen so strenuous a wish for medical improvement among the students of Aberdeen. The Society lately instituted, I am sure, will greatly contribute to it. I feel sensible of the mark of their goodwill and opinion which you intimated to me, and gladly accept the situation offered me. Societies now high in repute have arisen from slenderer origins, and I despair not that the Medical Society of Aberdeen shall establish a very permanent degree of respectability. Through you I beg to offer my best wishes for the success and prosperity of every individual member.—I am, yours, &c.,

“WILLIAM LIVINGSTONE.”

A copy of the Latin diploma for presentation to honorary members was sent to Dr Livingstone with the inscription, “Te viri benefice Gulielmi Livingstone, M.D., scientiæ saluti,” and the professor and infirmary physician henceforth took the young Society



under his protection, sent his apprentices to its meetings, and delivered anatomical lectures to the medical students who had so earnestly sought his patronage.

This adroit securing of a patron, of the support of a popular and beloved physician, was due to James M'Grigor and to those of the young men who had seen a little of the world, and who were of the type most likely to succeed in life. Dr Livingstone showed genuine interest by giving the use of a house of his own to the students which contained a hall suitable for their meetings. For fifteen years all the Society's business was conducted there, and Dr Livingstone's house held its library and museum. A generous giver, he took pleasure in increasing the young men's small means anonymously. Like his father, he was celebrated as a successful operator in the infirmary, where he was surrounded by his admiring pupils. The *Aberdeen Magazine* chronicles "a female patient dismissed cured from the infirmary after having had a cancerous breast amputated by Dr Livingstone. It measured twenty-six inches in diameter, and weighed nine English pounds." In the *Medical Society's Thesaurus* is preserved a case by Dr Livingstone of a child who swallowed a curtain ring. He gave sound homely advice to the students when he occasionally came to listen to their papers, and sat as their first honorary president. During a debate about the use of opium, he advised that it should be soaked in bandages and put round the ankles of young children, as this was safer than giving them a dose.

Dr Livingstone, whose benign and amiable likeness looks down from the walls of the Medical Hall, was a physician skilful without ostentation, generous and kindly, a very pleasing type of the provincial practitioner, and an honour to his native town. The use of a house was granted during his life, and he enthusiastically encouraged the wish for a medical hall, and left a legacy to the young men and some valuable books. Under his care the Medical Society assumed form, and changed greatly for the better. Mem-

bers became divided into honorary, extraordinary, corresponding, ordinary, and junior members. The whole Society became like one school or college, and rigid discipline was enforced. "For absence from meeting," wrote the secretary, "no excuse is valid but disease, being out of town, death of a relation, being sent for by a physician in town to visit a patient, or being called in to see a patient of one's own." The excuse of a patient *in extremis* becoming suspiciously general, papers excusing attendance had to be signed by one of the town's physicians. One young man, says the secretary, was actually found walking in the new fashionable promenade, Union Street, when he said he was called to a dying man!

Dr George French, who was appointed Professor of Chemistry in Marischal College in the same year as Dr Livingstone became Professor of Medicine, was also sought as a patron by the ambitious young men. He was a man of very different temper from his colleague, being ill-tempered and pugnacious to a marked degree. Several attempts were made to acquire his favour, but he was not disposed to be gracious. A great obstructionist, he objected to the Medical Society as being a dangerous innovation. He owed his own good fortune in life entirely to favour and his uncles, Sir William and Dr George Fordyce, but he was chary of assisting others. Having begun life as a medical practitioner in London he was unsuccessful, and was sent by his uncles to Aberdeen. There he was appointed surgeon to the Duke of Gordon's Northern Fencibles, and was induced to believe that he might easily acquire a medical practice. Sir James M'Grigor says "he sustained a high professional reputation to the close of his long life." Besides his professorship and practice, he had a shop in the Upper Kirkgate advertised as "provided with an assortment of the most reputed patent medicines and several perfumery articles." His position was that of an old Tory. Such an objection had Dr French to progress that when, in his old age, Sir Humphry Davy invented the miner's safety lamp, his only remark was that "Davy was a

very dangerous person." In the infirmary and the dispensary Dr French was always finding fault with his work. He supplied the Aberdeen Infirmary with medicines and wines at what some of the managers considered double price. Dr French was indignant at the accusation, but did not seek to refute it as old Dr Livingstone had done. A good deal of work devolving on him in the infirmary, he remarked on "the inconvenience of taking charge of the whole place," and requested that Dr William Robertson be employed as third physician. In the dispensary he was not any better to please, and resigned his charge there without further ado, as he found it "impracticable to execute the duties expected from him with any material benefit to poor patients or any satisfaction to himself." Such was the cantankerous Professor of Chemistry. As a medical practitioner in Aberdeen he survived to the great age of eighty-six, and lies buried in the town's churchyard beside his wife, an English lady. He was thought as learned as he was misanthropical, and this, coupled with his being professor of so wondrous a science as chemistry, made him looked on with terror by the ignorant, and none the less admired by clever young men. Dr French's portrait in the Medical Hall, that of an ungracious-looking man wearing a very palpable brown wig, is characteristic.

The young Society, with the politic James M'Grigor at its head, was determined to acquire Dr French's patronage, and he was as determined that they should not have it. Considering himself insulted in some way by the Medical Society, he publicly announced his intention of having nothing to do with it; but the young men were with him at the infirmary, and his medical practice in Aberdeen was large, his scruples were worth the trouble of overcoming, and they determined to spare no pains to get the better of them. That Dr French took some interest in the Society was evident, for he had intimated that it would be an advantage if its hours of meeting could be changed to from six to seven in the evening, when his apprentices could have an opportunity of attending them. The

dispute about Dr French and the change of the hours of meeting was kept up for a long time. One member suggested that the hour of meeting should be later, and another objected on the score that this would interfere with tea and supper engagements. One audacious youth suggested that Dr French be asked to change the hour of his chemistry lectures, but the minutes add, "his late conduct to the Society rendered this rather improper."

William Chalmers, Professor of Medicine in King's College and physician in Aberdeen, was made honorary member, and sent a hearty letter acknowledging this token of respect. He was, he said, about to give his introductory lecture on the study of medicine in the Public Hall of King's College, and hoped the Society would attend, as he intended to mention with much commendation the beneficial influence of the institution. Thanks were awarded to Dr Chalmers for this "extraordinary and unprecedented encouragement," which rejoiced the hearts of the young men after the snubbing they had got from Dr French. Dr Chalmers attended a meeting of the Society, James M'Grigor being chairman, and the subject of discussion chlorosis, and became eloquent on the subject of mineral waters, notably of Pannanich Wells near Ballater, which he spoke of as "prepared in the Laboratory of Nature."

Many warm and enthusiastic letters were received from town and country physicians and university professors by the secretary. Honorary members rapidly joined the Medical Society, and King's and Marischal Colleges were soon well represented. Dr Chalmers intimated his intention of giving a course of regular lectures on medicine in King's College for the members of the Medical Society, but was unfortunately prevented by ill health, and eventually by death in 1792.

There were other physicians in Aberdeen and its county whose patronage was welcome. One of these was Sir Alexander Burnett Bannerman, M.D., who succeeded Dr Chalmers as Professor of Medicine in King's College. Sir Alexander was born in 1741,

died in 1814, and was sixth Baronet of Elsick. At the age when a great doctor is at the height of his reputation, Sir Alexander was, says tradition, a man with "the grand air," a handsome gentleman of "presence," in ruffles and powdered wig, with buckled shoes and silver-headed staff, who went about among his patients in a lordly way. Finding his equals amongst gentry and nobility, Sir Alexander commanded a respect due to his abilities, which were those of a sagacious, skilful physician. Though dignified and peremptory, he was the prince of good company, and the best families far and wide looked on his talent and *bonhomie* as beyond dispute. He left behind him the recollection of a physician of the *ancien régime*, of that wiser type, who, laying aside worn-out theories, applied himself to good common-sense and nature as the best guides to success.

Some letters written by Gavin Hadden of Union Grove, a well-known manufacturer in Aberdeen, to his brother at Berryden, by the old town, where Johnny, the little son of a third brother, Provost James Hadden of Diamond Street, then in London, lay sick, mentions Sir Alexander Bannerman as being called in along with Dr William Dyce, and afterwards with Dr William Robertson, in consultation. The boy, who suffered from water in the head, was leech-bled for six hours by the doctors' orders, and, wrote Mr Hadden, "they thought the bleeding would never cease." Dr William Robertson of Aberdeen had a good reputation as a doctor of children's complaints, and gave up the patient as incurable. Mr Hadden remarked that he "has sometimes seen children come round wonderfully after having been given up by the doctors." This, however, was not the case in the present instance, as little Johnny died a few days after.

Dr Alexander Gordon, lecturer on midwifery, and physician to the Aberdeen Dispensary, was, as well as Sir Alexander Bannerman, an honorary member of the Medical Society. The 'Aberdeen Journal' for 1788 mentions Marischal College and the University



of Aberdeen (King's College) as conferring the degree of Doctor of Medicine on Alexander Gordon, A.M., "formerly surgeon of his Majesty's ship of the Otter." Dr Gordon, who acquired a medical practice in Aberdeen after retiring from the navy, was a man of considerable ability and energy, and author of a famous treatise on puerperal fever, still quoted as an authority, and which has been reprinted by the Sydenham Society. He proved himself very obliging, and was held in great respect by the Society. Dr Gordon is mentioned in a curious advertisement in the '*Aberdeen Journal*' telling how he had been at great expense in buying instruments necessary for the illustration of his lectures on midwifery, "which should entitle him to a paying audience."

Dr George Skene, son of Dr Francis Skene, physician in Aberdeen, is described as having been "a genuine scholar, of good ability, great shrewdness and sense, and witty." He had the prestige of his family, and inherited from his father an excellent medical practice. Dr Skene was Professor of Natural Philosophy in Marischal College, to which he had been appointed at the age of nineteen, and from which he retired in 1788 on account of the largeness of his practice. A miniature portrait shows him as a pleasant-looking, rosy-cheeked gentleman, in a sky-blue velvet coat and perruque, in the year 1793. A portrait of Mrs Skene, a daughter of Gordon of Abergeldie Castle by Balmoral,—now the summer home of the Prince of Wales,—shows a lady of keen Aberdeenshire features, in a mob cap and blue ribbons. Dr George Skene died suddenly in 1803.

The infirmary, as well as the physicians, was in close relation with the Medical Society. James Robertson, who had some small post there, going away to Greenland as ship's surgeon in a sailing-vessel, recommended his friends James M'Grigor and Colin Allan as caretakers of the infirmary electrical machine in his absence. There were great complaints of medical students. Two students had been employed in the infirmary shop to look after drugs and

parcel out medicines ; but this arrangement was found impracticable, owing to the culpable carelessness of the young men, and “the wretched, and shameful beyond description, condition of the shop.” In 1796 a change was made, as Dr Livingstone considered that no physician with a large practice could look after the young men in the infirmary shop. At his suggestion a druggist was appointed, with two students as pupils. The infirmary shop was said to be the oldest place of the kind in Britain, and was entitled to some respect.

A third infirmary physician was appointed in 1791, and it was suggested that he should be apothecary, and see that the gardener took proper care of the herbs stowed away in the infirmary garret. Among the plants for sale in the infirmary shop were peppermint at 8d. a pint, rose-water at 1s., hyssop-water at 10d., camomile-flowers at 10d. to 1s. a pound, and poppy seeds at 1s. 2d. a hundred. Mezereon roots, burdock, dried rhubarb, *Carduus benedictus*, and caraway-seeds, were also kept. The infirmary gardens were let at £10 a-year, and contained rose-bushes and herbs, such as sage, pennyroyal, and hyssop. The infirmary had in all three gardens, and a part of these was reserved as a walk for the patients. The infirmary midden was sold annually to the highest bidder, generally one of the infirmary physicians.

In 1799 Sir Alexander Bannerman prescribed, as ordinary diet for the infirmary patients, breakfast at nine o'clock—porridge, and instead, when meal was above 1s. 3d. the peck,  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. white bread, and a pint of milk or table-beer ; dinner, at two o'clock, consisted of one quart of broth,  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of bread, a piece of meat set apart for the soldiers, to be boiled in the common broth-pot ; and supper of sowens, at eight o'clock at night, with tea or coffee.

Dr Livingstone retired, after many years' labour, from the infirmary, became a life manager, and offered his services still as physician when any of his colleagues were ill.

Dr Alexander Gordon applied for the post of physician to the



dispensary on the resignation of Dr French. Mr Rae of Grenada, who was interested in his success, offered the infirmary managers a bill for £220, on consideration that they appointed him, which they did. Dr Gordon, on his election, applied to the infirmary for the payment of all dispensary expenses ; but on the death of Dr David Stuart it was arranged to conduct the funds of the infirmary and dispensary separately.

The student of the Medical Society having been seen at the infirmary and the dispensary, let us see how he got his college education.

## CHAPTER VII.

## KING'S COLLEGE—PROFESSORS AND STUDENTS.

Professors of medicine—The Gregory family—The student of the past—King's College in the early days of the Medical Society—Attempts at union of the Colleges.

OLD ABERDEEN, with its twin cathedral spires, its winding river Don, and its embowered Chanonry, where Protestant professors built pleasant homes on the foundations of Catholic canons' manses, was as widely different from the bustling seaport of New Aberdeen as if it had been in another country, instead of only one mile away. The double-crowned graceful belfry of King's College represented one of the oldest universities in Scotland, and the little sequestered city, no larger than a village, was filled with cloistered quiet and old-world quaintness. The glamour of the past encircled "the Aulton," and like a dream of the middle ages lingers there still, when all has changed around. The old college had a venerable history, its professors and students were those of "the University of Aberdeen," and its roll of distinguished graduates was high. Founded at the close of the fifteenth century, it was the third university in Scotland, and had from the first a professor of medicine, the "mediciner monk" whom pious large-minded Bishop Elphinstone appointed when he modelled King's College from the University of Paris. The College fell on evil days—the Reformation crashed down upon it fifty years after it was

built. It preserved a difficult existence from one troublous time to another, bearing with it into an enlightened age the traditions of a monastic school. King's College could not offer the facilities of modern progress in its secluded nook, but accepted as if by royal right the reverence due to a great past, and opened arms of welcome to the Medical Society, claiming pre-eminence in patronage. Had it not had its professor of medicine two hundred years before there was one in Marischal College, which had no proper foundation, and which its students delighted to call "the Academy in the Broadgate"?

Gazing through the mist of ages, the monkish mediciner of King's College is a vague presence. A herb-garden contained his simple pharmacopœia, and of his medical practice and professorial duties we know little or nothing. The first "mediciner" was James Cumine, who received the right of salmon-fishing on the Don. Robert Gray, of a powerful burgher family in Aberdeen, succeeded him. The first professor of medicine after the Reformation was the learned Gilbert Skeen, whose book upon "the Pest" was printed in Edinburgh, a man of humane and kindly feelings, prompted to his good work by seeing the inhuman neglect of the plague-struck, who were left like beasts to perish. Dr Patrick Dun, afterwards first principal and rector of Marischal College, became "mediciner" of King's College in 1619, and was followed by Dr William Gordon. During the civil wars of Charles I.'s time, the chair of medicine was vacant for a time, and was taken by Andrew Moore. Dr Patrick Urquhart, mediciner, was also rector of King's College in 1688. His medical practice included the embalming of the dead, a fashion much in vogue among noble Scottish families, and he was employed on one occasion to preserve the body of a young Earl Balcarres who died of heart-disease. The professor found a stone as large as his fist in the young nobleman's heart, and a contemporary writer speaks of the alarm caused by "a ghaist that grumbled and grained" in the death-chamber ever afterwards.

Dr Urquhart, who was a son of the laird of Meldrum and a daughter of the Earl of Airlie, was fifty-four years mediciner at King's College, and died at the age of eighty-four.

The early professors of medicine lectured in Latin, as was the custom before the Reformation. The habit was continued to recent time, students of medicine becoming familiarised with the grand old language which had been for so many ages the medium of educational culture.

The most remarkable of the mediciners of King's College were the Gregorys, whose family is said to have produced sixteen professors in all, and to have "counted, like a royal house, five Jameses and three Davids." In the words of a biographer, "their names and discoveries will ever form a brilliant page in the history of the literature of Scotland," and they traced descent from George Jamesone, the Scottish Vandyke. Dr James Gregory, elder, succeeded Dr Patrick Urquhart in King's College in 1725, and was the son of James Gregory, professor of mathematics in St Andrews, described as, "excepting Newton, the greatest philosopher of his age," whose wife was Mary Jamesone, the painter's daughter. David Gregory, professor of astronomy at Oxford, another of the family, formerly a minister in Aberdeenshire, was saved from an accusation of wizardry, on account of wonderful cures he had performed, by being able to state that he had been educated a physician, considered by the presbytery a satisfactory explanation. The Gregorys were related to the Aberdeenshire Moirs and Reid the great metaphysician, whose 'Inquiry into the Human Mind' was a leading feature of the philosophical history of the eighteenth century. Dr James Gregory's son, of the same name, succeeded him in King's College, and was followed by his youngest brother, Dr John Gregory, whose career was brilliant, and who, like all his family, showed rare aptitude for mathematical reasoning, and who was for a time professor of natural philosophy in King's College. Medicine and philosophy were often thus combined. After successful years in Edinburgh and

London, he succeeded his brother in the mediciner's chair, and, marrying a daughter of Lord Forbes, settled down in the old university town. There was so much scholarship and culture in the north-east of Scotland at that time, that a great man was said to be as favourably placed in Aberdeen as in London. The salaries of professors in King's College, insignificant as they were, attracted the best men of Aberdeenshire birth, who had no scruple in returning to their native corner in the height of their fame. Marischal College, the raw Protestant school, was as yet thought far inferior to where

“ There's an old university town  
Between the Don and the Dee,  
Looking over the grey sand-dunes,  
Looking out on the cold North Sea.”

This early culture in King's College still influenced the young medical men of 1789 and their Medical Society, although by that time the tide of greatness was turning to Marischal College.

Dr John Gregory, settling in Old Aberdeen, founded, along with his cousin, Dr Reid, the metaphysician, and some professors in King's and Marischal Colleges, a club called “the Literary Club,” and, in jest, “the Wise Club.” This association was an earlier society, not purely medical, preceding that founded by the twelve medical students of Marischal College. It was the object of Dr John Gregory and of Dr Reid to use the club as an audience before which to read and receive criticisms of their writings before publishing them. The club met in Anderson's New Inn, beside the town-house, in the Castlegate of New Aberdeen, and in its arrangement resembled the Medical Society. Each member in turn read an essay, to which was added the criticisms of the other members, which the author was bound to answer as well as he could. Most of Dr Gregory's works were read to the Wise Club, among others his book ‘On the Comparative View of the State and Faculties of Man with those of the Animal World.’ Thus was founded in the

north of Scotland an association which gave, through the existence of a hereditarily educated class, a literary hall-mark to the physician and the philosopher.

The mediciners in King's College were in the days of the Gregorys, as is seen, gentlemen of standing and ability, of literary culture, who by no means neglected the teaching of medicine in lectures to their students in the university. Dr Gregory's introductory lectures at King's College, 'On the Duties and Qualifications of a Physician,' are said to have been the only ones of his ever printed, as his "deliverance" was extempore. These would not have seen the light had it not been that a student copied them out and offered them for sale; and Dr Gregory gave the profits, after publication, to a poor scholar.

The Gregorys belonged to the Clan M'Gregor or M'Grigor, and were recognised as relations by the great cattle-riever, Rob Roy, in a way which makes an amusing episode in the history of King's College. At the time of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745, Rob Roy, who was in hiding in Aberdeenshire, bethought him of visiting his cousin, the mediciner of King's College, having business of his own in that direction. Under the circumstances, he was not welcome. Rob Roy, who was quite as proud of his own profession as Dr John Gregory was of his, seeing young James Gregory, afterwards the famous Edinburgh physician, a sturdy likely child, offered to take him with him to the Highlands and "make a man of him," promising to return to fetch him for that purpose. This story is very artistically worked up in Sir Walter Scott's 'Waverley,' where it forms one of the gems of that world-famous novel. Dr Gregory was horrified at the idea of his clever son becoming a "stoutrief," and was relieved when, one day walking arm in arm with his cousin Rob Roy in the Castlegate, the beating of drums was heard, and a troop of soldiers came from the barracks. "If those lads are stirring, I had better be off," said the freebooter, as he disappeared down a neighbouring close, and was never seen



again in Aberdeen. The idea of the Professor of Medicine of King's College, the apostle of light and learning, walking arm in arm with Rob Roy is delightfully incongruous. It is scarcely necessary to add that Rob, with powdered hair, a suit of fine black, and a cocked-hat for the occasion, may have passed very well off as an "extraordinary member" of the Wise Club.

Mr Allardyce, who so excellently edits 'Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century' from the MSS. of John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, gives an interesting sketch of Dr John Gregory. It would appear that the Gregorys, when Professors of Medicine in King's College, gave lectures in good English to their students, who for so many years had been crammed with monkish Latin; but that at the departure of James Gregory, medical teaching in Old Aberdeen came to a stand-still.

Dr James Gregory succeeded his father when very young in King's College. The most brilliant of his family, he has left a record of his life in the infirmary and also in general practice as a physician. Before quitting Aberdeen for Edinburgh University he wrote, at the age of twenty, his celebrated 'Conspectus Medicinæ Theoreticæ,' on which some of the students of the Aberdeen Medical Society found themselves wrecked at their entrance examination. We have a glimpse of the rough-and-ready tone of the youth of the learned aristocracy of Old Aberdeen in the following anecdote. Dr James Gregory in his boyhood was remembered by the Rev. Professor Paul of King's College as being seen standing one evening on a heap of mud in the middle of a gutter before his father the mediciner's door. He was dressed in a suit of fine white fashionable clothes, and was surrounded by the barefooted laddies of the Aulton, who under his instructions were making a dam while he shouted to them in good broad Scotch, "Mair dnbs, laddies," and his mother, Lord Forbes's daughter, in vain beckoned to him to come in to the house.

In past days the Old Town student's life was not without danger.



Old Aberdeen was full of the mansions or "lodgings" of nobles, entering from narrow closes and iron gateways. The Duke of Gordon had a mansion there, the laird of Cluny, and many others; and the sons of great houses found it convenient to live near King's College with their private tutors. The story is told of the heir to a large estate, lodging in his Old Town mansion while he attended college hard by, having to fly for his life out of bed in the middle of the night because the house was stormed by an enemy who, seeking to murder the heir, killed all who resisted him. The students in these riotous old days were barbarous in their pastimes. It was told that they conspired by an oath of concealment to hide the accidental death of the college janitor, the innocent victim of a practical joke, which gave rise to the saying of "airt and pairt in Downie's slaughter." Contemporary with some of these wild days is possibly the portrait of a King's College student of high rank, in Cavalier dress and ruffles, which hangs in the college.

Towards the close of last century the students had become comparatively quiet. Still, in general, lodgings in the 'Spital and plenty of meal from the parental gimal out in the country sufficed to keep them in good working order, while rich and poor mingled together with that healthful freedom which brings a useful knowledge of the world. The Rev. Donald Sage speaks of dances among the students on Saturday nights in the quadrangle, where the young men practised new steps together, and were refreshed by an orange. The days were past when students of King's College dare not mingle in amusements, and were forbidden to go into the New Town. Latterly, the living of students within the college was done away with, and the term of reproach "Buttery Bajant," addressed to first year's students with large appetites, became obsolete, as also the "poor bursar," who aimed snowballs at the wealthy student in his red cape, and heartily envied him at the same time.

An air of ancient gentility so hung about the Aulton that it led

the old-fashioned folk who lived there to lead a life apart. The little cathedral town thus presented the spectacle of a group of people intermingling freely with each other, and keeping up a court of their own which required some introduction to from strangers. Two remarkable men visited King's College at the latter end of last century, Dr Samuel Johnson and Robert Burns. Dr Johnson found an old friend in King's College in the person of Sir Alexander Gordon of Lesmoir, mediciner, of whom he says that "he derived a decent livelihood as Professor of Medicine." Sir Alexander entertained Dr Johnson with all hospitality, and after dinner took him to his garden, where was a fair grotto hung with verses of his own composition. A King's College professor is spoken of by Robert Burns, on his visit to Aberdeen, as "good-natured and jolly." The quiet of the Old Town university appears to have struck both of these remarkable men. Dr Johnson thought the professors afraid to venture an opinion on any subject—in his own words, "they did not start a single mawkin" for argumentative pursuit. The learned Doctor was exasperated at the sententious silence of the provincial professors, at their rugged serenity, the cautious silence of his friend the medical professor, and at being able to get no one to tell him what it would cost to educate a young man at King's College.

In 1789 nepotism reigned in Old Aberdeen. The principalship and the medicinership were in the hands of the Chalmers family, which had been put in office when Principal Middleton, of the family of Earls of Middleton, was expelled, and days of Whiggism set in. The Chalmers family was an object of persecution to Jacobites, and in 1745 Principal Chalmers, of King's College, had his house broken into by the rebels. John Chalmers, who was principal when the Medical Society was founded, is remembered for the sake of an old joke in connection with an accident which occurred to him. He fell from his horse, and was borne to his home at Mill of Sc lattie, near Buxburn, where several of the Old Town professors came to inquire after him with long faces and

condolences. Seeing his possible successors in office at his bedside, the sick man said, "Well, gentlemen, which of you is to be principal?" which effectually startled them. It is satisfactory to know that the sick man recovered, and disappointed his friends.

In 1782 Dr William Chalmers was appointed Professor of Medicine in King's College, and took possession of the old mediciner manse opposite the university, a plain-looking house among trees, which had had a porch or "to-fall" added to it, in which was the professor's study. Dr Chalmers faithfully befriended the Medical Society, and did all that was in his power for it.

His successor, Sir Alexander Burnett Bannerman, and his son James Bannerman who followed him, have left little record of their work as professors. It was said of Dr James Bannerman that he only gave one lecture during the whole college session, but that it was "the most learned of them all and the most elegant" since the days of the great Gregorys' courses of medical lectures had been discontinued. A member of the Medical Society, and a diligent attender of the Aberdeen Infirmary, Dr Bannerman not only made his professorship a sinecure, but let his manse to a tailor, who flourished his sign in the face of the learned university. He himself lived at Balgownie, hard by on the river Don, with his wife, a lady of decided character, a daughter of Mr Burnett of Kenmay. Dr Bannerman was a stout portly gentleman, and because he did not show alacrity in mounting up long stairs in the 'Spital to visit the sick poor, was voted in the pages of the students' 'Medical Magazine' as "proud, lazy, and inefficient."

Principal M'Leod, who succeeded Principal Chalmers, was an occasional visitor at meetings of the Medical Society. When elderly, he married a young pretty English wife. The portrait of the old gentleman, which bears a jaunty, would-be youthful air, and that of his lady, young and slim, in a great hat and feathers, and playing on a harpsichord, are in the possession of their granddaughter, the Dowager Countess of Caithness. Principal M'Leod was well remembered as giving a scholarly tone to the students

of King's College. As an aged man he used to be seen hurrying down to be in time for college prayers at eight o'clock in the morning in a state of dishabille, induced by the necessity of wearing silver-buckled knickerbockers and shoes, silk stockings, and powdered hair at an early hour. In Dr M'Leod's day was the last fight between the King's College students and the sailors of New Aberdeen, when the latter, exasperated by the young gentlemen's frolics, attacked the college with a battering-ram, and were persuaded to desist "till next day" by the courteous old principal, who was hebdominal for the week, and who came out bareheaded to expostulate with them.

In the Medical Society were many medical ministers; therefore it may be well to mention the reverend professors of the Old Town a hundred years ago. These represented not only respectable orthodoxy, but an enthusiastic love of religion, and minds pious and cultivated, disturbed by no spirit of freethought, but liberal towards those who differed from them. The Rev. Dr Alexander Gerard, professor of divinity, was the writer of a celebrated prize essay on "Taste," which passed through three English editions and two French ones. His portrait, and that of his lady in a hoop and high rolled hair, hanging in the college senatus room, are historical portraits. The Rev. Dr Gilbert Gerard, his son and successor, was a man of the same type as his father, and many recollect well two kindly aged ladies, his daughters, who lived in the Chanonry, a last connecting-link of past days with present. Among other professorial celebrities was Professor Robert Eden Scott of moral philosophy, who died early, a man of the highest ability. There may be mentioned also the names of Hugh Macpherson, professor of Greek, described as "a gallant Highland gentleman," father of Professor Norman Macpherson of Edinburgh University, and Dr Dunnean of natural philosophy fame.

The professors of King's College *en masse* became honorary members of the Medical Society shortly after it was instituted, and all had more or less interest in its progress. Professors and

students were alike full of schemes for the union of the two universities, still in the distance, for the rivalry between King's and Marischal Colleges had always been stormy, though efforts had been made to unite them for many years. The question of money and rights kept the sister universities long asunder. Some letters between Janet Elphinstone (King's College) and Margaret Marischal (Marischal College), addressed to the 'Caledonian Mereury,' give a good idea of the state of feeling between the Old Town and the New when the Medieal Society came into existence. A letter from Marischal College speaks of King's College as an old lady in the cobbler's trade who objects to a rival shoe-shop next door. "Janet Elphinstone" replies with indignation that her journeymen understand Latin, and are able to cope with the "fifteen apothecaries" that patronise her younger sister. There is some clever and homely sarcasm in the correspondence. A humorous rhyme foretelling the union of the colleges found its way into the 'Aberdeen Journal' under the name of "A Prophecy explained," thus :—

“ Dee and Don shall run in one,  
So Thomas Rhymer told,  
Though to this day believed by none  
That such a thing could hold.  
But seeing what's a-doing now,  
The Scottish Merlin spoke  
What faithless critics hitherto  
Have counted but a joke.  
Twas not that Don should run to Dee,  
Or Dee fall into Don, ·  
But that their colleges should be  
United into one.  
In honour then of Scotland's bard,  
Let King and Earl agree,  
And Bishop Don submit, though hard,  
To join with Marshal Dee.  
So shall the old prophetic dream  
Explain its mystic course,  
And Learning's long-divided stream  
Shall run with double force.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

## MARISCHAL COLLEGE—PROFESSORS AND STUDENTS.

The Earl Marischal—Medical graduates benefactors of the College—Medical duties of the Principal—An Aberdeen doctor beheaded—The professors of medicine—Professors Beattie, Stuart, and Kidd—Trust-deed between the Aberdeen Medical Society and Marischal College.

MARISCHAL COLLEGE, in busy New Aberdeen, was full of life and vigour. It had risen after the Reformation a Protestant school, over the ruins of the old faith, on the lands of the Franciscan or Grey Friars, presented by King James I. to George Keith, the fifth Earl Marischal, for the use of the college called by his name, which he founded and built there in 1592. The old Earl Marischal, lord-lieutenant of the north of Scotland, the first Scottish noble of his day, and a great statesman, was remarkable for his sincere piety. In the college charter he gives as reason for his princely gift, love of his native land, and his desire that it should possess light and learning. Marischal College was a herald of brighter days for Scotland, as yet unequally yoked with her “auld enemy of England.” The reign of James I., which produced so many Scottish physicians, produced also the Earl Marischal, sagacious, learned, rich, yet frugal, and educated in the best universities of the Continent after his studies at King’s College. His charter is earnest writing, and shows him to have been a man of wide and liberal views, far before his age. He showed his devotion to his



master, King James, by bearing the expense of his journey to Denmark in quest of a bride, the money being borrowed from him, and never repaid. Seeing the need of higher education and training for his countrymen in the rude north, he sacrificed his means nobly to obtain them. "In darkness and ignorance," he wrote, "most men lie, so that they exist in misery." This misery, he believed, "arises from the fact that an honourable, liberal, and Christian education and training is in many places here either wanting or neglected." With some pride in his own superior wisdom, tempered by the grace of God and the Protestant faith, he adds: "It having pleased Almighty God to vouchsafe unto *us* His marvellous mercy and goodness, . . . especially in that He has enlightened *us* with a purer and fuller knowledge of Himself." The founding of the "new academia" was determined on by him, "not without the advice and opinion of grave and prudent men." New days came, and the pious old Earl Marischal passed away, attended on his deathbed by the first rector of the college, Dr Patrick Dunn.

The duties of the college principal, as laid down by the Earl Marischal, were thus stated: "He must be well versed in the Scriptures, able to unfold the mysteries of faith and the hidden treasures of the Word of God." The principal was also to instruct in Hebrew and Syriac, and "after the eight acroamatic books which the regent shall explain," he was to teach "all the rest of physiology from the Greek text of Aristotle, to which he shall add a short explanation of anatomy." Geography, history, and the outlines of astronomy came under the principal's special care, and after the studies were over, he was expected to invest "those who are qualified with the master's cap." As payment, he received annually "three chalders of barley and 100 merks money of this realm."

Aberdeen doctors who went abroad and made fortunes, gifted Marischal College nobly. In the year 1618, David Chamberlain,



surgeon to Anne of Denmark, queen of James VI., and of the warship the Royal James, left 1000 merks Scots to Marischal College. At about the same time Dr Duncan Liddell left bursaries for medical students, with an order that his bursars should wear "ane grave habit as ane black gown or black bonnet or hat, and other claithes conformable thereto." Dr Reid, along with a quaint Latin speech, left a handsome gift to the college.

Aberdonians who made their way in Edinburgh and London with distinction, were much more interesting to Aberdeen medical students than university professors at home. The memory of the witty and cultured Arbuthnot, who was also a great doctor, and of Sir William Fordyce, was a stimulus to fame never lost sight of. In the hall of Marischal College hangs the portrait of Sir William Fordyce, painted by Angelica Kaufmann—a very striking portrait of a fine-looking dignified man, and considered the most valuable of the old pictures in Marischal College. This great doctor was in his day lord rector of the New Town College, and gave £1000 towards a professorship of agriculture. Among lesser lights was the family of Lorimer, of which four members in two centuries benefited the medical and other students of Marischal College. A Lorimer in the seventeenth century left means for an educational endowment in Cullen. William Lorimer of Gravesend, his great-nephew, made a singular bequest to the Aberdeen Grammar School and Marischal College, besides increasing the Cullen mortification, and gave careful direction for the education of his bursars before going to college. They were to be provided with good dictionaries and good editions of the classics in Latin, and were not to be taught to learn off by heart from the Latin poets until capable of repeating Pope's "Essay on Man" and his "Universal Prayer." They were to begin learning the Catechism at nine years of age, were to be impressed with a just sense of religion and virtue, and to be made read their Bibles at home and at school. The bequest, now worth £16 yearly, was followed by one founded by an early

friend of the Aberdeen Medical Society, Dr John Lorimer, the author of 'A Concise Essay on Magnetism.' In the repositories of the Medico-Chirurgical Society there is preserved an old doctor's case-book, "the gift of Dr John Lorimer, who was a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh, President of the Edinburgh Royal Society, and of Marylebone, London," and honorary member of the Aberdeen Medical Society, who also founded a bursary in Arts in Marischal College, his *alma-mater*, in 1793. It contains notes of an interesting case of modified leprosy, and a list of drugs and cures in vogue at the time—among these latter being vomits for epilepsy and palsy, and "diuretic infusions" for dropsy. Symptoms are simply expressed, and the wording is not at all pedantically learned, as in some doctors' case-books of the time. There is an engraving of Dr Lorimer in the library of the Medical Hall.

The college was in its turn generous to medical graduates, as its records tell, among others the following: "Mr George Cheyne allowed to be graduate doctor in medicine, because he is not only our own countryman, and at present not rich, but is recommended by the ablest and most learned physicians in Edinburgh as one of the best mathematicians in Europe." It is difficult to see why he should be a good doctor because the people of Edinburgh thought him a good mathematician; but the kindly reason for giving him employment "because he was not rich," was no doubt appreciated. Dr Cheyne, the pupil and friend of Dr Pitcairn, mentioned as a very fashionable doctor in Thackeray's 'Esmond,' was a graduate of Marischal College, born in Methlick, who became a great physician. Becoming, through long years spent in England, more communicative than most of his race, he tells how he was led into habits of intemperance by frequenting taverns in order to get himself into practice; how he found himself becoming as fat and unhealthy as his noble patrons; how, retiring into the country, forsaken by his friends, his "body melting like a snowball," he

became pious and temperate, and adopting a milk and vegetable diet, averted early death. Dr Cheyne, who was the apostle of abstinence, had an immense reputation in Bath, and became wealthy. His diet was not always appreciated. A certain distinguished gourmand, when asked by Dr Cheyne if he had taken what he was ordered, answered, "If I had, doctor, I would have broken my neck, for I flung it out of the window." He was one of the many patrons of his old *alma-mater* amid her difficulties, Marischal College being much supported by the voluntary subscriptions of her fortunate sons, who put their purses at her disposal. Many interesting particulars about Aberdeenshire physicians in their connection with the university are to be found in the 'Selections from the Records of Marischal College,' by Mr Peter Anderson, published by the New Spalding Club.

Dr Patrick Dunn of Ferryhill was succeeded as principal of Marischal College by Dr William Moir, who was followed by Dr James Leslie, physicians of note in the north of Scotland, with good medical practices, who taught medicine and anatomy of the day to the students. Two Blackwells, father and son, divines not physicians, occupied the principalship until the middle of last century; and the widow of the later Blackwell left money to found a chair of chemistry in Marischal College, afterwards filled by Dr French. A son of the first Principal Blackwell, a man of ability and genius, a physician and pupil of Boerhaave, had a strange, unfortunate career. He fell into poverty, and was nobly aided by his wife, the daughter of an Aberdeen stocking-weaver, who wrote one of the best herbals of the day, a valuable book filled with careful and beautiful drawings of herbs from the Physic Garden of London. Her husband, meanwhile, went to Sweden, where he came into high favour as a physician to the king. Rebellion unhappily breaking out, he had the misfortune to become mixed up in some way with the king's enemies, and was beheaded in Stockholm in 1747, in vain protest-

ing his complete innocence of the crime laid to his charge of conspiring against his royal master.

The Rev. Dr George Campbell, author of 'The Philosophy of Rhetoric,' who was principal during the early years of the Aberdeen Medical Society, was one of the most accomplished men of the Scottish Church, and exercised a great influence for good over the students of Marischal College. He was well known to the world as having confuted Hume the historian as an infidel, in so concise a way that the infidel complimented him on his success. In 1789 the kirk-session of Aberdeen voted against the repeal of the Catholic Emancipation Act, and found an opponent in Principal Campbell. His rule was mild, his spirit Christian, and he advocated innocent recreations for the young in opposition to those who denounced walking on the Castle Hill on Sundays. In the pulpit he was a universal favourite, and is said to have been a great orator. After a sermon delivered one Sunday by him in the town's church, a wit remarked, "I have a woe to pronounce unto you, Principal—'Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you!'"

The Rev. Dr William Laurence Brown was principal of Marischal College in 1796. He was a writer of some note on polemical literature, the author of an essay on "Scepticism" and on the "Immortality of the Soul," and winner of the great Burnet prize, worth more than £1000, for the best essay on 'The Existence of a Supreme Being.' Dr Brown did not favour the Medical Society, and was conspicuous for being the only professor in either college who did not at first give a subscription. A list of subscribers winds up in one of the Society's books with "Principal Brown, £0, 0s. 0d." Dr Brown came to the principalship as a young man through the patronage of a nobleman who was ambassador at The Hague, where he had spent his early years. Amusing stories were told about the new principal, who had a pompous manner. It was said that once two young students presented themselves at the door of his house with letters of introduction to

him, and were ushered into the old gentleman's study, where they found him in dishabille and in ill-humour. The elder and bolder of the two came forward with his letter, but was cut short very peremptorily with, "What do you mean by intruding on my privacy? Present your letter at the university, sir."

The student was about to retire, while his companion, a sharp little fellow of fourteen, peeped forth from behind the screen at the principal's study door. "Excuse me, sir," said the student, "but I was expressly told to deliver my letter at your *residence*."

"Oh, indeed," responded the principal, "and who may your letter be from, sir?"

"From Lord G., sir."

The principal rose from his seat. "Lord G.! bless me, my dear friend Lord G.! and what is Lord G. to you, sir?"

"He's my uncle, sir."

"Your uncle! my dear sir, excuse me, I had no idea of that: and how is my dear friend Lord G.? You will oblige me, I trust, sir, by dining with me next Sunday?"

Glancing at the second student, he said, smiling, "And who are you, sir? Have you got a letter of introduction from Lord G. too?"

"No," was the reply; "mine's from the Rev. Mr ——."

"Good, very good," replied the principal, in thorough good-humour; "not so good as a letter from Lord G., but—you may come and dine on Sunday too, sir."

Another story told how Principal Brown, having in his later days showed such sectarian conduct as to "read the newspaper" in the Athenæum news-room at the corner of the Castlegate, two of the bolder of the divinity students had the audacity to wait upon him and represent that this behaviour was unseemly for a reverend principal. They fled abashed when, having quietly listened to them, he thundered out, "You young monkeys, did I not baptise you both the other day, and you dare to come and lay down the law to me! Be off with you directly, or I'll——"



The first professor of medicine in Protestant Marischal College was appointed in the year 1701, Dr Patrick Chalmers of Fedrett. The principal and remaining professors, "having just and full knowledge of the said Dr Patrick Chalmers, his literature and qualifications for the said profession of medicine, received him publickly, after he had delivered a prelection, into his new office." The professorship was created by William, ninth Earl Marischal, "heritable and sole patron" of the college. The learning and abilities of Dr Chalmers were expatiated on, and he was expected to lecture on medicine, being "granted full and free power and warrant to profess and teach medicine at such hours and in such places within our said college as shall be judged most convenient." His salary was to equal that of the other professors. This curious comprehension of the profession of medicine is followed by another as curious. His successor, Dr Matthew Mackaile, who had the druggist's shop in the Castlegate, put in a petition to the principal and to "the masters of Marischal College," representing to them "their design of improvement of solid and useful learning by setting on foot a course of experimental philosophy." He was raised to the professorship, but, let us hope, not taken from his shop, at the time of the Commission of Visitation. Dr James Gordon, who succeeded him as professor of medicine, was made physician of the newly-built Infirmary of Aberdeen; and Dr Alexander Donaldson, professor of medicine in 1754, was also professor of oriental languages in Marischal College. He was one of the early physicians of the Infirmary, and bequeathed to Marischal College all his oriental books.

In 1793 Dr William Livingstone was offered the chair of medicine in Marischal College, and in this revolutionary year Dr George French became also professor of chemistry. A regular course of lectures he did not give, though in these days professors were invariably called lecturers. Kennedy, writing his 'Annals of Aberdeen' in 1818, says there was then no class for medicine in Marischal College. Dr Livingstone preferred to lecture to the young men

of the Medical Society on the "subjects" which they provided for him in the house which he had given for the purpose. Dr French held his class three times a-week for the older students on chemistry, "as an addition to the natural philosophy course." A great grumbler, he constantly complained of defective apparatus, and his class was considered not a medical one, but rather as preparatory to a mercantile life. It was the opinion of this originally-minded person that medicine should not form part of the Marischal College curriculum. Professor Bain, in his instructive paper on "The History of Chemical Teaching in Aberdeen," remarks that the small income of the chemistry chair was only enough to make it attractive as "a by-job to some medical man in the town." The £40 a-year, granted with the chair of chemistry in 1793, became reduced to about £30, and in 1813 the Government added £33. The foundation-deed of the chair is dated 1798. For five years previously Dr French had been teaching chemistry in Marischal College. The professor of chemistry in these days was by no means a gentleman badly off. He held a high position, and was greatly respected by people who were afraid of what they did not understand. Dr French's chemical experiments, so long continued amid such wretched accommodation as he had in Marischal College, left strange impressions on the vulgar mind, and gave rise to incredible tales. Looking back upon the characteristic figure of Dr French, we see the rather pitiful spectacle of a man of original ability desiring greater things than he possessed, of an irritable disposition, condemned to the petty social warfare of an isolated provincial life. He appears in strong relief to his colleague, Professor Livingstone, the even tenor of whose way was unvexed save when his sensitive soul was touched by doubts of others as to his being a physician and a gentleman. The sensitive feeling which he inherited from a distinguished father, very properly made this "beloved physician" one of the choicest guides that could be devised for young men.



The professors of Marischal College were all honorary members of the Aberdeen Medical Society. The most remarkable of the non-medical professors was Dr Beattie, the poet-Professor of Moral Philosophy, the friend of Sir Joshua Reynolds and of a brilliant circle of English men of letters. His letter, written in old age to the secretary, upon receiving the honorary membership of the Medical Society, was courteous and affable. "It is an honour," he wrote, "which I set a high value on, and which I accept of with much gratitude. I shall be happy in every opportunity to promote, to the utmost of my weak ability, the interest of the Society, and of testifying my esteem for the members of it." Dr Beattie was a prose writer of some note, as well as a poet. His "Essay on Truth" was written, says his biographer, "with a view to ascertain the standard of truth, and explain its immutability,"—a rather wide subject. "The Minstrel," his chief poem, was termed elegant writing, and the professor himself was a good type of the pietist of his day, who not only wrote fine prose and verses, but was a scholar and a man of letters. Professor Beattie had the title of LL.D. conferred on him by Oxford. Sir Joshua Reynolds painted his portrait as centre of an allegorical picture representing triumph over sophistry, scepticism, and infidelity, which hangs in the hall of Marischal College. It was high honour for the northern university town to have a man of such eminence within it, and it was well for its youth that he was unspoiled by adulation, and of humble Christian spirit. Dr Beattie's life was very desolate in his latter years, and his heart turned to the training and education of the students of Marischal College, than whom they had not a truer friend.

The Literary Society, or "Wise Club" of old days, still patronised by the professors of both universities, was Dr Beattie's chief solace. Its members, untouched by free-thought, united in the annihilation of the infidel Hume, with whom, nevertheless, they were on the best of terms, considering him an excellent person of erroneous views. Such an association, among whom were several

medical men, had a good effect on students of medicine, who saw their professors, cultured gentlemen, mingling with the best society in Edinburgh and London, and able and willing to extend patronage to their pupils. The Wise Club, whose members had a profound veneration for the classic masters of literature, received a new impetus from the friendship of Dr Beattie with Mrs Montagu, the head of a great English literary society, at whose house visited the most distinguished men of the time, whose classic style in literature was their admiration and that of their students. The club met on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month, in the New Inn, at five o'clock, "after dinner and tea." At half-past eight a simple supper was served, and, after the solace of a pipe, the members returned home to bed at ten.

Dr John Stuart, Professor of Greek, whose pleasing portrait is in the hall of the Medical Society, was looked on as its principal patron, having been the first to give the members a place of meeting. He was called "the father of the Medical Society," and is mentioned in Kennedy's Annals as teaching "that elegant language [Greek] four hours each day during the college session." The professor was lame, and was known among the students by the nickname of "Dot-and-carry-one"! The estate of Inchbreck, in Kincardineshire, belonged to Dr Stuart; he was frank and kindly, and a generous friend to homeless students, and though himself the father of a numerous family, his house was always open to the students of his class.

Patrick Copland, Professor of Natural Philosophy, was described by an old pupil as "the most efficient of the public teachers of Marischal College." He was a man of fine face and figure, who lectured well, and had a genius for mechanical contrivances, which increased his reputation as a professor. He divided natural philosophy into four branches—mechanical philosophy, chemistry, animal economy, and vegetable economy; but he lectured entirely on mechanical philosophy. This he divided into mechanics, hydrostatics, electricity, magnetism, optics, and astronomy.

Professor Copland, who showed considerable interest in the Medical Society, taught natural philosophy at the time that the young members were busy levying their early subscriptions. He was the first professor in the north of Scotland who gave courses of simple popular lectures on natural philosophy applied to the work of mechanics. His mechanical apparatus he made himself, or caused to be made by his own trained workmen.

Professor Hamilton of the mathematical class, who succeeded him, and Professor Copland, exchanged classes with permission of the College Senatus, Professor Copland taking natural philosophy. Dr Hamilton's abstractedness was the constant entertainment of the students, by whom he was, nevertheless, respected and loved. Timid and easily alarmed, he was noted by students as frightened at pea-shooting, and was once heard to cry, "Gentlemen, I entreat you, don't load with ball." Many and strange were the stories told of the professor's absence of mind, as when he stumbled against a cow upon the links of Aberdeen, and passing his wife shortly after, said, without looking up, "Is that you again, brute?" He lived in a handsome house upon the Low Stocket Road, the scene of amusing stories told of him, gleefully repeated, but which cannot be accepted as fact. He was grandson of a principal of Edinburgh University, and few who saw the retiring professor, whose class was full of mischievous boys, at an age when they should have been at school, would have imagined him to be the distinguished writer who solved the question of the liquidation of the great National Debt, and who, it was said, "discovered the fallacy of the Sinking Fund, and checked a nation in the career of extravagance by displaying to it, in characters not to be mistaken, the unpalliated truth of its situation."

A pupil remembers Professor Hamilton in his old age in Marischal College, his stooping shadowy figure, good-humoured small round face, and his minute but keenly twinkling eyes, surrounded by a thousand wrinkles. He was decidedly odd in appearance, was full of fidgety impatience, and wore a small scratch wig, and

a gown which flapped about his feet or hands or eyes from time to time. Such a person, however reverent, provoked the youthful students to merriment. He used to rush into class, as if late, in a great hurry, sometimes hang his wig on a pin instead of his hat, and sometimes removed both, leaving his head bald. If anybody idled, the professor rushed up to him with outstretched neck, and after addressing him in Latin, cried, "Take your hat and leave the skule." Professor Hamilton worked all the difficult sums and mathematical questions on the blackboard carefully himself, the students mostly having but a hazy idea of following his calculations, and taught the rules of arithmetic and Euclid, winding up with plane trigonometry, practical geometry, and projection of the sphere.

Dr Davidson, Professor of Civil and Natural History, appointed in 1811, was never able to keep his class in order, and when driven to desperation used to cry, "I'll send for Dr James Beattie, gentlemen." When sent for, this gentleman, his predecessor, and a great contrast to his namesake, would appear, and at his sight—that of a gigantic man with majestic tread—each rioter was silent, though he only walked through the class-room with the air of a Greek hero. Dr Davidson was constantly the butt of the students. Sometimes miniature glass-bombs were embedded in the candles which hung from the roof of the class-room, and would explode shortly, putting out the candles, while yells of terror were given by those in the secret. Dr Davidson sometimes lectured on chemistry, and collected occasionally in his crucible such formidable materials as filled the room with a dense smoke, alarming the students in their turn. Fines were a favourite punishment with this professor, and were paid in farthings, to provoke him! Absurd answers were given by the students, and ridiculous questions shouted in a spirit of anxious inquiry,—as when the professor, explaining volumes of gas, was met with a cry of "Which volume?"

Such were the professors who assisted in the education of the

young students of Marischal College, and under whose influence they grew to manhood.

A sketch of the professoriate would not be complete without some notice of Dr Kidd, Professor of Oriental Languages, successor to Dr Donaldson, minister of Gilcomston, and patron of the reverend medical members of the society, who was appointed in 1791. Of Dr Kidd, who lived in a large house in what is now called Kidd Lane, there are many hilarious stories told of mother-wit more Irish than Scottish. A genuine Hibernian, but nationalised Scotsman, he was a man of pious liberal mind, irascible, outspoken, witty, earnest, sincere, homely, and a decided member of the Church militant. Story tells that on being rebuked for praying for Queen Caroline by a reverend professor of King's College, he answered, "Sir, I will pray for the queen, and for yourself, and for every sinner out of hell." When, at Queen Caroline's death, fashion ordained that his church should be in Court mourning, Dr Kidd, whose tolerance did not mean approval, tore the black draping down with his own hand. In him was seen a last reflection of the old robust spirit of John Knox; and he was more liberal in spirit than Mr Bisset, an Aberdeen minister who lived in the time of the Rebellion, who was a Hanoverian, congratulated the Duke of Cumberland, and prayed against "the house of Satan," by which he meant St Paul's Episcopal Chapel in the Gallowgate. One of Mr Bisset's sayings to a young man was, "Believe me, my friend, unsanctified learning will become the greatest curse of the age;" but he was so straitlaced that, on hearing that some Old Town professors had gone to hear a stranger minister, he preached against them.

Marischal College in the early days of the Aberdeen Medical Society very thoroughly filled its students with a distaste to its surroundings. A graphic account of its appearance is to be found in the record of a student who had a large connection with college youth, and is related in Mr Sage's Diary. There was originally a



great contrast between the princely magnificence of old King's College, supported by the purse of a Pope, and the bare educational building which the struggles of the Reformation produced, upheld by voluntary subscription. The words of the Keiths, imprinted on Marischal College—"Say they! what say they? let them say"—were said to have had reference to the finger of scorn pointed to the Protestant seminary. The proverb was more characteristically rendered, "Say they! what say they? do thou weel, and lat them say." Two centuries of strife had nearly ruined the college buildings, now barely habitable, in spite of the munificence of distinguished alumni, and become an ugly edifice of four storeys high, with a wing as high at one end, and at the other a huge clumsy tower meant for an observatory. On the central building was a clock, the windows were small, and the inscription in Greek, "Virtue is its own reward," was carved on the north wing. Within there was a large hall on the ground-floor of the middle building called "the Public School," where the students met at eight o'clock in the morning, and where it delighted the wilder spirits to enter while the Lord's Prayer was being finished, in order that they might be fined, as the reverend principal hastily concluded with the words, "Pay down a penny, sir—for ever and ever, Amen." This public school was a wretched-looking place, a hundred feet long by twenty wide, with three short, narrow windows, containing glass above and boards below. Two raised desks adorned it—one for the principals and professors on Fridays, the other for the student whose turn it was to write a Latin oration, and it is said to have looked very like a barn. Above was the college hall, which, spacious and beautiful and adorned with oil paintings, was not unworthy of a university. There the students assembled for the annual public examination, and above the hall were the library and museum. The north wing and observatory tower contained the Greek class-room on the ground-floor, where, through the kindness of Professor Stuart, the Medical Society held its early meetings.



In old Grey Friars' Church hard by there was a loft for the accommodation of professors and students at divine service. The pictures of Marischal College at the close of last century show a plain harled building with two wings, in the style of the old Scottish mansion-house, bare and ugly. Three professors still lived in one of the wings as part of the original arrangement whereby students and lecturers were to board in the college, as the Earl Marischal had provided. The gloomy building, lit by spluttering tallow candles in winter afternoons, could not have had a very brightening effect on the spirits of enthusiastic youth.

The Professor of Natural Philosophy had philosophical instruments and rain-gauges under his charge on the top of the tower, and his family lived below. In the south wing were the natural history, natural philosophy, and mathematical class-rooms, and the lodgings of the professors of mathematics and Greek. By the college was a garden, where Dr Beattie the poet showed his young son the growing cresses which formed his name, and proved to him therefrom design in the creation of the universe. The college close occupied more than an acre, and beside it was a mean-looking building with a tiled roof, the chemical laboratory where Dr French laboured.

The account given of Marischal College in 1790 is not enlivening. It represented a group of old houses unpicturesquely grouped together and tottering into ruin. One of its graduates mentions "the prison-like dens of Marischal College and its unplastered walls"; but if it was old and dilapidated, its life as a teaching institution was full of vigour, and the names of its distinguished graduates were beginning to exceed even those of King's College. The jealous rivalry between the two universities smouldered on, and broke out fiercely every now and then. Sometimes meetings were held in which delegates from both colleges argued in favour of their *alma-mater*, and it was thought fortunate when blows did not succeed words.

A trust-deed, making the principal and professors of Marischal College custodians of the property of the Medical Society, was signed between Dr Livingstone and the professoriate on the one hand, and the members on the other. This deed was signed by Sir Alexander Burnett Bannerman, M.D., Bart., and Professor of Medicine in King's College; Doctors James Moir, George Kerr, William Dyce, James Charles Ogilvie, and other physicians in Aberdeen, honorary members of the Medical Society; Walter Ogilvie, secretary; and John Ligertwood, vice-president. A later trust-deed was signed in 1815 by Principal Laurence Brown of Marischal College, and the professoriate. A final deed was signed by Doctors William Livingstone, George French, Charles Skene, William Dyce, and others, physicians in Aberdeen, and honorary members of the Medical Society; and twenty students of medicine, representing the junior class of the Medical Society, among which are the names of Robert Dyce, Patrick Morrison, John Cadenhead, George Will, William M'Gillivray, Alexander Edmond, John Sim, and others, students of medicine. The deed describes the Medical Society as at first composed of a few medical students "for mutual improvement in prosecuting their studies." These meetings, it adds, were of much benefit to the members, and were soon patronised by the physicians of Aberdeen and the professors of the two universities, who joined it as honorary members, the president being always "one of the most respectable practising physicians in Aberdeen." In a few years "the society became so flourishing as to have received as honorary or extraordinary members many of the most illustrious medical and literary characters in the island, and a valuable and extensive library." The Medical Society, through its union with Marischal College, in no way sacrificed its independence, and could never be claimed by the university as a possession, the principal and professors being simply custodians of property during the owners' pleasure. The trust-deed was written out by Alexander Chivas, apprentice to David Hutcheon, advocate

in Aberdeen, and was signed as witness by George Pirie, the sacrist of Marischal College. Among the signatures is the name of Alexander Edmond, advocate, late of Kingswells, by Aberdeen, apprentice and afterwards partner of Mr Hutcheon, the legal adviser of the Society. Such was Marischal College in the early days of the Medical Society, which had some honorary members in Edinburgh and London who merit attention.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE EDINBURGH MEDICAL SCHOOL.

Dr Cullen—Dr Monro—Dr James Gregory—Student life—Medical doctors and professors—Dr John Abercrombie.

THOUGHT takes us from Granite-land to where the beautiful capital, the Modern Athens, lies with her background of hills, picturesque even amid sombre city smoke. The Aberdeen Medical Society was closely bound from its earliest days with the Edinburgh School of Medicine, then at the height of its fame. Towards the close of the eighteenth century the feeling between Aberdeen and the royal city was one of reverential admiration on the part of the northern seaport for the centre of light and learning, where Marischal and King's College medical students looked forward to being taught by the great Monro, the Professor of Anatomy in Edinburgh.

Although the race for wealth and fame was already gravitating towards London, it was not that the north-countryman valued culture little, but that he valued wealth more. Life was hard in his home, severe in its simplicity, and he who could learn to live in Aberdeen was safe to make his way anywhere. After the days of the Second Monro the bolder Aberdeenshire students of medicine went to London; but in the meanwhile Edinburgh was their ambition. Life in Edinburgh, where the history of a nation sweeps between palace and castle along the Canongate and High Street, was an education in itself; and in Edinburgh was always to be found a class of people

so raised above common wants by the amenities of society, that they had and could impart intellectual culture. But Edinburgh, with its palace-like houses of dim grey freestone, its Arthur Seat, its Calton Hill, its Castle Rock, and all its grand situations, was a hundred years ago a veritable "Auld Reekie," teeming with population and crowded within narrow limits. The New Town was beginning to gleam beyond what had been the Nor' Loch; yet fashionable Edinburgh doctors still toiled in the closes of the Old Town. A month or two before the Aberdeen Medical Society held its first meeting, the new university buildings were begun, amid general rejoicing, on the site of the old ill-fated Kirk-of-Field. A picture of the laying of the foundation-stone shows a grand procession of wigged and powdered gentlemen, followed by carriages full of great ladies, in full dress, powdered hair, and feathers, showing that the pomp and ceremony of the old *régime* had not yet died out.

The Aberdeenshire student of medicine coming to Edinburgh, according to the fashion of students, held Dr Cullen in great reverence, now a very old man, who retired from his professorship in 1789, and died the following year. His death, and that of the great anatomist, John Hunter, took place within a short time of each other in these days of change and reform, which extinguished many shining lights in medicine and in science. Dr Cullen was an able and a fortunate man, and a distinguished lecturer. The *protégé* of three noble dukes, he was courteous, obliging, and generous, and full of that homely wisdom, the heritage of the great physician. He was transferred from the Chair of Chemistry in Edinburgh University to that of the Theory of Medicine; and Dr John Gregory of Aberdeen being Professor of the Practice of Medicine, these two remarkable men taught alternately till Dr Cullen became Professor of the Practice of Medicine. Some of his axioms have been preserved, as when he said, "Every wise physician is a dogmatist, but a dogmatical physician is one of the most

absurd animals that lives." His advice to his son was his advice to all medical students: "Study your trade eagerly; decline no labour; recommend yourself by briskness and diligence; bear hardships with patience and resolution; be obliging to everybody, whether above or below you; and hold up your head, both in a literal and figurative sense." In the meetings of the Aberdeen Medical Society he was admired chiefly as an iconoclast—a man of new ideas, who dispersed old superstitions. As an opponent of the great Boerhaave, now out of fashion, he was hailed with admiration, for it was the habit of the student of medicine to denounce the physicians whom his grandfather had admired. Dr Cullen read easily and well in his university lectures, from notes in a familiar style, openly telling his students that the earth hides the physicians' faults, and that if the living body could be dissected it would show that they were sometimes wrong, adding: "Whenever you yourselves shall be above mistakes, or can find anybody else who is, I shall allow you to rate me as a very inferior person."

Dr Cullen's sometime assistant, and afterwards rival, Dr Brown, who contradicted all his old master's opinions, and who was looked upon by the best authorities as a charlatan, was much the fashion then, but found few admirers in the Aberdeen Medical Society. His art consisted in indulging the foibles of the sick; and it was said that he recommended high livers afflicted with gout strong food and rich wines. Occasionally in the minutes of the Aberdeen Medical Society he is mentioned as having been quoted as an authority; but on the whole the sagacity of the northern Scot did not lead him to believe in Dr Brown's cures.

The great medical attraction in Edinburgh was the teaching of anatomy by the Monros, who, as Professors of Anatomy in Edinburgh, were world-famous. The first of this celebrated family was the first Professor of Anatomy in Edinburgh. Unfortunately the progress of the teaching of anatomy was slow; it was hampered by law and superstition, and body-snatching was systematically engaged in,



there being no other way of getting "subjects." The first Monro's father served as surgeon with King William in Flanders, and himself began practice in Edinburgh, where he was appointed Professor of Anatomy in 1721. Dr David Skene, of Aberdeen, in his Edinburgh Journal mentions calling on an Aberdeenshire friend, Lady Balnacraig, whom he found receiving her physician, Dr Monro, who greeted him graciously. He described the anatomist as "an easy, merry, cheerful man," who lectured every Monday and took a rest on Tuesdays. Dr Monro was remarkable for a kindly disposition, had with rival physicians and adverse critics an admirable good-humour, and his advice in a medical magazine to an old pupil, who took him to task, not "to pretend to perfection," is a model of amiable raillery.

Under the second Monro, his son, the early members of the Aberdeen Medical Society studied who went to Edinburgh. Monro "Secundus," as Professor Struthers in his masterly book on "the Edinburgh Medical School" tells, had a clearness of style that thrilled his audience like an electric shock. As he spoke, there flowed from him a grand course of information—medical, surgical, physiological, pathological—without art or effort. Professor Monro retired to his estate of Craiglockhart in 1809, and was succeeded by his son, Monro Tertius, third and last of the Monros.

The question of lodging and board was very important to the stranger student coming to Edinburgh. Dr David Skene found rooms for himself and his friend Willie Gordon in the old-fashioned Potterrow, where a little snug room with a boxed bed in it was got for 2s. a-week, to be reduced to 1s. 6d. if the lodgings were retained during the winter. The young men dined at an "ordinary" for 6d. each.

We may imagine the stranger student wandering about Edinburgh in search of lodgings in the brilliant days of the second Monro, knowing no one in the town, or perchance having some grand letter of introduction in his pocket which he was too modest to deliver. A

story is told of a student being persistently refused admittance into the better sort of houses, and recommended to some obscure, uncleanly quarters where "collegians" were kept. Through friends at court the magic doors of society were thrown open, but the industrious scholar avoided the company of perruqued gentlemen and behooped ladies, preferring to watch "lang Sandy Wood," the favourite town's doctor, going from door to door in moments of leisure, and the several styles of the great men who were his teachers in the University, which prospered so much that in 1810 there were 900 students of medicine. An honorary member of the Aberdeen Medical Society, Sir Astley Cooper, went to Edinburgh to study medicine in 1787, and took lodgings in Bristo Street close to the University, dining at 1s. a-day in Buccleuch Place. The professors of King's College were of opinion that student life in Edinburgh was so expensive that "the lower orders" could not afford it, and only one out of three students of medicine from Aberdeen went so far. At home a young man could board and lodge for about a quarter of what was needed for "the South." Consequently, some went out into the world as far as the West Indies with no more medical education than could be got from a little hospital practice and some medical books.

Among the physicians of Edinburgh allied by the title of honorary membership with the Northern Society was Professor James Gregory, from Aberdeenshire. Born in 1753, before his father left King's College to try practice in London, he was at the height of a solid reputation when the first members of the Aberdeen Society came to Edinburgh. The most remarkable character in the professoriate, he lectured on "the practice of physic" from the death of Dr Cullen for thirty-one years. A portrait of Dr Gregory, as a large heavy-featured man dressed in the uniform of the Edinburgh Volunteers of the day, and wearing a wig tied in a queue with ribbon, gives the appearance of a man of great vigour, with the large head and massive features of his race. He was ungainly, with some-

what the figure of Samuel Johnson; and of good birth and acute natural parts, was combative and irascible, joining largely in the noisy wrangles which disturbed the professors and doctors of medicine at the time in Edinburgh. The personally abusive tone which the Aberdeen Medical Journals afterwards acquired found its origin in these unfortunate medical squabbles. Surgeon John Bell and Dr Gregory having quarrelled, Dr Gregory declared that he did not mind how much noise his enemies made, as it would not deprive him of an hour's natural sleep, besides affording him infinite amusement and gratification while awake. He is reported to have said that if any man needed a medical attendant for himself or his family, he would do as well to call in a mad dog as Mr Bell. Dr Gregory had also a paper war with Dr Hamilton, the Professor of Midwifery in Edinburgh University, and on one occasion gave a brother physician a good thrashing with his gold-headed cane, which was followed by a lawsuit. In spite of his violent temper and abusive language, Dr Gregory was greatly beloved, for his mind was sagacious and straightforward, he was forgiving of injuries, of broad and enlightened views, and scorned like smaller persons to court public favour. In his early days he was a great therapist, and is known as the compounder of the famous "Gregory's mixture." He was first physician in Scotland, a member of the French Institute, and possessed a literary, philosophical, and scientific reputation, which he kept up by constant intercourse with men of letters as well as of medicine.

This sketch of a past type of physician would not be complete without Sir Astley Cooper's youthful recollections of him. Dr Gregory he described as a powerful and eloquent lecturer, always able to command the respect of his somewhat wild audience, the young students of the university. His style was prolix, owing to his habit of commencing the history of a case by considering the opinion the ancients had of the disease under consideration, and their treatment of it, from which he descended gradually to medicine

in his own time. He represented the Aberdeenshire doctor as kindly and tender to those in affliction, and always ready to rebuke evil. Once, on leaving a student in his consulting-room along with the money which he had received for class tickets, Dr Gregory saw him pocket a portion of the fees. Bidding the youth good-bye, he said to him, "I saw you take that money, sir. Good God! what distress must be yours before you would lower yourself to such an action. Never do it again, I beseech you, for such a course can only end in ruin." These words had the happy effect of saving the young man from a life of crime, and of making him a useful member of society. Such, passionate and kindly, dictatorial and capable, was this strange specimen of a north-country physician amid the elegant *ton* of the modern Athens.

The chief of the medical professors of this brilliant time in Edinburgh were honorary members of the Aberdeen Medical Society. Dr Andrew Duncan, senior Professor of the Institutes of Medicine, joined it in 1792, and was a man of high ability, celebrated as the originator of a great many benevolent schemes, "entertained by the goodness of his heart." There is an engraving of Dr Duncan among 'Kay's Edinburgh Portraits,' in which he wears a long coat and ruffles, his queue of powdered hair neatly tied in a ribbon behind his head, and under his arm carries a silk parasol. Dr Duncan was first physician to the King for Scotland, was often elected President of the Royal Medical Society of Scotland, and took a strong interest in all medical societies. He was disappointed in the Chair of Theory of Medicine in Edinburgh which Dr James Gregory obtained, and gave extramural or "private lectures," which were very popular, on the same subject. He was elected by the Aberdeen Medical Society when he lost the chair, this being the only recognition of high ability in their power to offer. The hall of the Edinburgh Medical Society was built by the suggestion of Dr Duncan; he was also the only private medical lecturer in Edinburgh in his day, and one of the founders of an extramural medical

school which could very soon boast that a medical student in Edinburgh might get all his education outside the University gates. He was also originator of the Dispensary, the Royal Lunatic Asylum, and Experimental Gardens of Edinburgh. At the time of his disappointment, when he was supplanted by Dr Gregory, he improved the opportunity, instead of railing at his successful rival, by concluding a clinical address to his students with these words: "In competition I had no powerful connection, no political interest to aid my cause; but I thought that my chance for success stood on no infirm basis when it rested on what I had done to deserve it. . . . I have already lived long enough to have experienced even advantages from disappointment on other occasions, and time alone can determine whether the present one may not yet afford me an instance of the favour of heaven."

Dr Hamilton, Professor of Midwifery in the Edinburgh College, also a noted man, became an honorary member. The sharp eyes of his young students at the hospital discovered Dr Hamilton to be a short little man, very popular as a teacher, and very eccentric too. He had a craze about confined air, and sat in his carriage with both windows open: when, in consultation, the medical brother who accompanied him objected to a cross-draught, Dr Hamilton got out and walked. He wore, after the fashion was out, knee-breeches, large buckles, powdered hair, a pigtail, and cocked-hat, and was a very noticeable figure in the streets.

Among others may be mentioned at this time Dr Daniel Rutherford, a chemist, Professor of Botany in Edinburgh University, the son of an eminent father, and the discoverer of nitrogen. He was the uncle of Sir Walter Scott, and is described as a man of literary and classic taste and of great good sense, though of humble manner and appearance, and a better pathologist—or, in the phraseology of the day, "morbid anatomist"—than botanist, and an excellent diagnoser of disease.

Professor Hope, afterwards of Chemistry, was also sought as a



patron by the Aberdeen Medical Society. He was described by a gifted pupil as "a man of reading and a gentleman."

There was also the noted John Bell, the great adapter of anatomy to surgery in Edinburgh, possessed of an originality which made rivals of Dr James Gregory and Dr Monro. Dr Gregory presented a petition to the Edinburgh Town Council to exclude John Bell from becoming a physician in the Infirmary. John Bell was excluded, and set up an extramural class, which marked a new era in medicine. In spite of industry and talent, he was never able to make up for the loss sustained by his exclusion from the Infirmary, though he was one of the chief consultants of his time. To a letter from the secretary of the Aberdeen Medical Society, offering membership, Dr Bell answered courteously, in the stilted manner of the time, that the approval of an assemblage of men was more flattering than that of an individual; adding, "It is natural for me to feel that I could not deserve the honour your Society has been pleased to confer upon me, were I not sensible that, when you are pleased to confer the compliment, it were a want of good taste to refuse it." Dr John Bell was known as "little Johnny Bell," and was a man of keen eye, intelligent face, and small stature. A fervid anatomist, he complained that latterly, in Dr Monro's class, "unless there was a succession of bloody murders, not three subjects were dissected in the year." He was an enthusiastic lover of music, and those students considered themselves fortunate who were invited to Mrs Bell's celebrated musical evenings.

Benjamin Bell, a famous Edinburgh surgeon, was made honorary member of the Aberdeen Society at the same time. He wrote a system of surgery, and fell a victim to the animosity of John Bell, who, thinking that he had something to do with a scurrilous pamphlet called 'A Review of the Writings of John Bell, Surgeon in Edinburgh, by Jonathan Dawplucker,' attacked Benjamin's system of surgery, which he thought out of date, and far behind his own brilliant work on the same subject. It caused great satis-



faction to John Bell to be able to say, "I neither mistook my bird nor missed my shot: on the day on which the second number was published, the great surgical work of Benjamin fell down dead." In 'Kay's Edinburgh Portraits' there is a sketch of Benjamin Bell as he went to see his patients, in a long coat, large waistcoat and ruffles, a heavy walking-stick, and a broad-brimmed hat. A contrast to his rival, John Bell, who was very irascible, Benjamin Bell is described as having been of a most amiable disposition.

Dr Andrew Fyfe, lecturer on anatomy, was one of the extramural Medical School the Society delighted to honour. Astley Cooper, one of his pupils, called him "a horrid lecturer," qualifying the remark by adding that he was an industrious, worthy man, and a good practical anatomist,—though his style of constantly interrupting his lectures with "Ah! ah! gentlemen," whilst he held a candle in his hand from which tallow dropped all over his clothes, could not have been pleasant. Dr Fyfe was the assistant of the second Dr Monro, who discerned and fostered talent in him, and his 'Compendium of Anatomy,' with its rare anatomical plates, is an invaluable and laborious work, which necessitated his learning to paint and draw, as he had no artist for his illustrations. Dr Gordon, in later days physician to Thomas Carlyle, received the Society's membership.

Dr John Abercrombie, an Aberdeen doctor transplanted to Edinburgh, and a member of the Medical Society, was a fine type of the successful northern physician. Dr Abercrombie was a son of the manse, his father having been minister of the East Church in Aberdeen, where he was born in 1780. Not only his parents but his grandparents belonged to Aberdeen; and his grandfather, Bailie Robert Abercrombie, with his wife, lie buried in its town's churchyard. Dr Abercrombie was educated at the Grammar School, and then at Marischal College, where he became Master of Arts at fifteen years of age. When he went up to Edinburgh to study in the University there in 1800, Aberdeen itself, and still

more Edinburgh, was in a state of change. Old houses and streets were being taken down and new ones put up. The Edinburgh College was an immense new ruin, Mr George Wilson says in his interesting pamphlet on Dr Abercrombie. It was winter, the buildings were left half finished, blocked with snow, mortar, and masonry; no workmen were to be found, for the college credit had stopped and all was at a standstill. Fortunately the medical class-rooms had been finished some years before, and could be reached with difficulty over the broken ground. At college Dr Abercrombie was chiefly impressed by Dr James Gregory, who was very popular with the students. In 1803 he took his medical degree, and after a visit to London settled down in Edinburgh in 1804 in Nicolson Street, then thought an aristocratic locality for medical men, and close by the College of Surgeons, to the south of the town. He became a member of the Aberdeen Medical Society in 1812, and presented several of his works to the library. Dr Abercrombie was first physician to his Majesty, a dignity conferred on the most distinguished doctor of the day in Scotland, and Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons in Edinburgh. He had a lucrative practice, and was described in his older years by a youthful aspirant after medical fame as "a perfect clock, as rich as a Jew, and a great physician besides." In his older days Dr Abercrombie showed great attention and kindness to members of the Aberdeen Society when students in Edinburgh.

Dr John Brown in his '*Horæ Subsecivæ*' says of him that the author of '*Diseases of the Brain and Nervous System*' "was a master in the diagnosis and treatment of disease." He tells a curious story of how, while visiting with a student a man supposed to be labouring under malignant disease of the stomach, Dr Abercrombie said, "The mischief is all in the brain." This proved to be the case, and on the student asking how Dr Abercrombie discovered this, he said, "I can't tell you, I can hardly tell myself—I rest on past observation. My information would be useless to others, they must

investigate for themselves." The student eagerly asked if it was something in the eye of the patient which guided his decision. "Perhaps it was," replied Dr Abercrombie, "but don't blister every man's occiput whose eyes look like his."

Besides a prolific writer on medical matters, Dr Abercrombie wrote upon matters of philosophy with a firm belief in the Providence of God and a great contempt for infidelity. His celebrated book on 'The Intellectual Powers,' presented to the Aberdeen Medical Society through Dr George French, is most interesting. A chapter on "The Uncertainty of Medicine" enjoins on those who make it their study to recollect that it is only by powers of close attention and observation that disease can be understood. In his conclusion he rises through firm conviction to eloquence, and asserts that the physician should resign himself to the influence of the natural truths which he has observed. "Familiar," wrote Dr Abercrombie, "with human suffering and death, let him learn to value the estimate of these truths, which have power to heal the broken heart, and to cheer the bed of death with the prospect of immortality."

Dr Abercrombie associated with the most remarkable men of his time, was very generous, fond of relieving the poor and of unostentatiously giving to all whom he thought needy, besides contributing largely to most of the benevolent institutions of Edinburgh. When appointed Lord Rector of Marischal College, ill-feeling arose on account of his complaining of degrees in medicine being given to unworthy persons, and bringing the school into contempt, and he was the cause of removing this slur on the Medical School of Aberdeen. Dr Abercrombie was a man of undoubted Aberdeenshire character, capable, and gifted. Nor was he regardless of this world's gear: he married the only child of David Wardlaw, proprietor of the estate of Netherbeath in Fifeshire, and became independent of the sordid necessities of his profession. It is none the less to his credit that he did not seek to further increase his

wealth, but freely gave of his skill, often refusing payments even when pressed on him, and although he had a large family to maintain. Among his distinguished patients was Sir Walter Scott in his later days, whom he advised to stop writing if he did not wish to kill himself, and whom he bled with good effects. In his house, which he must have seldom had time to rest in, Dr Abercrombie was singularly happy. It was said of him that no one could tell what he was at home among his family of eight daughters, whose mother died early. He very soon left an overwhelming general practice for a great consulting practice, and when in general practice made forty-five to fifty visits a-day, sometimes more, and had fifteen private pupils besides. His advice to a young man about to begin medical practice shows his own high appreciation of his calling. He said: "In your professional conduct you are well aware that no respectability or eminence can be attained without the most minute attention and the most unwearied diligence. All other considerations must be sacrificed to your own professional improvement, and to the interests of those that are committed to your care."

Among Dr Abercrombie's many works was one called 'Observations on the Moral Condition of the Lower Orders.' Adverse to materialism, which for years after the days of Hume and the French Revolution still dominated medicine, he wrote against "the cant of infidelity, which he declared worse than the cant of hypocrisy." A valuable little paper, which no doctor should be without for distribution, is said to have been written by Dr Abercrombie, and is called "Sending for the Doctor." It explains when the doctor should be visited to the advantage of the patient, how to leave a message at the doctor's door, and gives information on points of medical etiquette. The observations on how to receive a doctor are shrewd and sensible. Dr Abercrombie says: "When your medical attendant calls, proceed at once to business, and do not seek to occupy his time with

the state of the weather, or the news of the day, before telling what you complain of. A doctor's time is like a stock-in-trade, and you may with as much propriety make free with a yard of broadcloth in a merchant's shop as with half an hour of his time." The patient is advised in a friendly way to state his case first, and his doctor and he can settle afterwards the affairs of the nation, or the state of the crops, with comfort. Working from eight in the morning till sometimes near midnight, Dr Abercrombie found time to write in his carriage, and when he started from home by mistake without a light, wrote his notes in the dark. Little is known about this great doctor's daily life—he who was so careful of others' lives being, we are told, nobly careless of his own. One who spoke of him as a "living epistle," thought Dr Abercrombie like an epistle of St John, "pure, profound, and illuminated with the spirituality of heaven." He died suddenly, of an unusual form of heart complaint, in November 1844, while his carriage stood at his door in York Place, at ten in the morning, waiting for him to go his rounds. In his portraits he appears as a fine-looking man, of strong features, with a remarkably pleasing expression of face, serene and happy. His pleasant look, as that of one lifted above all care, was said to be distinctly beautiful as he lay in his coffin. A medallion is carved upon his gravestone, which is said to be a remarkably good likeness of this Christian gentleman and physician, whose riches never caused him to forget his duty to suffering humanity.

By the election of such distinguished men the Medical Society showed an appreciation of the University of classic Edinburgh, and of its intellectual society—in itself a culture. Some students of medicine, meanwhile, from year to year left Aberdeen for London, where they mingled with the greater world, and had the advantage of the best teaching as well as the best opportunities of success.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE LONDON MEDICAL SCHOOL.

John Hunter—John Abernethy—Sir Astley Cooper—Sir Walter Farquhar, M.D.  
—The medical student in London.

THE Aberdeen Medical Society gladly sought patrons amid the wealth and power of London, where Aberdeenshire physicians were remarkable for love of their native city. The number of medical students who went southward for their degree was yearly increasing. The great English physicians were well known to the Scottish student of medicine: Harvey, at the mention of whose name Boerhaave, the Dutch physician, bowed his head; Sydenham, who wrote on the plague, and was soldier and surgeon during the wars of the Parliament; and Dr Jenner, the country physician, who ingeniously discovered a cure for the deadly scourge of smallpox.

John Hunter, the great anatomist, was the most distinguished medical man of the day. Scotland greatly revered him, for not only was he a famous surgeon and a profound anatomist, but he was a Scotsman. In invincible industry he was a grand example of that genius described as "an infinite capacity for taking pains," and putting anatomy on a sure foundation, he gave to the study of pathology its true place. It was said of him that he loved anatomy with all the fondness of a lover, and in his incessant



industry laboured as if life was all too short for the work he had to do. He had a candid open nature, was entirely unreserved, despised artifice, was above all deceit, and hated to see it in others. His life was a sacrifice to science, and in his earnest aim and intense character he had much in common with students from the north, who, though they revered little, yet revered the best. With such a nature as that of Hunter's the young men of the enterprising city by the sea had much sympathy, and he could not but inspire the youth of his profession with an object and an aim in life as no other teacher could. The Aberdeen Medical Society missed the patronage of the great anatomist, but invited his son, a medical officer in the army, to become honorary member.

The celebrated surgeon, John Abernethy, joined the society in 1816, and was also a Scotsman, a man of strong character, and a great doctor. A pupil of John Hunter's, he arranged and classified the great Hunterian Museum in Lincoln's Inn Fields. He has been described as a little man, very handsome, and careless of his dress, irascible, and very kind-hearted—his face lit up with a benevolent expression. He believed that all diseases had their source in the stomach, which should be every one's first care. Of Abernethy's wit and his hasty temper we have all heard stories. His advice to the dyspeptic, "earn a shilling a-day and live on it," and to a Royal Prince to do as Lord Wellington did with besieged cities, "cut off the supplies," cannot be too well known and appreciated; but some of the stories about Abernethy were very plain speaking. The envy of others kept him for many years from the hospital situation he deserved to hold. When assistant-surgeon for years in St Bartholomew's Hospital, he characteristically reminded one of his superiors of a promise he had made to retire from office in his favour, a promise which had not been kept. "Well, sir," said Abernethy, "you say you didn't promise, I say you did; and all that I now say is, Shame on the liar."

Abernethy's sharp wit was intensified by the tricks that fortune played him. For twenty-eight years he remained assistant-physician at St Bartholomew's, brought crowds of students to it, made the hospital's fame, and never received a farthing of the large sums he put into the pockets of his seniors. When at last promoted, he wrote a pamphlet against the injurious effects of continuing the same infirmary physicians for a lengthened period. Meanwhile his lectures, attended by several of the Aberdeen students, were most attractive; and his manner at its happiest his students called "Abernethy at home." Much of the interesting surgical details in his lectures was derived from the romance of war. He would first of all describe a gunshot wound received by an officer in the style of a novel, and then add, "That will not do at all for us," and give a scientific explanation, describing tendons, nerves, sinews, and arteries in an easy and confidential way, and yet so that the young student could never forget them. In London this remarkable doctor was the rage, and an enterprising baker became at once popular by christening his biscuits "Abernethy." The great surgeon presented the singular figure of an eccentric man, with a broad Scottish accent, going his own peculiar way, saying and doing what he chose, amid London rank and fashion, and pleasing where he seemed anxious to displease. Abernethy's great medical contemporary, Sir Astley Cooper, described him as eloquent and amusing in his lectures, a good anatomist "for teaching and reading, but not for work, as he never laboured, a pleasant companion, and an excellent private character." His blue-pill and stomach remedies were famous. He ordered people to eat three ounces of food three times a-day, without drinking. A patient having confided to Sir Astley his entire belief in Mr Abernethy's regimen, his rival cruelly said: "I will faithfully recount to you the dinner he ate himself yesterday at the Freemason's Tavern, where I sat down next to him. He took turtle-soup and punch, venison, champagne, pastry, and cheese; and now, he said, 'Waiter, bring

me a glass of brown stout.'” The patient indignantly cried, “How could I have been such a fool as to starve myself !”

Sir Astley Cooper's reputation and that of Abernethy existed together, and together they are called by a writer on eminent doctors “the Knife *versus* Regimen.” Sir Astley, an Englishman, was a brilliant surgeon and Professor of Comparative Anatomy, who handled his instruments with peculiar elegance, and, always suave and agreeable, received many a fee which might have been offered to his rival. It was said that he could operate as well with an oyster-knife as with the finest instrument made for the purpose in the best shop in London. An argument was said to have taken place between some admirers of different great surgeons. One spoke of an important operation made in five minutes. “You should see Sir Astley,” said another; “he doesn't give you time to wink.” Daring operations in surgery were Sir Astley Cooper's greatest feats, and made his name world famous. He is described as having been remarkably handsome, and commonly wore white silk stockings and knee-breeches, a light waistcoat and blue coat, with hair carefully powdered. A leader of the resurrectionists, he knew all their secrets. The most frightful “resurrection” stories are to be found in the pages of his life; and he boasted there was no *body* that he could not obtain—it was only a question of price. His income rose from five guineas to £21,000; and a merchant prince is said to have tossed him, after a successful operation, £1000 in his nightcap. He was a brilliant surgeon in the days when dash and celerity in operation were more admired than “conservative” surgery, and was the friend of the medical student, openly taking his part against the aggression of professors.

Sir Charles Bell, whose patronage was also courted by the Medical Society, brother of John Bell of Edinburgh, was Professor of Anatomy and Surgery to the College of Surgeons, and in his later years Professor of Surgery in Edinburgh. His water-colour drawings of anatomical subjects were very fine; and amongst other

works, he wrote on 'The Hand,' the Bridgewater Treatise on 'The Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God as manifested in the Works of Creation,' receiving the prize offered of a thousand pounds. He was one of the most hard-working men of his day, and was looked on as the worthy successor of John Hunter. His life tells of failures and successes, of a devotion to science poorly paid, whilst a medical practice would have given a fortune. Charles Bell left Edinburgh because the Infirmary and the College were practically closed on him, and made his great physiological discovery of the separate identity of the sensitive and motor nerves in an old half-ruined house in London. The years from 1807 to 1811 were spent in such obscurity and misery, that he used to say no after troubles had ever power to move him. Returning to Edinburgh, after refusing great honours in London, that he might devote himself to science, he found he was a mere outsider in a city of cliques. The evening of his life passed unregarded; but his work was done, and posterity accorded him that gratitude which was denied in his life.

Sir Gilbert Blane, an eminent Scotsman, was made honorary member of the Society, and accompanied Lord Rodney in his early days as private physician to the West Indies, where he was present at six battles. He became later Physician to the Fleet, and wrote on the diseases of seamen. Afterwards he settled in London, and was Physician to the Royal Household and St Thomas's Hospital; but his manner was so cold that he was facetiously termed "Chill Blain." He was at the head of the Naval Medical Board, introduced the cure of scurvy on board ship by lemon-juice, and was celebrated for improving the condition of convicts on board the hulks at Woolwich, and greatly diminishing, by cleanliness and regimen, jail fever.

Sir Benjamin Brodie, a distinguished surgeon, accepted the honorary membership of the Society.

Dr John Coakley Lettsom, who took considerable interest in the

Aberdeen Society, was a man of character and ability. By frugality and industry he became wealthy, and when established as a physician in London had a large income. An epigram was written on this fortunate doctor by a wit:—

“ When any sick to me apply,  
I physicks, bleeds, and sweats 'em;  
If after that they choose to die,  
What's that to me?  
I Lettsom (I lets 'em).”

A friend happily replied for Dr Lettsom—

“ Such swarms of patients do to me apply,  
Did I not practise some would surely die;  
'Tis true I purge some, bleed some, sweat some,  
Admit I expedite a few, still many call—  
I Lettsom (I lets 'em).”

The life of Sir Walter Farquhar shows what the Aberdeenshire medical man could do to obtain a high position for himself in London. An account of his life has been given by James Mitchell, LL.D. He was the son of the Established minister of Peterhead, a student of King's College, a *protégé* of Professor John Gregory; and finished his medical studies in Glasgow and Edinburgh. He determined to join the army, and through the influence of Lord Howe was made surgeon to the 19th Regiment, where he personally attended the commander when wounded in the siege of Belleisle. The regiment was ordered to Gibraltar, and he obtained leave to go to France, where he studied his profession, and for several months lodged with Le Bat, the distinguished anatomist, in Rouen. His health failing, he left the army and settled in London as an apothecary, where he made a large income. Dr Farquhar soon found his practice increase with the sale of drugs, and became physician to the celebrated beautiful Duchess of Gordon, through whose patronage he was introduced to people of the highest rank in Scotland and England, many of whom availed themselves of his services. He became a licentiate of the

College of Physicians, gave up his apothecary's business, rose from the drug-store to be one of the first doctors in London, and was eventually made a baronet.

Sir Walter Farquhar attended King George III. during his unfortunate mental illness, and withdrew entirely from general practice in 1813, when he continued to remain consulting physician to the Prince Regent and some great families. The character of this successful physician shows the peculiarities common to distinguished physicians of prudence and sagacity. He remained unelated by wealth or adulation, and never presumed on his intimacy with politicians and princes by thrusting himself amid public affairs. In private life he was simple and humble, and proud of his early home. The young members of the Aberdeen Medical Society had in him a faithful friend when they came to London, and were surprised to find in the King's Physician a kindly, homely Scot. Sir Walter was an intimate friend of Mr Pitt, Lord Melville, and the great English statesmen of the day; and the following story shows that if the successful doctor had no pride in himself, he at least wished that his family should continue to enjoy the social distinction he had laboriously acquired. One of his daughters had engaged herself to a young man who had neither birth nor riches, desirable in a son-in-law. Mr Pitt, observing one day when he called on his friend the physician that he was in a dejected state, induced Sir Walter to tell him the story of his daughter's love-affair. Mr Pitt then asked if the young man was respectable and had the manners and education of a gentleman. On being told that he had, he said, "Then, my dear friend, remember this: you and I are old enough to know the delusions of this world. If your daughter's affection is given to a virtuous man, all is as it should be. Give your consent, and you will never regret it." Sir Walter followed his distinguished friend's advice, and never, it is said, had cause to repent of his determination. He was fortunate in his sons: one became Governor of the Mauritius, and



another the head of a great banking-house. He was the constant patron of the Aberdeen Medical Society, and gifted it with the finest picture in its collection, a portrait of the great Dr Harvey. He valued the picture highly, and sent with it the following letter to the Medico-Chirurgical Society, as it was now called, shortly before his death, in 1820, addressed to Dr John Charles Ogilvie, the secretary :—

“DEAR SIR,—By some accident the printed statement of the Medico-Chirurgical Society, endorsed by your friendly letter as President, did not reach me till the latter end of last year. Since that period the indolence attendant upon feeble health has prevented me from paying that attention to it which it so amply deserves, and more especially from me, *who commenced my medical studies in your city.*

“I believe the letter was forwarded to me by my friend Sir James M'Grigor, who has distinguished himself as a public character, and has also proved himself a warm friend to the Society. I cannot follow a better example, and therefore I have ordered fifty guineas to be paid into your bankers, Messrs Down, Thornton, & Co., to assist in completing the proposed plan [for the Medical Hall]. I wish I could find as great a number of followers as Sir James did in the Peninsula, *I may say from his own staff.*

“Some time ago Lord Besborough made me a present of a genuine and undoubted portrait of the great Harvey, and I cannot better dispose of it than by presenting it to your Society, to be placed in your great room, as a stimulus to the exertions of your young students in the prosecution of their professional pursuits. I have often and often wished that he had been a Scotchman.

“I have talked the business of the Society over with Dr Saunders, who from bad health has been obliged to retire from business, which I consider as a public professional loss, and particularly so to me personally. The young students from Aberdeen will have cause to lament it, as for many years he has been the constant zealous patron and promoter of their interests in the commencement of their career. He desires me to say that he is very anxious to send part of his medical library to the Society, and if you will send him a catalogue of what you already have, he will be happy to add such books as he possesses which are not contained in it, to which I shall be equally ready to contribute.—I have the honour to be, with great regard, dear Sir, your most faithful and obliged

“W. FARQUHAR.”

This letter is not only interesting as attesting the value of the portrait of Harvey, but as showing the importance of the Medical Society in the eyes of old members, when they became distinguished men in London. The picture, greatly valued by the members, is to be seen in the Aberdeen Medical Hall.

Dr William Saunders, an Aberdonian and a friend of Sir Walter Farquhar's, held a high position in London. He engaged in a crusade against quacks, and especially against a certain Dr Brodum who flourished a degree from Marischal College in the face of the medical profession. Dr Brodum was grossly ignorant, and traded with sham prescriptions; but it was discovered that his Aberdeen diploma had been signed by Dr William Saunders himself, as member of the College of Physicians. Brodum confessed to having never been in Aberdeen, but Sir William barely escaped prosecution.

The names of Forbes and Clarke have produced several physicians of distinction in London. Dr John Forbes, a north-countryman, in its early years took a great interest in the Aberdeen Medical Society, and bequeathed his library to Marischal College.

Having glanced at the lives of great physicians and surgeons who patronised the Medical Society of Aberdeen, the life of students of medicine in London may be taken into consideration. Many of these were apprenticed to doctors and chemists. The London apprentice of medicine was, as elsewhere, very much dependent on the humour of his master. Campbell, in his old-fashioned '*London Tradesman*,' said to have been written by Defoe, advises parents to choose good masters for their sons. Hard was the fate of the stranger condemned to serve with what Mr Campbell calls "*villains*," who looked on apprentices as slaves, taught them no business, devoted their lives to drudgery, and concealed from them the secrets of their business, some out of sullenness, and others out of pure ill-nature. A dishonest or dissolute master ruined the apprentice, and the temper of the wife had to be considered; for amid domestic

wrangling the youth had little chance of prospering, and with a female tyrant he was kept continually at kitchen work.

The early times of the naval surgeon, his experiences during examinations and on board ship, so amusingly told by Smollett, held good for long after his days. After studying at Leyden and wandering through the Continent, the student of medicine made pills and lotions for a London apothecary, as was the custom. In common with this was the experience of many poor Scottish medical students, those from Aberdeenshire being remarkable for methodical industry. Smollett supplies us with a witty description of a surgeon's examination, and his experiences are valuable as a peep into days which continued until the study of medicine altogether changed in our country. The description in 'Roderick Random' of the examination at Surgeon's Hall many generations of readers have laughed at, and everybody recognised as true. Roderick presented himself as a Scottish student of medicine before "a dozen of grim faces sitting at a long table." When told he came from Scotland the answer was, "I know that very well; we have scarce any other countrymen to examine here." On hearing he had only been for three years apprenticed, one of the grim men, Mr Snarler, fell into a violent passion and suggested that his friends should have made him a weaver or a shoemaker when they could not afford the necessary education, "but their pride would have a gentleman." Two of the examiners now began to quarrel on the subject of wounds of the intestines.

"I affirm," said one, "that all wounds of the intestines, whether great or small, are mortal."

"Pardon me, brother," says a fat gentleman, "there is a very good authority——"

Here he was interrupted by the other with, "Sir, excuse me, I despise all authority."

"But, sir, sir," replied his antagonist, "the reason of the thing shows——"

"A fig for reason!" cried this self-sufficient member; "I laugh at reason. Give me ocular demonstration."

The fat gentleman began to wax warm, and observed that no man acquainted with the anatomy of the parts would advance such an extravagant assertion. This enraged the other so much that he started up, and, in a furious tone, exclaimed, "What, sir! do you question my knowlege in anatomy?" and the scene concluded with a fight among the examiners.

"The London physician" of the day is sarcastically drawn by Campbell, who wrote that "to acquire this art of physic requires only being acquainted with a few books, to become master of a few aphorisms and commonplace observations, to purchase a Latin diploma from some mercenary college, to step into a neat chariot and put on a grave face, a sword, and a long wig; then M.D. is flourished to the name, the pert coxcomb is dubbed a doctor, and has a chance to kill as many as trust him with their health." He adds, however, that "a man with a large share of mother wit, or common-sense, by long experience and diligent observation of what passes in the course of his practice, without any other language than his mother tongue, or any other knowledge but what he can find in plain English without a chariot, long wig, or even a diploma, may be of more service to the public and make a more eminent figure in the medical world than a coxcomb who has read Hippocrates, Aristotle, and Galen."

## CHAPTER XI.

THE STAFF-SURGEON : SIR JAMES M'GRIGOR, DIRECTOR-GENERAL  
OF THE ALLIED ARMIES' MEDICAL DEPARTMENT IN THE  
PENINSULAR WAR.

Early days in Aberdeen—Adventurous career in the Peninsula.

JAMES M'GRIGOR, founder of the Aberdeen Medical Society, had a career of remarkable success, of which he gives particulars in his interesting autobiography. Like most distinguished men, he appears to have been lucky through all his life, his good fortune continuing with him often during the most trying circumstances. Born in 1770, he was the eldest son of a Grant of Strathspey, who settled in Aberdeen as a hosier. His mother was a Grant also, and of good family. James M'Grigor received his education at the Aberdeen Grammar School under Dr Dunn, studied in Marischal College, and attended the Aberdeen Infirmary under Dr French. He took his degree in Edinburgh, where he had the advantage of being instructed by Dr Monro, secundus, in anatomy, and by Dr James Gregory in "practice of physic." In 1793 Dr M'Grigor sailed from Aberdeen to London to push his fortunes as an army surgeon, when a storm came on, in the midst of which a box belonging to him burst open, disclosing a skull, which the sailors with superstitious fear demanded should be flung into the sea. Dr M'Grigor stoutly resisted, and was seconded by the captain, but was only saved from the loss of his property by a rapid set-in of fine weather.

Arriving in London, he was advised not to join a Scottish regiment, as Scotsmen generally distinguished themselves, and the regiment could not rise all together. He therefore selected the 88th or Connaught Rangers, which some Aberdonian doctors also joined. The reputation of the Connaught Rangers as desperate fighters is still kept up. Dr M'Grigor first saw active service among the Irish at the sieges of Bergen-op-Zoom and Nimeguen. At Bergen-op-Zoom, in spite of the tears of an old clergyman, he turned a church into a hospital, after which he observed that "mortality in the regiment greatly increased"!

Marching through Holland, the Aberdonian surgeon fell in with a strange adventure. During a retreat he determined to quarter himself in a comfortable farmhouse, where was a locked door. Forcing it open, he found the body of the farmer's grandmother lying in a bed in the wall within. Unceremoniously thrusting the unpleasant occupant out, the doctor and two brother officers lay down in the bed, which was a large one, in their uniforms to be ready in case of attack. In the morning Dr M'Grigor felt a deadly faintness: he had caught typhus fever, and besought his companions to leave him behind them, which they would not do, as they said the Dutch, in revenge of the British pulling down their wooden houses for firewood, murdered the sick who were left. Rather than have his throat cut, they carried him off in a state of delirium in a cart; but long before he was convalescent, which was due to his faithful Irish servant and a Dutch farmer and his wife, he insisted on being taken home with the army. His indomitable resolution contrasts strangely with the recklessness he showed in choosing a bed where a typhus patient had just lain. It was his belief that fresh air was, under Providence the saving of his life; and he returned to duty and health with a great determination to do well as far as in him lay. He had plenty of opportunity in the wild Connaught Rangers of leading a life of temperance and discouraging duelling, which he did by



every means in his power. Promotion came, and he received the situation of Superintendent-Surgeon of Hospitals in Southampton, where he showed discretion by turning the colonel of his regiment, a rash hot-tempered man, from a bitter enemy to an admiring friend.

While awaiting the fleet, to sail for the West Indies, whither he was bound with the troops, he left his ship one dark afternoon to inspect the men of another vessel. Having been persuaded by the captain to remain all night on board, he found next morning that the fleet had sailed, carrying him away in the wrong ship. He was one of the first of the army to land in Barbadoes. News came meanwhile of Dr M'Grigor's death, strangely enough through his friend, Dr Robertson of Barbadoes, who wrote to Dr Livingstone asking him to inform the members of the Aberdeen Medical Society of his sad fate. The members were much distressed, the reader's desk was hung with black, and Dr M'Grigor's parents were unnecessarily plunged in grief. A surgeon was put in his place, and it was discovered that he had been mistaken for a young officer who, while attempting to pass from one ship in the fleet to another, had been crushed to death. The ship in which he was to have gone to the West Indies with his brother had meanwhile been seized in the Channel by a French frigate, and all on board were consigned to the miseries of a foreign prison. He accidentally met his friend, Dr Robertson, who had just sent news of his death, and relieved his mind ; and eventually returning to England, Dr M'Grigor was in Portsmouth during the mutiny of the fleet. The greatest difficulty was found at this time in getting army medical officers : the Government had to advertise for them, and young men of ability were offered every facility for rising to eminence.

Placards were placed on the gates of King's and Marischal Colleges, and the other Scottish and Irish universities, offering surgeons' commissions to those who could pass some slight examination, free quarters from the Army Medical Board, and their travelling expenses from home. This caused the introduction of ignorant

and unqualified men in many cases. Dr M'Grigor deprecated the introduction of inferior staff-surgeons, and considered it "sound policy and real economy" that the soldier should have the best doctoring. "Are not town hospitals and dispensaries," he said, "open to the sick of the poor and middle classes, and their physicians and surgeons supposed to be the ablest men in the medical profession? And are the soldier and sailor to be put off with a cheap article of a doctor who cannot afford the expense of a regular medical education?" Dr M'Grigor's adventures continued manifold. Ordered with the army to India, he fell ill of fever, and told in amusing style how his men stole sheep from the natives—as they said, "to make mutton-broth for the doctor." Among his soldiers Dr M'Grigor halted like a patriarch of old, surrounded by camels, horses, sheep, and goats, and went an excursion across the Red Sea, when the waters were low, passing on dry land, but nearly perished by the sudden flow of returning tide. He was told how the Emperor Napoleon had all but met the fate of Pharaoh there shortly before, and had observed that he might have supplied the ministers of Europe with a good text! Dr M'Grigor had the opportunity of studying the plague when in India, and the good luck to become acquainted with the future Duke of Wellington, Sir David Baird, and Sir John Webbe.

Taking leave of his regiment, he became surgeon to the Royal Regiment of Horse Guards Blue, where he laughed at his own appearance in "a broad buff belt, high jack-boots, stout leather gloves to his elbows, a great cocked-hat, and a sword." Dr M'Grigor had a higher opinion of the gratitude of the private soldier than of the officer to his physician, and considered that excessive duty of sick-nursing, and laborious attentions to men of high position, is likely to engender want of respect towards the doctor, rather than just estimation of his services. When in the Blues Dr M'Grigor was sent for to Windsor to attend one of George III.'s state receptions. The king was a great critic in all the minor mat-

ters of warfare, and well acquainted with the past history and services of all his officers. The Scottish staff-surgeon had difficulty in finding a splendid enough uniform for wearing at a court ball to satisfy the old king. Dr M'Grigor's assistant-surgeon, while in the Blues, was Dr Laing, afterwards Professor of Surgery in Aberdeen. Harry Dundas, who became Lord Melville, an intimate friend of Dr M'Grigor's, wished to appoint a new British Indian Medical Board at Prince of Wales Island, and to set him at the head of it, but he wisely declined the honour, as public favour was against the new Presidency, which was nicknamed Nova Scotia. The king appointed him shortly after Northern Medical Inspector in England, and afterwards South-Western Medical Superintendent. He set about at once introducing reforms, distinguishing himself by that power of order and arrangement which strongly marked his whole life. His habit of inquiring into the history of each patient, while the medical officer read the particulars of the case and the treatment to be enforced, was a great improvement on old customs. He afterwards questioned the patient, and, while approving the surgeon's report, sometimes suggested improvements. The hospital books were sent him, and he made in them notes of his remarks. A private letter from Dr M'Grigor courteously referred to this and that authority on certain diseases, in the treatment of which the surgeon had failed. This course suited admirably, and showed the good policy which was the foundation of his success in life. Dr M'Grigor was next appointed medical commissioner to the ill-fated expedition in Walcheren, where disease devastated the British army. After perils by land and sea, he returned home, and was married to Miss Grant, sister of a distant relation, afterwards Sir James Grant, head of the Intelligence Department during the Peninsular war, whose life was full of romantic incident.

Dr M'Grigor was now to receive the greatest honour of his life. He was called to Portugal to be chief of the medical staff of the Allied armies under Wellington (then Lord Wellesley), when, after

the disastrous death of General Sir John Moore, England had lost confidence in herself, and the fate of Europe lay trembling in the balance against the power of Bonaparte. He reached Lisbon in January 1812, where his arrival was anxiously awaited. The Commander-in-Chief had written to the Duke of York, as head of the British army, begging that he would send him "the most active and intelligent person that can be found to fill the place of Medical Inspector-General." The Duke replied by sending Dr M'Grigor, with the remark, "I consider him one of the most industrious, able, and successful public servants I have ever met with." Dr M'Grigor, on his arrival, at once set about reducing the idle concourse of officers and men on sick leave who lived in Lisbon with their wives and children, sending some home, and placing the rest under care in the rear of the army. Mr Larpent, Judge Advocate General to the Forces, an intimate friend of Dr M'Grigor's, in his 'Journal' says that at this time "there were more absent from sickness in the army than there were recruits." The number of the British sick was 7000, and Dr M'Grigor had on his medical staff 700 surgeons. It was his belief that dissipation and disease killed twice as many soldiers as died of wounds received in battle. There were seven great British hospitals in the Peninsula, of which Lisbon was the chief. The army of Napoleon was said to consist of 3,000,000 of men, who were much better cared for medically than were the British soldiers before the arrival of Dr M'Grigor; but the tide of war was turning. Napoleon was now with the best half of his army on the way to Russia. He had forced his brother Joseph as king on the Spaniards, and encouraged his soldiers to victory by saying, "The English cannot hold the Peninsula. Half of the army is on the sick list!" Dr M'Grigor very soon reduced the hospitals, and shattered regiments rose to their feet as if by miracle. His predecessor had written no medical reports, and he became known as the originator of the Army Medical Report!

The commander promised his aid in matters of medical reform, but complained that he had to do his own work and that of others as well. "I replied," said Dr M'Grigor, "that it would be my endeavour to prevent his having that trouble with me," and every morning he came to report the number of sick and wounded along with the heads of the other departments of the army. On being put off with the excuse that it would be well not to trouble the chief personally, he refused to conduct his business by proxy, and continued consequently in intimate relation with the head of the army. To his demand for conveyance for the wounded, however, his chief gave at first a decided refusal, saying that the scheme was impracticable, and would hinder the advance of the troops. The siege of Badajoz, the noise of which rent the earth, was seen by Dr M'Grigor, and is described by him in telling language; also the sacking of the town, and the danger to the victorious general from his own drunken soldiers firing over him a triumphant *feu de joie*. He describes the duties and rewards of the army surgeon, who is always in request after a siege, in these plain words: "The doctor is caressed, flattered, and almost idolised. From what one sees and hears at such times, one might be led to fancy that he would be cherished ever afterwards." He remarked that though there were some bright exceptions, most patients forgot the doctor upon their recovery. He adds: "I have indeed known more than one instance where the surgeon, besides visiting his patient three or four times a-day, when great pressure of fatiguing duty devolved upon him, after expending all the bandages he could get from the stores, had torn up his own shirts for bandages and dressings for his patients, while he has furthermore supplied not only all the wine required, but the very eatables from his own stock, and nothing but that constant kind attention saved life."

During his career in the Peninsula, as in the West Indies, he was surrounded by medical assistants from Marischal College, and amid the cry of battle Dr M'Grigor and his companions sent home



handsome contributions for the proposed Medical Hall in Aberdeen. Meanwhile Salamanca was taken, but was followed by the dark days of the great head of the British army. Fortune appeared to forsake him, and he held many a conference at this time with "Dr Mac.," as he called Dr M'Grigor, as to what was to be done with the sick and wounded in case of retreat. The doctor saw that his chief had lost for the moment his prestige, and that his officers were becoming discontented; but as commander he never for a moment slackened the reins of discipline. At his daily visit one morning Dr M'Grigor found him sitting for his portrait to a Spanish painter, who fled before his wrath when Dr M'Grigor mentioned that he had ordered up purveying and commissariat officers. "I shall be glad to know," he cried, "who is to command the army—I or you? I order one route and you another. As long as you live, sir, never do so again; never act without my orders."

Dr M'Grigor pleaded there was no time to consult him, and it was necessary to save life, adding, "I was about to take my leave, when, in a lower tone of voice, he begged I would dine with him that day, and, of course, I bowed assent." After dinner the great man became more open to reason, and ever after the commander and the surgeon were bound together in close friendship. There followed preparations for the winter to be passed in Portugal, between the sea and the famous lines of Torres Vedras, where the Allied forces remained in retreat, and Wellington again held conference with his friend "Mac."

"What is to be done?" he said; "I hear you have 2000 sick." He was delighted to learn that the number was already reduced to about 100, and that these Dr M'Grigor had, on his own authority, sent on in ambulance-wise before the army. After this the commander was in the habit of saying, "Nobody does their duty in the army but the men of the medical department," and he used playfully to call him Dr Sydenham.



Dr M'Grigor materially assisted the victories in the Peninsula by his care of the sick, and it is no exaggeration to say that his chief would not have met with such signal success in Spain if he had not been practically aided by this distinguished surgeon. In sufficient time he said he would undertake to put one-half of the sick of the army in fighting order. He endeavoured to give the British the medical advantages possessed by the French army, which he had good opportunity of seeing. Napoleon had a particular care of hospitals and their necessities, while the British in the Peninsula had neither spring-waggons nor the slightest appliance of comfort for the sick—not a hospital bed. Dr M'Grigor induced the commander to report home for the first time the work of the medical staff in the army, which he acknowledged to have been of the utmost service to him. Until then no public notice had been taken of the services of the army and navy surgeon. Towards the latter part of his Peninsular campaign he had his hospitals as well conducted as those of the French, and hired French surgeons by high pay to serve on the British side. The siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, where the great breach was lined with naked bayonets, over which the British soldiers crossed on each other's bodies, had crowded the hospital beds. Returning in glory with the Allied forces driving Napoleon's army before them into Paris, Dr M'Grigor shared in the triumphal entrance of Wellington.

Amongst other pleasant qualities Dr M'Grigor cultivated a courteous, considerate manner, and studied to say and do nothing that could make an enemy. His walk and conversation were that of a Christian and a gentleman, and the plain Aberdonian Scot became companion of the great. Observing on one occasion, along with a friend, a French surgeon, after the war, in a hospital amputate badly, he said to a medical friend, "Don't say anything about it, or it may be worse for the wounded man." The Duke of Wellington remarked of Dr M'Grigor, endorsing the opinion of the Duke of York, "I consider him to be one of the most industrious,

able, and successful public servants I have ever met with." He was presented by his brother medical officers on his retirement with plate to the value of nearly £1000, and received a Government retiring allowance of £3 a-day. A baronetcy followed. Sir James M'Grigor's home at Camden Hill, near London, was pronounced by Sir James Simpson, of Edinburgh, to be the perfect home of domestic bliss, where every member of the family was devoted to the welfare of all.

Dr M'Grigor never became a London Scot, and to the end retained his characteristic Aberdeenshire tone. He was too wise a man to give himself "airs," was homely, and was always the first to help deserving merit, especially if it came out of the Aberdeen Medical Society. One of his later public acts was to stay the progress of the cholera in 1830. He was the Duke of York's physician for years, and never got a fee from him, receiving, however, from the Duke his post in the Peninsula. One of the last public acts of the Duke of Wellington was to get "Mac." his baronetcy and retiring pension, which he had great pleasure in doing. Sir James M'Grigor now became Director-General of the Medical Board, and set himself to work to destroy monopolies and to make three separate medical divisions in the army one—those of Physician-General, Surgeon-General, and Inspector-General of Hospitals. Trifling economies in hospital management he believed to be bad policy. Made Knight Commander of the Bath and covered with honours, Sir James none the less appreciated being made Rector of Marischal College in 1826 and 1841, and having the freedom of the city of Aberdeen presented to him. He established the Army Medical Friendly Society for Doctors' Widows, whereby 120 widows got incomes out of a capital of £80,000, founding also a similar society for the orphans of medical men at Chatham, where he appointed a museum of anatomy and natural history bearing on military surgery, with 6000 specimens. Once or twice, becoming aged, he ventured to

ask retirement from his medical directorate, but his old friend the Duke of Wellington said, "No, no, 'Mac,' there's plenty of work in you yet." It is satisfactory to know that one of Dr M'Grigor's posthumous honours was that his name was included in the list of busts to be placed in the college built in honour of the Iron Duke. His habits were active and regular, and tended to long life. In winter and summer he rose at a very early hour, and after a cup of coffee began the work of a long day. At eighty-six years the lamp of life gradually burned out, and he died in 1858, loved and revered by all, having fulfilled his desire to leave behind him a good and honourable name, a son to inherit his baronetcy, and the foundation of a noble house. A statue of Sir James M'Grigor was appointed by the Board of Works to be placed near Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament, the movement for it being set about entirely by Englishmen. A magnificent red granite obelisk in the quadrangle of Marischal College, 72 feet high, commemorates his memory, his life-work, and his arrival, after a long, active career, to a tranquil, happy old age. In the hall of Marischal College there is a fine portrait of Sir James M'Grigor, painted by his fellow-townsmen, William Dyce, R.A., and a more characteristic and equally fine one, by John Geddes, R.A., in the Aberdeen Medical Hall, where he appears in all his honours, a tall, stout, fine-looking, fair-complexioned man, with a pleasant, kindly face full of benevolence and intelligence. Portraits of him were also taken by Sir David Wilkie and Mr Jackson, R.A.

To Aberdonians Sir James M'Grigor is most interesting on account of his connection with the Medical Society, whose maker and mainstay he was, collecting sums of money for its behoof from the medical staff with which he was surrounded amid siege and battle, and adding thereto generously himself throughout the Peninsular war. Glancing round the council chamber of the Society's hall, built through his efforts, and on the beaming countenance of his portrait, as a later member of the Aberdeen Medical Society re-

marked, "Si monumentum quæris circumspice." The son of a country merchant, Sir James M'Grigor became the trusted friend of his sovereign, suggesting the Scriptural words, quoted concerning him very aptly by another member of the Society, "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings." Thus lived a great surgeon, who attained at the close of a long life the highest honours, and who in the capacity of a public servant, in which the Scot abroad has been often distinguished, has never been surpassed.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE DOCTOR IN INDIA: DR MILNE OF BOMBAY.

Dr Milne's early days as ship's surgeon—His gift to Aberdeenshire schools  
—Life in India.

IN the prosperous days of the old East India Company Aberdonians had their share, and one of the most remarkable men connected with it was Dr John Milne of the Aberdeen Medical Society. Only by extraordinary application could he have hoped even for moderate success in life; yet he lived to become the munificent patron of the class from which he sprang, and in his progress was an excellent type of the successful man, shrewd, frugal, of thorough application and unwearied industry, faithful and capable in whatever he undertook.

John Milne's parents were laborious working people. His grandfather had been a farmer at Lower Banchory, but his father giving up farming, came to Gilcomston, then a suburb of Aberdeen, where he was employed by a brewing company. He and his wife were very poor, and had great difficulty in bringing up their only child. John Milne's mother, a woman of intelligence, was possessed with a strong wish that her son should succeed in life, and on her deathbed begged her husband to give him, by every means in his power, a good education.

John Milne was born in 1775, and at school showed indomitable

perseverance under great difficulties. When fourteen years of age he became a student of King's College, and attended the Greek class, where he won the Fullerton Bursary, and where there was competition by class place, an old-fashioned but successful stimulus to rivalry. He went to the university entirely ignorant of Greek and Latin, but owing to the vigorous way which the professors had of "hammering," as he called it, the dead languages into their pupils' heads, he soon reached the top of the Greek class, which he kept. The Fullerton Bursary of £20 sterling, divided amongst four years' study, was decided by competition alone. John Milne's first five pounds are said to have covered his college fees and left a sum for his board, and he was now in a position far different from that of some students, who were glad to plough in summer that they might be able to pay their winter classes. At seventeen he went to Greenland with a sailing whaler as surgeon, a situation often held by lads of ability, whose views of life received some breadth from foreign experience. When there were sick on board the surgeon's life was a busy one, but he was sometimes employed, when there was nothing else for him to do, in stoning raisins for the Christmas pudding! A life of Dr Milne, by the late Mr John Smith, advocate in Aberdeen, gives some interesting information about his voyages. It is singular that Mr Smith, who had never seen Dr Milne, and whose only correspondence with him was on business, should have been an enthusiastic admirer of his talents and character.

Much in the life of this successful man shows that he was of strong idiosyncrasies, and narrow but intense in aim. For eight years he led a roving life. In early life he became surgeon's mate of the East India ship, the Carnatic, bound for Madras and China, which situation he received through the good offices of a bailie of Aberdeen, Mr Ritchie of Techmuiry, a near relation of his patron, Mr Fordyce of Brucklay. The "old East Indiaman" was a stately vessel, bristling with defences like a warship, her great



quarter galleries giving her the appearance of a fortress on the sea, and was the great passenger-ship of the time, life on board of her being full of romance and interest. Ever active, John Milne found time to write a series of letters to John Hunter, the great surgeon, on diseases common during the voyage, choosing as a motto the words from "Othello," "Nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice." In his letters home the young surgeon showed a mind not unsimilar to that of Robert Gordon, who founded Gordon's College in Aberdeen. He was advancing to wealth by steady, careful steps, developing a rigid economy; and when engaged on the Carnatic relates that he went on board ship at once to save lodging on shore. His voyages took years to complete. Sailing from Gravesend, the Carnatic held her way, from the middle of December 1793, till she reached Madras on the following 13th of September. Returning home in April 1795, after touching at Malacca, St Helena, and the river Shannon, she reached the mouth of the Thames again in December 1795. Thus two voyages took two years in these slow days of old.

The East Indiaman was heavily armed, and changes of route were necessary in order to avoid French privateers. Dr Milne's letters give a sickening account of disease, the horrors of which rival the descriptions in Sir Walter Scott's 'Surgeon's Daughter.' Improvements in ship government were suggested by the young surgeon in forcible language. He objected strongly to the emoluments of the very situation which he himself held, complaining of ship surgeons having, besides their pay, a certain amount of tonnage in the vessel. Their commodities, he remarked, they could sell at a high rate in India and China through the monopoly of the East India Company. Surgeons could, indeed, if they liked, exchange their goods abroad, and bring others home with them to sell again free of freight. This system very naturally led them, as Dr Milne says, "to pay more attention to their invoices and the sale of their goods than to prescriptions and the cure of

patients." In spite of his objections, however, he made a great deal of money himself in this way.

In 1798, quitting sea service, Dr Milne became surgeon to the East India Company in Bombay, and it was not long before he founded what was till recent years the only medical bursary in Aberdeen. It was given to King's College with a grant of £600. In 1808 Dr Milne revisited Aberdeen, where he was received with all the famous hospitality of the people of *Bon Accord*. The training of medical students in King's and Marischal Colleges was yet capable of much improvement. Their condition was thus summed up at this time: "The usual course of medical study at Aberdeen was for the student to serve an apprenticeship of three years to any practising medical man in the town or country having a degree of M.D. or surgeon, and to pay him an apprentice fee. . . . To attend a year or more at the Infirmary, and to unite with his fellow-students in stealing dead bodies from the churchyards around"! The principal object of Dr Milne's bursary was to remove the medical apprentice fee, which was a great burden to poor students. It was part of his agreement that the fee should be the sum remaining after paying for the deed of medical apprenticeship and an "Infirmary ticket," also that the apprentice fee should be paid over by the Professor of Medicine to the Medical Student's Bursary Fund. When the prize was first given, three professors of King's College brought in turn their classes to compete for it.

The worth of Dr Milne's burse or purse was £21 a-year. A rich man returned a nabob to the home of his youth, the honours he received sat graciously upon him. To the Principal and Professors of King's College he expressed pleasure at "being permitted to evince these sentiments of gratitude with which he had ever been impressed towards their seminary for the benefits which at an early period of his life he derived therefrom, and which he considered to have in a great measure determined his successful

progress." He requested that the Professor of Medicine in King's College, who had "so handsomely conferred his degree upon him, Sir Alexander Burnett Bannerman, M.D., should have the power of making choice of the Professors of Medicine in Marischal College on the resignation of Professors Livingstone and French;" also that "one of the physicians of the Infirmary be always appointed to the office." Having thus busied himself in giving away professorships, Dr Milne considered that it might occur "that during a college session no young gentlemen have the inclination to study medicine." When this took place for two years, he ordered that "a medical theme be proposed to the members of the Medical Society of Aberdeen, and that the annual amount of the bursary be conferred on the candidate whose performance may be approved by the Professor of Medicine in King's College and the Honorary President of the Medical Society." Dr Milne had evidently no idea of the growing powers of the Aberdeen Medical School, but a vacancy occasionally occurred, as the minutes of the Society show, and was filled as desired.

In 1809, during his visit to Aberdeen, was presented the characteristic portrait of Dr Milne now in the senatus room of King's College, and painted by John Moir, brother of Dr James Moir. The portrait represents him at thirty-five years of age, a fair-haired man with a handsome face of acute expression, and a fine figure of which he was very vain. He wears the fashionable dress of the day, an open coat with wide folding lappets, and buckskin breeches, a bunch of large gold seals being attached to his watch-chain. After Dr Milne's death the portrait was claimed by the heir-at-law, Mr Fordyce of Brucklay, and his widow offered it to King's College, but the gift was prevented by the claims of the Educational Trustees. Mr John Smith took charge of it eventually, and for long it hung in his office, but is now in the senatus room of King's College. Dr Milne, with considerate forethought, made a will in favour of his poor relations in Aberdeen, and gave a sum of money to the

Medical Society. He had now risen to the highest professional rank in Bombay as President of the Medical Board.

The following words from his letters home show his vigour and extreme views. On the 2d April 1833, he wrote from his home in India : "I allow no idle time to remain on my hands, being employed from the moment I move in the morning at grey daylight until I go to sleep about eleven o'clock." The mind, he believed, could make the body work at command under it ; and he called his friend and old fellow member of the Medical Society in Aberdeen, Dr Strachan, his medical attendant, to witness that "wine had no charms for him." He represented himself as working "for eighteen hours out of the twenty-four." His meals were simple and light, but his ideas of rest were peculiar. He wrote to a friend : "I sit up half the night, and never go to bed ; when I am tired, and sleep comes over my labours, my chair is the place of rest,—an hour or two is enough, when I recommence my work. I eat not the bread of idleness ; in the grave we shall be still and quiet. I am anxious to employ every hour while mind and body have activity and vigour. In regard to my own health, I am active and stout, which is the reward of temperance and regularity."

When a new idea suggested itself to Dr Milne, he wrote it down on paper, that he might not have to keep it in mind. This kept him alive to every passing event, and in the 'Bombay Gazette' he constantly wrote on all subjects, discussing grievances and ventilating new projects for the better management of India. He had no objection to the climate, which he thought as healthy as any other, and it did not occur to him that his own life might be prolonged by returning home to Scotland. At times he was droll and quixotic in habit. In his desire to live like the Indian natives, when superintending-surgeon at a village seven miles from camp, he went about clothed with a piece of cloth round his loins in native fashion. Going to camp, he set off thus on horseback, and halting within two miles of it, put on his British uniform.

Dr Milne was, in spite of his peculiarities, a man of extraordinary public spirit, unselfish to martyrdom, and genuine in his wish to benefit his adopted country, India. When the Emperor Napoleon's power was at its height, an attempt was made to alienate India from Britain. Dr Milne did his best to impress upon England the necessity of crushing the power of France, and alarmed the Government to good purpose. An improvement in Indian coinage next occupied him. He advocated large expenditure and high taxes, and wrote: "However small or large the public issues of any country may be, it is obvious, even if a penny only is circulated, and that penny merely goes to the purchase by a father of his schoolboy's top, its circulation will promote the industry of the carpenter or wheelwright who made the top; he in turn affects the timber merchant, or, it may be, the shopkeeper." By these ingenious comparisons Dr Milne represented twenty different classes as being benefited, and the benefit as all coming to the tax-office. The income of India was one hundred millions a-year, and made the chief wealth of Britain. Failure to the amount of twelve millions at Calcutta frightened the British Government, and Dr Milne's views were adopted. In his private business romance creeps out in dealings with the Rajah of Sattara, whose claims in a great lawsuit he supported from his own capital for many years.

Obscure subjects in physiology and disease were a never-failing source of interest to Dr Milne. On hearing that Dr Andrew Moir had been appointed teacher of Anatomy in King's College, he wrote advising him to teach "a sound and rational system of Physiology," and volunteered to give him information on the subject.

The labours undertaken by Dr Milne, as representative of a great engineering firm, were enough to fill several lives. He wrote home that he had succeeded in uniting the islands of Bombay and Salsette with India by a bridge of seven arches, then building; that he had opened carriage roads between the upper and lower country, intending to unite, by the scaling of the Western Ghauts, the Eastern



and Western Presidencies of Bengal and Bombay. He suggested the covering of India with a network of roads, bridges, aqueducts, and tanks, and originated the great overland route to India. "If I succeed," he wrote, "in effecting only half of my present contemplated measures, this country will become one of the finest and most productive in the world, and the Government one of the most efficient. I have spared no pains, and will, I hope, by perseverance, effect the great object of opening a free communication throughout this great empire. I will then die in peace." His financial affairs and his correspondence kept two clerks, as well as himself, in constant work. Thus Dr Milne laboured not in vain to enrich the greatest of British foreign possessions. Mr Fordyce of Brucklay, in order that his fellow-townsmen in Aberdeen might profit by Dr Milne's letters, which were addressed to himself, from time to time sent them to 'The Banner' newspaper, where they were read with interest.

Dr Milne was chiefly remarkable for his gift to Aberdeenshire parish schools. In memory of his own struggling youth, he endowed them with money to pay the education of "poor scholars." £20 a-year were first to be granted to Monymusk, in memory of his mother, and to Nether Banchory, but to his distress the former was impracticable, and a first experiment was therefore made with the parish of Skene, the home of Dr Milne's father and grandfather, which was followed by Nether Banchory, Portlethen, and Nigg. A provision was also made for poor schoolmasters, and Dr Milne's gift covered school expenses, such as books and pens, which he did not approve of the schoolmaster granting. Of the parents he says: "Knowing well that these poor people have but little to give, I should be sorry to deprive them of any portion of what they require to promote the comfort of their homes." He made allowance for school fuel, and remarked on the old Aberdeenshire custom thus: "The provision was, in my day, made by the conveyance of turf by the scholars, who daily delivered on entry their peat, and those formed the stock for the day's consumption." He saw no reason why this



old custom should not be continued, "as it noways abridges comfort, and it will only require a small portion of additional labour from the elder branches of the family." Rewards he offered both to boys and girls—for the parish schools of Scotland were "mixed schools," and Dr Milne's bequest was a forerunner of free education on the most liberal principles. He trusted that his gift would help to raise the standard of national education, which, it is needless to say, it did. "Sacred things," as they are termed, Dr Milne did not approve of being much taught in school, "as sectarian discussions are so frequently at variance with the true and benignant spirit of the faith which these sects profess." His own life, as he said truly, was an instance of a career greatly aided by attention to mental improvement. He had succeeded to the highest medical rank in India, he proudly said, "with the marked approbation of Government as well as the eulogium of colleagues in the Medical Board, which was never conferred before nor has it been bestowed since, because no one has taken the pains to obtain it."

"I am naturally disposed," he wrote, "to attach a high value to the powerful and enlightening influence of education, and feel anxious to enable it to diffuse a more genial and cheering ray through that part of a country which so greatly requires such aid as Aberdeenshire." Parish schoolmasters in Scotland he considered had far too small salaries, and that by increasing their incomes he would obtain persons more suited for imitation by their scholars. He felt that his property could not be better invested than by thus "promoting the advancement of generations yet unborn." His wealth, obtained by careful hoardings lent out on high interest, if not nobly won, was at least nobly spent, and Dr Milne had the satisfaction of knowing he was conferring an invaluable gift on his countrymen.

In 1826, ten years before this great Educational Grant, the Rev. Dr Paul remarked that Aberdeenshire schools were in a miserable state, and their salaries too small to tempt good

teachers. The schoolmasters were Aberdeen College graduates, scholarly, but imperfectly educated for commercial and civil examinations, owing to the poor state of the universities. The only reading-book for the more advanced classes in parish schools was, however, the best of books, the Bible; the younger children had the Proverbs of Solomon, and infants the alphabet and some easy syllables printed on the outer leaf of the Shorter Catechism. Writing and a little arithmetic were taught, but if any of the teachers showed a desire to explain the children's lessons, the parents objected to their children being "bothered," though they did not object to them being whipped. Reading was without taste and intelligence. A visitor having promised in three schools 1s. to every boy or girl who could write out a Bible verse without a mistake, could find none. Rustic chroniclers give amusing descriptions of old Betty of the Dame School, with her crowd of little ones round her, designating to backward scholars the letter S by the ashes (Aberdonian-Scottish *ace*) on the school hearth.

Dr Milne's grant was followed by the most extraordinary success of Aberdeenshire youths in pursuit of Indian Civil Service appointments and learned professions. About ten years ago 85 schoolmasters and nearly 3000 scholars were benefited out of this fund.

In 1841 Dr Milne died unmarried and suddenly at Bombay: he had been busy writing letters on the capital of India in the 'Bombay Courier.' A month or two previously he had lamented the death of his friend and neighbour, Dr Strachan, of the Aberdeen Medical Society. His health he considered perfect, and five minutes before his death he was busy planning out work for the future. His Aberdeenshire schools had now added to them the schools of Aberdeen city, and the annual revenue from his estate was ordered to be divided into sums of £20 each to the most deserving parish schoolmasters. Dr Milne's fortune was large, and had been for the most part lent out to advantage at high interest to officers in the Indian army.

£3000 owed by the ex-Rajah of Sattara were not forthcoming, his Highness refusing to pay the money lent him, and making a counter-charge on Dr Milne's executors. It was decided to let "let be for let be," but even with these losses his fortune amounted to £47,500.

Dr Milne formed in his later years a romantic liking to a very young girl, Miss Amy Green, at a boarding-school in Bombay, which added some warmth of sentiment to his lonely life. In his will she is called "my very dear little friend," and to her he left the interest of 24,000 rupees to provide for her education and maintenance till her marriage, desiring that, along with his friend Arthur Dingwall Fordyce, she should superintend the working of his schools in Aberdeenshire. This very young lady was paid a certain sum in full of all demands, and her interest in the schools of Aberdeenshire ceased. They flourish unsurpassed as great educational institutions.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE METROPOLITAN PHYSICIAN : DR NEIL ARNOTT.

His education—As Member of the Aberdeen Medical Society—Dr Arnott's works and inventions—Home life.

NEIL ARNOTT, one of the first secretaries and treasurers of the Aberdeen Medical Society, was also one of the first of its young members who won fame in London. Year by year came southwards young medical men, not a few of whom attained that solid success, the historic portion of the poor and industrious Scot who left his country for opulent England.

Neil Arnott was born at Arbroath in 1788. His father, an Aberdeenshire man, had a large farm by the beautiful Bay of Lunan, near Montrose, but the family drifted towards Aberdeen, near which Neil's father's sisters had a farm at Kingswells. When a child he lived with his parents at the home farm of Blairs, by Banchory Devenick, upon the estate of the Catholic family of Menzies, delightfully placed on the river Dee among wooded hills, where now rises the sombre front of the Roman Catholic college. Mr Arnott was as unsuccessful at Blairs as he had been at Lunan Bay. His wife, Neil's mother, was a Highland lady and a Roman Catholic, a daughter of Maclean, chieftain of Boreray, in the Hebrides, nearly related to Flora Macdonald, of a family remarkable for Jacobite loyalty. Mrs Arnott had formed an attachment to her future

husband at a boarding-school, and made a runaway marriage, which proved unprosperous. Neil's father gave up farming, came into Aberdeen, and set up a grocer's shop, but in this he was not successful either. Being a bookish man, he read behind the counter, and when asked for trifles, rather than be interrupted sent his customers elsewhere, and lost his trade. His wife, meanwhile, commenced the occupation of dressmaker; an early grave closed over the unsuccessful man, and he left a large young family quite unprovided for. Mrs Arnott, a gentlewoman of great spirit and ability, determined to educate her family at any sacrifice to herself, and Neil was sent to the Aberdeen Grammar School, where the young laird jostled the peasant boy, and his mother, who had been highly educated, assisted his home lessons.

Mrs Arnott was looked upon with the greatest respect in Aberdeen, where she had good friends; and her devotion to her children, and unwearied industry, surrounded her with many of the best families in the town, who sympathised with her distress, though she in no way begged their help, although her struggles were great. The young Arnotts having taken the troublesome complaint of measles, they were one winter sent out to Kingswells house, to be under the care of their maiden aunts; and Mrs Arnott went to see them there, walking out, after her work was done, on cold winter nights, through frost and snow, the icicles clinging to her dress. The house of Kingswells later belonged to Dr Francis Edmond, and is a picturesque old mansion. Neil during the summer holidays, as a very young child, began to develop his peculiar gifts there, and remembered, his long life after, the delight with which he collected water by the roadside in a tub, and discovered the property of the siphon. His aunts forbade him to shoot, but such was his love of handling a gun that he shot a small bird, and was divided between grief at its death and joy over his success.

From the Grammar School Neil Arnott went to Marischal College, where he became M.A. in his seventeenth year, and took a bursary,

and where, like all poor students, he had to work very hard, reading and studying at the same time. He attended the Medical Society as secretary, which he joined in 1805, and spent his savings chiefly on wax candles, an expensive necessity in days when the ordinary tallow candle required such perpetual snuffing that the collegian's studies were constantly interrupted, and sometimes broken, by the operation—so much so as sometimes to make study impossible.

In 1806, after having given up his secretaryship, Neil Arnott went to London, where he studied at St George's Hospital under Sir Everard Home, John Hunter's brother-in-law, who got him an appointment as surgeon in the East India Civil Service. His natural bent was towards physics, which he had studied under Professor Copland in Marischal College. Sailing for China while still a youth, he made observations on ocean currents, lectured to the captain and the ship's officers, and, fond of music, sometimes amused himself by fiddling while the crew danced. During a second voyage to China he increased his medical reputation by saving the captain's life, and discovered an improved way of ventilating ships through the sails, called by the sailors "the doctor's duck trousers." Every circumstance that he met with supplied him with information, which he worked into the labours of his life, for with him every step was a step in advance. Now and then he came back to Aberdeen and looked in upon his mother, who had a "flat" by the Nether Kirkgate in M'Combie's Court, off Union Street, where she lived with her remaining family. Here the widow gave "tea drinkings," as they were called, to the ladies of her acquaintance, and interested them all in her clever young family.

In 1811 Neil Arnott commenced practising medicine in London. He was at first in partnership, and on account of his good knowledge of French, and his being a Roman Catholic, became physician to a colony of French refugees who had fled to London from the fury of the Revolution. The captain whose life he had saved



brought him patients, and he was appointed physician to the French and Spanish embassies. Dissolving partnership, he gave courses of highly interesting, clear, and lucid lectures on medico-scientific subjects in the Burton Rooms, and afterwards in his own house, and finally settled in 38 Bedford Square, a very handsome mansion, where he remained for the rest of his life.

As a writer of popular science, Neil Arnott's nervous and forcible language makes his books fine reading. In them one sees the master-mind of a highly educated and cultured man, whose learning is broad and general. He excelled in modern languages, music, and drawing, and his most remarkable work, '*Physics*,' reads like a romance, and is as interesting as fiction. This valuable book—a young scientific student's guide—has been lately republished and brought up to the present date by Professor Alexander Bain and Mr Peter Taylor, with a very interesting biography of Neil Arnott. Varied information combines to make '*Physics*' unique. The narration is simple and not abstruse, as is the case sometimes with works where the learned writer forgets the ignorant reader. It contains, for instance, a graphic description of the stethoscope, which brings the instrument well before the eye in the words, "This is a wooden cylinder, widening out at one end, applied to the chest of the patient, while the surgeon places his ear at the other and detects any derangement of the working of the inward parts, as a watchmaker can detect the deranged beating of a watch."

His description of the ear trumpet is equally good. On "Light and Heat" he excels, and he has a vivid description of what the earth would be without light—"light, life—darkness, death." Part of Neil Arnott's '*Physics*' might well be quoted among rare literary gems, and one of the finest of his descriptions is that of the steam-engine, which presents a glowing picture of the triumphs of steam. The engine, says Dr Arnott, regulates its own strokes, and records them; regulates steam to the boiler, coals to the fire; opens and shuts its own valves; oils its own joints; and

when anything goes wrong rings its bell for its attendant, and lives on coal, wood, and charcoal. The steam-engine, he continues to say, has made British merchandise hold her own against the world ; and he finishes his panegyric by declaring that it is its own water-pumper, miner, sailor, cotton-spinner, weaver, blacksmith, and miller. In five years five editions of 'Physics' were published.

Neil Arnott, in his later years a wealthy man, took rank among the prominent persons of the day. One of the founders and prime movers of the University of London, he was an original member of its senate, and a member of the Royal Institution, associating chiefly with the most progressive scientists, and showing an enthusiastic desire to benefit humanity as long as life remained to him. Living many years in London, it was remarkable that he retained to great age his accustomed vigour, and what has been termed "the delicate pink hue of health." A characteristic figure in scientific society, he had a natural and easy grace of manner, was of a buoyant hopeful nature, and had that genial sociality found generally among those whose life has been spent amid fortunate surroundings.

Neil Arnott married late in life, and had no family. His friend Mr Knight died and left a widow, who became his wifely companion and solace, and Mrs Arnott, who was as benevolent and philanthropic as her husband, had tastes and accomplishments akin to his. The house in Bedford Square now became a brilliant centre of attraction for a select few, among whom were Sir Edwin Chadwick, Sir Rowland Hill, and George Henry Lewes.

When Dr Arnott retired from medical practice he devoted himself to sanitary matters, and invented valuable mechanisms for the comfort of invalids, in memory of which his name will always be blest. Among these are the water-bed, a simple and perfect arrangement for allaying pain and resting the weary sick body. He invented also Arnott's stove, a model of economy in fuel and combustion, but declined to patent his inventions, finding his

greatest happiness in lessening human suffering. He drew up a report of the fevers of London for the Poor Law Commissioners, was ordered by Government to inspect the "fever nests" of Edinburgh and Glasgow, and received the title of Physician Extraordinary to the Queen. Neil Arnott's busy brain never ceased its labour, if the name of labour can be given to that God-given energy which finds rest in good work. To his patients he was affable and courteous, sparing no work in their service; and an old friend having asked his opinion about the sanitary state of a small bedroom, received in answer a long letter with a mass of calculation to the effect that its size contained just as many cubic feet of air as was necessary for human health. As old age came on Dr Arnott gradually gave up, on account of increasing deafness, the society of his friends, and Mrs Arnott became his only companion. The aged couple took pleasure by the fireside in reading together 'Don Quixote' in the original Spanish. The unfortunate deafness was caused by a journey from Aberdeen, where Dr Arnott attended the meetings of the British Association; and an accident occurring to him subsequently, hastened his end. So constant in good work was he, that on his deathbed he invented a chair-bed to alleviate sea-sickness.

In character Neil Arnott was an amiable philanthropic man of generous nature,—robust, not tall, but strong and well made, his face bearing an expression of force and benignity happily mingled. His success lay in his mental activity, incessant industry, and acute observation; and he was a fine instance of that rare combination of the culture of the upper classes with the solid acquirements of men of ability who have been obliged to work hard in early days. His family rejoiced in his prosperity, and his aged mother, who had toiled for him, lived to see her favourite son a great and prosperous man, and several of her family fortunate in their careers.

Amongst other legacies Neil Arnott left £2000 to the London

University, and £1000 to the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, St Andrews, and Aberdeen, with a handsome addition to the latter, in whose united University there is a large medical bursary in his name. These legacies were increased by his widow, whose fortune was independent of his, and who fulfilled his wishes faithfully after his death. As he had promised an additional £1000 to each of the Scottish Universities, she had pleasure in fulfilling his intention.

Some interesting letters were written by Dr Arnott to the Senatus of Marischal College at the time of the founding of his scholarship of £100 to promote the study of physics, in which he acknowledged the "useful information" received from his *alma-mater*. He believed, he wrote, that a more careful and special study of natural philosophy was required by students of medicine for the proficiency of their art than had been heretofore considered necessary, and that the advancing civilisation of the world was closely bound to engineering skill, the chief foundation of natural philosophy. He gave the scholarship for the purpose of endowing medical students and young persons generally in Aberdeen with evening or other lectures on this important subject. His letter to the Senatus of Marischal College represents himself as in early youth brought up near the open sea, amid the phenomena of change of weather; then among mountains and river-scenes; and again in a considerable seaport town, and as having been struck by the necessity of applying the simple laws of motion to purposes of utility. He remarked also upon the changes of the century, the earlier years of which knew not steam-engine, nor gaslight, nor railway, nor steamship, nor telegraph, which in a century have changed the condition of the human race on the globe. Thus with traditions of long ago and modern science mingles the distinguished name of Neil Arnott.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## SOME EARLY MEMBERS OF THE ABERDEEN MEDICAL SOCIETY.

Dr James Moir, Dr George Kerr, Dr Robert Harvey, Dr Colin Allan, Dr Ninian Bruce, Dr John Murray—Dr Brown of Skene Square—Army and Navy surgeons—Influence of the Paris Medical School.

THE trumpet which sounded through Europe in 1789, when war was declared with France, called doctors as well as soldiers to arms; and the twelve young students who founded the new School of Medicine in Aberdeen mostly became army and navy surgeons, while a few led quiet home lives, and followed their profession in Aberdeen. The most remarkable of these was James Moir, who shared with James M'Grigor in the making of the Medical Society. He was the son of the Established minister of Peterhead, the Rev. Dr Moir, and in his early days practised with his father, a representative of the old Moirs of Stonywood, who played a part as Jacobites in the Rebellion, and who were connected with many Aberdeenshire families. On his mother's side he was descended from the Donaldsons of Auchmull, a race of doctors, and was a grandson of Patrick Byres of Tonley, who at the New Inn in the Castlegate fought and killed a neighbouring laird in a duel. Dr Moir's father married his cousin-german, Janet Byres, and through her the estate of Tonley came into his family.

Educated under the care of Dr Glennie, afterwards of Marischal College, Dr Moir studied chemistry with Dr French, and took his

medical degree in Edinburgh under his relative, Dr James Gregory. Settling in Aberdeen in 1792, he acquired a great practice there, and held office in most of the many public charities of the town, living for a number of years in Carmelite Street. He was senior physician to the Aberdeen Infirmary in 1808, resigning in 1814, and became well known as a consultant in the county.

Dr Moir was remembered late in life by his patients as having a very kindly expression of face, and his portrait in the Medical Hall shows him as a portly, swarthy old gentleman, with strongly marked features, rosy countenance, white hair, and a very large white neck-cloth. Dr Moir was addicted to much snuff, and was unreverentially termed "Snuffy Moir." His favourite mode of walking in Union Street was with one hand behind him, which held his large silver snuff-box; in his waistcoat was stitched a leathern purse, which contained a large supplemental supply. His days were lengthened beyond the usual span; and after enjoying the very best medical and consulting practice he retired to live at his beautiful cottage villa at Braehead, by the Bridge of Don, beyond Old Aberdeen, where he was described by a lady friend as "a very handsome portly old gentleman—an aristocrat among physicians." Braehead is a lovely spot, beautifully laid out with nice grounds, still almost as pretty and sequestered as when it was built by Dr Moir. During his more active years he had lived at Johnston, Rubislaw, but after his retirement to Braehead mingled little in medical matters, and passed away after a few days' illness, the first in his long life, at ninety years of age, having lived through the old days of the Medical Society to newer times.

The Society did honour to so venerable a brother physician by walking in procession at his funeral to the town's churchyard, the president and members preceding the coffin. As members separated after giving the last honour to their old respected fellow-citizen, his character and qualities were recalled very forcibly as belonging to a bygone age. Older men called to mind his quiet



kindly manner, and the kind heart beneath, and thought of his wisdom, retiring and modest, his love of domestic life, his aversion to public notice, his self-sacrifice to the poor, who could never repay him, and his air of dignity, which sat so well upon the affluent old man. Dr Moir's grandson, Dr Douglas Moir of Manchester, represents the old predilection of his family for medicine.

George Kerr, one of the original members of the Medical Society, whose portrait represents a man of staid and gentlemanly appearance, suggests the painstaking secretary and treasurer which he was during the early days of the Medical Society. His work was a labour of love, and he has been aptly described by a later physician in Aberdeen as "of sharp, incisive, and vigorous mental parts." Many papers in the receptacles of the Medical Hall, carefully docketed and arranged by him, show how he had the Society's interests at heart, and how he valued its progress.

George Kerr lived a long lifetime as a medical practitioner in Aberdeen, and represented the old-fashioned provincial medical practitioner in his peculiar addition to the medical literature of his day—a small book published by him in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and London in 1816, printed by D. Chalmers & Co., printers, Aberdeen, and called 'Observations on the Harveian Doctrine of the Circulation of the Blood,' dedicated by Dr George Kerr to Dr Abernethy, of London. It was afterwards quoted as a curious literary production, which attempted vainly to disprove the circulation of the blood at a time when it could be easily seen through a microscope. Dr Kerr, in his Introduction, makes the following astonishing statement: "In my opinion, Harvey reasoned falsely from the experiments he made, and having persuaded himself that the pulse is occasioned by the distension of the left ventricle by the blood exciting it to contraction, he assumed the connection of extreme arteries with veins and the circulation through the lungs as necessary consequences of the first assumed fact."

The great objection which the Aberdeen doctor appeared to have against Harvey's discovery was that it changed old views of things, and that, since his days, "physiology had been almost as changeable as the cut of clothes." He believed that there was an unknown agent, a prime mover in the human body Harvey knew nothing of, and that the motion of the heart was to be accounted for in a way of which Harvey had no idea. One looks in vain through the book for any better explanation of the matter, and comes to the conclusion that Dr Kerr's argument was more destructive than constructive. It is scarcely fair to deduce from these statements that Dr Kerr did not believe in the circulation of the blood. He was simply revelling in the critic's delight in proving that an argument, however plain the truth of it may be, will not hold as an argument. As a member of the Medical Society, Dr Kerr was always on the side of sober criticism, and gave a discourse on "the Study of Medicine," wisely recommending his young friends "to study facts, and not be led away by delusive theories." Dr Kerr was the uncle of the late Dr Robert Kerr of Aberdeen.

Robert Harvey, another founder of the Society, represented as a young man in a sky-blue velvet coat wearing a perruque, in his likeness in the Medical Hall, seems to belong to a bygone age. He was the father of the late Professor Harvey of Aberdeen University, and his sky-blue coat was painted in the days of Napoleon's Empire, when male fine dress, crushed by the French Revolution, blossomed for a short time once more. Every man who had pretensions to gentility favoured as his best suit the blue coat, especially affected in France.

Dr Harvey, described as of Braco in the parish of Inverury, and of Broomhill near Aberdeen, was a man of good birth and landed property. He was born on St Valentine's day, 1770, and became the heir of his uncle, Dr Robert Harvey of Grenada, who lies buried in Exeter Cathedral. In 1805, during which year he received the title of honorary member of the Aberdeen Medical Society, Dr

Harvey married Mary Gordon, daughter of Dr Alexander Gordon of Aberdeen, and was buried in the town's churchyard of Aberdeen, where a memorial is placed above his grave.

John Grant from Strathspey, surgeon to the staff in Aberdeen, lived a long active life. His likeness, that of a bustling country practitioner, and not a high work of art as a painting, is in the Aberdeen Medical Hall. Dr Grant lived to a great age in Inverness, where he used to receive deputations from Aberdeen, as the sole remaining founder of the Medical Society of Aberdeen. The army and navy surgeons from the Aberdeen Medical Society had meanwhile many a valuable experience and deadly danger abroad, winning more laurels, and less money, than their stay-at-home companions. The memory of some of these young medical pioneers of British fame in the wars of the Revolution, and of what fate had once in store for them, may for a moment be recalled. James M'Grigor was destined to be the most distinguished of those born during that wonderful time of awakened mental activity towards the close of last century.

There were other men, with remarkable and interesting lives, who in this extraordinary period of Revolution distinguished themselves not a little, and who should not be forgot because of greater names: characteristic of the days they lived in, they give a view into medical history without which this sketch would be incomplete. There were also the doctors at home, valued, respected, and loved in their day, worthy of remembrance.

To return to the founders of the Aberdeen Medical Society. Colin Allan, one of the twelve students of Marischal College, and a close friend of James M'Grigor, had a varied life as a regimental surgeon, changeful and busy as that of any great soldier or surgeon. He married Miss Gibbon of Aberdeen, daughter of a prominent citizen connected with the shipping, and of his collateral descendants two families are yet in his native town. The Allans held a portion of the valuable landed property of Pitmuxton, near

Aberdeen, and from the Allan family came the names of Allavale Cemetery in Aberdeen and of Allan Street. After many wanderings, Colin Allan received the appointment of principal medical officer in Halifax, Nova Scotia, from which he retired when he left the service in 1836. He paid a visit to his native country then, and spent the rest of his days at Frederickton, the capital of New Brunswick, but unfortunately, in a fire lost all his library and valuable goods. He led a happy life, however, on the whole, in the evening of his days, having made himself a home in his adopted land, and many friends. Not forgetful of past days, he called one of his sons after his friend, who had now become famous, James M'Grigor. Thus, when weary wars were over, he sought a retreat in a far country, yet one akin with his own, and preserved to the last his Scottish identity and character, like so many old Scots abroad.

Ninian Bruce, another old friend of James M'Grigor's, shared his labours as surgeon for many a day in foreign lands, and represented in his life and gifts a very good type of the active, acute north-countryman, who acquires, if fortunate, a solid reputation, if he does not acquire fame. Dr Bruce's life is the history of a scholarly mind struggling under difficulties amid the uncongenial surroundings of an army surgeon. He joined the Connaught Rangers as assistant to Dr James M'Grigor, along with Dr John Brown, in early youth, and found himself in the wildest regiment of the line, and, on the authority of the Duke of Wellington, the bravest, where every man and officer, except the doctors, were Irishmen, and all of one clan or family. Some curious incidents concerning him are given by Dr M'Grigor in his life. In one of their voyages together, the ships touched at Grenada, an island which had a close connection with Aberdeen, through Aberdonians who had gone out and settled there. Dr Bruce determined to remain as partner to a doctor at Grenada, and to give up the army. His companions on board ship bade farewell to him, and were next morning astonished to see him return

to them in a boat with all his luggage. He had found the island unhealthy, and quickly made up his mind to leave it, with the remark that he "would not live in such a Golgotha for all the wealth of Indies." He put in his lot once more with the Con-naught Rangers. Sailing about from place to place in times of war and truce, the staff officers became often dissipated gamblers; but Dr M'Grigor could always depend on the services and devotion of Dr Bruce. When the ship cast anchor at Ceylon, Dr M'Grigor took charge of the sick on board, while Dr Bruce looked after them on land. The army, except when on the march, had plenty of leisure, and while some of the ship's officers played cards, and others wandered through the beautiful island, he employed himself in studying the native language. When his hospital duties were over, he was to be seen, armed with paper, pen, and ink, and surrounded by natives, whom he questioned, arranging from their information, with infinite pains, the parts of the Singalese language.

In his profession Dr Bruce rose high, becoming Deputy-Inspector of Hospitals and surgeon of a military college. At Bombay he was, along with Dr M'Grigor, on intimate terms with Colonel Wellesley, afterwards the Duke of Wellington, and Brigadier-General David Baird. In Bombay raged the distressful disease caused by the guinea-worm, called "the jiggers," from which Dr Bruce suffered tortures, but was attended by Dr M'Grigor with some success. After the wars were over, and Dr Bruce, one of the many busy workers overshadowed by greater names, came home, he showed his kind recollection of his *alma-mater* by appointing a bursary for Marischal College in arts, and his professional books he left to the library of the Aberdeen Medical Society in remembrance of early days.

Staff-Surgeon John Murray, of the Peninsular war, was a diligent member of the Medical Society. Of a family of physicians, he had romantic episodes in his life, one of which is chronicled by his friend, Sir James M'Grigor. After the battle of Toulouse the Allied forces retreated, leaving Dr Murray in charge of the wounded,



a task which he undertook with confidence, having already stood the fire of battle with the rest of the medical staff. There was some fear of him and his helpless charges being killed by the French, but Dr Murray, having bravely sought to prevent some of the men from deserting to the enemy, placed his pocket-handkerchief on his sword as a flag of truce, and capitulated with honour to the French general, who allowed him to retain the charge of his sick, and added to them the French wounded, with whom he became so expert that they preferred him to their own surgeons. Having thus made the best of a difficult position, Dr Murray, on his release, received promotion and high praise from Wellington as a reward for "courageous, judicious conduct."

Dr Murray had many narrow escapes on the field, and used to relate how, tending a wounded man during battle, the unfortunate sufferer was shot dead in his arms. After the battle of Waterloo he walked the hospitals of Paris. While presenting his paper on "French Practice" to his old companions of the Medical Society, he remarked that, while in Paris with the army in 1815 and 1816, he had attended the hospitals there, and preserved memoranda of important cases. French medicine, with insular pride, he asserted was poor, and French surgery behind British; and in remarks by other members after the reading of the paper, French medical practice was contemptuously called "fifty years behind the age." "A good surgeon," said Dr Murray, "requires to be a good physician." The practice of medicine in France, he affirmed, consisted in giving *tisanes* for every ailment, some of which were the same under a different name, and this practice the celebrated Dr Dubois alone denounced. The consultations of Dubois Dr Murray considered specially instructive. He took careful notes of them and of the lectures at the Hôtel Dieu, La Charité, and Boyer's clinical classes. Going years after to India, he died of fever at Kurnaul in 1842, a few days after his arrival, where, at the close of the rainy season, he had been placed on duty owing to miasma



among the troops, brought on by the opening of an old irrigation canal. He had reached the highest grade in the Indian Medical Service.

Dr John Brown, of the Aberdeen Medical Society, in early days was an army surgeon, and followed the wanderings of the Connaught Rangers during the wars of the Revolution along with Dr M'Grigor and Dr Murray. Returning from the Peninsula, he retired to his native town, and passed the rest of his life with his widowed mother in his house in Skene Square, Aberdeen. "Little Dr Brown," as he was called, was long remembered as a man of gentlemanly manner and military bearing. Silent and reticent, and not to be spoken lightly with even by his friends, he was affectionate to those he loved, charitable to the poor, and devotedly attached to his mother. Dr Brown, who died unmarried, did not practise as a paid physician, but was well known to be of skill and experience in medicine, and, sociably inclined, visited his old friends, in many cases showing an ability beyond that of a mere local practitioner. In rural Aberdeen, in the early days of the century, the Skene Square doctor in his pleasant house, enjoying his snug income, thought of the difficulties of poor Scottish children seeking education, and determined to make schooling easier for them, and to have the satisfaction of seeing the success of his scheme. He caused to be built, therefore, in the garden attached to his house, a mixed school for boys and girls, as was the fashion of the day, which was in working order before his death, and he had the happiness of seeing the children of the neighbourhood taught at his expense. He desired that their parents should never pay more than 1d. a-week for each child, that useless accomplishments they should not have, and that they should be taught only reading, writing, and a little arithmetic. In his will he left a sum of money for the support of the school, the interest of which reached £90 a-year.

Dr Brown was the doctor of the Aberdeen Fencibles, a regiment similar to the Edinburgh trained bands, zealous in defeating the

hostile designs of France. This regiment, as old pages of the 'Aberdeen Journal' testify, consisted of a handsome and soldierly body of men, who on the birthdays of good King George III. "fired volleys into Gordon's College gardens with the daring and precision of veterans." It was the custom of the Fencibles, who had at their command, also, a fine musical band, to assemble in the Castlegate outside the Town-house when the Town Council was drinking his Majesty's health after dinner, and to greet each toast with a peal of musketry. Dr Brown, as a little old grey man in a grey greatcoat, used to be seen wandering from house to house in later days among the few friends that remained to him, such as the Hays of Seton and the Patons of Grandholm. He died at an advanced age, mindful even in death of the claims of others: having made his will, he rose one night to add a codicil in favour of a poor young man whom he wished to befriend; but the exertion was too much for him, and he was found dead in bed next morning.

The School Board has now taken possession of Dr Brown's school, and its character is changed, for it has lost the individuality and simplicity of more primitive times. One can imagine the shade of "little Dr Brown" gazing on palatial State schools where free education is given, as the American in Bellamy's 'Looking Backward' beheld newer Boston city, with more astonishment than admiration. His simple house, with its barefooted scholars, was in its day a boon to the struggling poor, which no scheme of modern educational luxury can ever take the place of.

Alexander Mitchell from Forfar, one of the original members of the Medical Society, became staff-surgeon in Jamaica, and Dr George Rose of the same joined the Coldstream Guards. William Hendrie, son of Lewis Hendrie from Aberdeen, who settled in London, was one of the earliest members of the Society, was the winner of the silver pen in the Greek class at Marischal College, the gift of Lord Buchan, and designed the Medical Society's Medal. He became surgeon to the 3d Regiment of the Guards, and extra-

ordinary member of the Medical Society in 1793, when he disappeared from view. His father, Lewis Hendrie, was first proprietor of the great perfumery business in London known as "R. Hendrie & Company."

Thus did Revolution bear away the youth of the old university town, whilst others were anchored at home. Many became distinguished in after-life by the grand experience of battlefield and hospital, and are already long ago forgotten; and some fainted and died by the way, and were mourned by loved ones at home. The army surgeon went to every siege with his regiment, was in the thick of every engagement, and was not spared, any more than his brother the soldier, by the enemy as he stood in the trenches. There were no red-cross ambulances during the wars of the Revolution, and in most cases fame and riches came chiefly to those whose hardy constitutions bore them through trials under which the weak failed. After the great war the retired army and naval surgeon often lived on peacefully to eighty or ninety years of age.

The old surgeon in Huntly or in Turriff, in Keith or in Fraserburgh, might give almost any account that he liked of his exploits in Wellington's army or on board Nelson's ships. The braggart might brag his fill and be admired all the more in the country inn, while his cronies smoked around him, and the wise man had less to say of the great war, remembering the time chiefly as one of danger and hardship.

Many retired army surgeons became regular medical practitioners when the wars were over, and many old people still remember in their dim youth the kindly grand-uncle who wrote R.N. after his name, and who was the pride of the family. In a beautiful house may still be seen in a far-away corner of the north, amid the fine pictures and rich china of an elegant drawing-room, the old epaulettes of an old naval surgeon, preserved with as much care as if they were of gold.

The Revolution changed altogether the style of the doctors in the country towns. Faded greatcoats were worn no more, the scratch wig became a thing of the past; and the doctor adopted a smart military look, wore gay top-boots and a cocked-hat, and was particular about the cut of his coat. His horse was a handsome animal, who carried his master along in military style; and by his appearance, with which civilians could never hope to vie, the old army surgeon retained his social status, being imitated to advantage by a younger generation.

As the history of the early members of the Medical Society is chiefly that of army and navy surgeons, a few words about them may not be amiss. From Mr Campbell's book, already quoted, a good idea is got of the requirements of an eighteenth-century surgeon. To him war was the best friend, and to France, that country of battle and turmoil, whose military surgery was generally reckoned high, he looked for instruction. Surgery, as now looked upon, was in its infancy, and there were no alleviations of suffering by anæsthetics. The descriptions of amputations were heartrending, —the burning of the mangled part by red-hot irons, the hissing of the boiling blood, and the cries of the sufferer, as a later medical writer says, must have been enough to appal the stoutest heart. In these old days of "blisters, plaisters, cataplasms, and cautaries," the surgical aptitude was nevertheless what it still is. There were said to be two ways of making a surgeon — one by letting him study at the nearest university and then go to the Paris hospitals for a year; the other, to allow him, after he had learned Greek and Latin, to be apprenticed to a good surgeon for seven years. It added much to the credit of the Aberdonian surgeons in the early days of the Medical Society that no pains were spared by them and their parents to obtain the best training possible, which produced in its turn success in a career in which there were many rivals.

The naval surgeon having passed the examination of the Col-

lege of Surgeons, caricatured by Smollett, was said to be as sure of advancement as if he had the favour of the House of Peers ; and his pay on board ship was small as received from Government, but full of perquisites. His place in a sixty-gun ship, what with his chest of medicines, and allowance for "slops" or sick men's delicacies, and fees for special complaints incident to sailors, made him worth nearly two hundred a-year in time of peace, besides his share of prizes in war time, in the distribution of which he ranked as lieutenant. The cry of surgeons for the army and navy was so universal that a mixed multitude answered its call, and to active youths it offered a ready chance of success in life. In the army and navy, and especially in the militia corps during the wars of the Revolution, many who did exceedingly well were said to have had "little more than the education of a country apothecary," for natural aptitude was as sure a pass to advancement as university learning. The same authority, Sir James M'Grigor, observed, on the other hand, that "the army was officered by gentlemen of anything but a studious turn of mind." The officers, as a rule, despised sobriety, and the young medical man was encouraged to drinking, dissipation, gambling, and duelling ; but success seldom failed the industrious and temperate.

The Medical School of Paris greatly influenced the British student of medicine abroad during the great war, and the most remarkable feature of the Parisian hospitals was the great number of fresh subjects easily obtained. The hospitals of London were said to be much inferior to the great Hôtel Dieu of Paris, where a young surgeon might pick up invaluable experience, owing to the daily variety of surgical cases ; and all medical men who could travel to see the wonders of the Continent before settling down to the quiet routine of a provincial town, made a visit to Paris and a walk through its hospitals indispensable.

Towards the close of last century, two great men formed the Anatomical and Pathological School in Paris, Desault and Bichât.

Marie François Xavier Bichât was the same age as the first students of the Aberdeen Society. He had the good fortune to study under his predecessor Desault, and his life discloses the same persistent and miraculous industry as that of John Hunter. The possessor of an extraordinary memory, and power of assimilating facts, Bichât seized on every moment of an all too short life for the working out of his great subject ; and the Reign of Terror was spent by him in dissecting at the Hôtel Dieu. During his preternaturally active life, he is said to have published twelve volumes of medical works, and died in 1808, at thirty-three years of age. Corvisart, physician to Napoleon, intimated his death to the Emperor in these words : "Sire, Dr Bichât has fallen upon a field which has slain many. No one in so short a time ever did so much and did it so well."

Such was the fame of French surgery that English and Scottish surgeons braved the perils of Paris for its sake, even in the most terrible days of the Revolution ; but those who could look on death in battle with calmness, and perform operations on agonised patients without a tremor, were not proof against murder.

Chopart, a great Parisian surgeon, was operating in hospital when the first cannon was fired in August 1792, and all the medical students rushed into the street, the surgical staff flying for their lives. The scene is described as terrifying : constant volleys of shot were fired, and litters passed down the street with wounded men. The butchery of the prisoners at the Abbaye finally terrified the stoutest amongst the surgeons. All this is vividly related in the diary of Sir Astley Cooper ; and an English physician at this time was making a good living in Paris, charging a louis for his first visit, and half a guinea for each afterwards.

Napoleon as Consul and Emperor was remarkable for his knowledge of military surgery, and the Peninsular war taught our medical authorities many things hitherto undreamed of—amongst others, aid to the wounded by means of ambulances. When the Allied



armies drove the French before them into Paris, the Scottish surgeons shared in the general triumph, and saw the great hospitals of Paris, before they returned home to tell stories for the rest of their lives of Bonaparte and the war. The foreign reputation of the French hospitals afterwards declined, but they still continued rich in subjects for the anatomical student, who at home had to lower himself to the frightful work of the resurrectionist.

## CHAPTER XV.

## NOBLE PATRONS OF THE ABERDEEN MEDICAL SOCIETY.

The Dukes of Gordon and Sir John Sinclair.

WHILE the Medical Schools of Edinburgh and London and the Schools of Paris were uniting with the young Medical Society in the far north, while the student was plodding his way through historic Edinburgh and the great Babylon of London, and walking the hospitals of the French capital, every effort was made to secure patronage at home. Patrons were courted not only for their wealth and high position, but because they had been in early days students of medicine, as was the fashion of the day. Glancing over the past, one sees the men who influenced the progress of medicine in Scotland long past years ago. The chief of these were the Dukes of Gordon, who had a strong interest in military surgery, and were officers in the army.

Among the honorary members of the Medical Society were two of that ancient house of which it was said "the Gordons hae the guidin' o't." The Dukes of Gordon represented the king as lord-lieutenants in the north, and were paramount lords of Bon-Accord. Their great estates stretched far and wide, and they were politicians, noblemen, and courtiers, patrons of medicine, science, and the arts. In their own country they were revered with an awe which marked a time when the pomp and display surrounding a

great nobleman made his very appearance entitled to respect. In the early days of the Medical Society the presence of the Duke of Gordon connected the isolated city with realms polite, where a friend at Court was a very good thing, and the king upon his throne was of small account in comparison with the Duke with many people. Interest in the Medical Society must have been widespread before it would have suggested itself to the mind of any secretary of a small association to ask the patronage of the greatest nobleman in the country for it. Through all classes in these days went the growing desire for more knowledge of medicine as of other sciences. People dared to have original ideas, and noblemen and men of leisure studied chemistry and anatomy, as in an earlier age they studied alchemy and astrology.

In 1817 the Duke of Gordon, and the Marquis of Huntly who succeeded him, were made honorary members of the Medical Society of Aberdeen. The Duke of Gordon was Alexander, fourth Duke, born in the year of the rebellion 1745, and brother of Lord George Gordon of the Whig riots. Duke Alexander was one of the sixteen representative Peers of Scotland, and of cultivated mind, and accomplished, though silent and reticent: he was chiefly seen in Aberdeen in a warlike character, at the head of his own regiment of Gordon Highlanders.

His Duchess was beautiful Jane Maxwell, the patroness of Robert Burns, and the lady leader of the Tories, who had great influence also even in medical circles. The Duke and Duchess of Gordon were intimate friends of Dr Livingstone, and of Beattie the poet—two benefactors of the Aberdeen Medical Society; and Duke Alexander was on terms of friendship with several medical men—among others, with Dr Andrew Duncan of Edinburgh, honorary member of the Aberdeen Medical Society. The Duke and the doctor, contemporaries till late in life, were in the habit of climbing up Arthur Seat once a-year on the morning of the 1st of May. One morning Dr Duncan found himself alone at the top

of the hill, and returning home, addressed these lines to his noble friend :—

“ Once more, good Duke, my duty to fulfil,  
I’ve reached the summit of this lofty hill,  
To thank my God for all His blessings given,  
And by my prayers to aid my way to heaven.  
Long may your Grace enjoy the same delight,  
Till to a better world we take our flight.”

The Duke’s answer was in racy rhyme :—

“ I’m eighty-two as well as you,  
And sound in lith and limb ;  
But deil a bit, I am not fit  
Up Arthur’s Seat to climb.

In such a fête I’ll not compete—  
I yield in ambulation ;  
But mount us baith on Highland shelts,  
Try first who gains the station.

If such a race should e’er take place,  
None like it in the nation ;  
Nor Sands of Leith, nor Ascot Heath,  
Could show more population.”

This digression leads us far from Aberdeen, though it may serve to show Duke Alexander’s appreciation of a medical friend. The Cock of the North must return to Gordon Castle and trundle down the streets of Aberdeen in his travelling carriage with outriders before he can be properly appreciated as an honorary member and great patron of the Medical Society. Happy was he who could command the hospitality of Gordon Castle, half-way between Aberdeen and Inverness, a magnificent palace standing on the banks of the Spey, dividing Moray and Banffshire, where ease and splendour mingled. While enjoying the pleasures and pursuits of the middle class, the Duke of Gordon was Conservative, and wrote to a friend going into Parliament at a great political crisis, “I think it high time the Radicals should receive a proper check.” As a patron of

medicine, he encouraged the progress of a high class of professional men at a time when caste still to a great extent ruled society, by a great man's favour.

The Marquis of Huntly was the son of Duke Alexander, and succeeded him as George, fifth and last Duke of Gordon. A fine statue has been erected to his memory in the Castlegate of Aberdeen. Duke George raised a regiment of Gordon Highlanders, known as the 92d, which have a remarkable history. He served in Flanders with the Duke of York, and with Sir John Moore in Spain, was appointed Keeper of the Great Seal of Scotland, and was long remembered in Aberdeenshire as a man of commanding appearance and urbane manner, pleasant and easy in conversation; delighting to oblige his friends, and, like his father before him, interested in the work of the middle class, among whom he had many friends and admirers. The extinction of the Dukedom of Gordon at the time of his death was looked on as a sort of national calamity. The noble father and son, despite certain blemishes of character, had a grand generosity of nature about them which made them princely patrons whose court in Scotland could never be replaced. Intimately connected with the University of Aberdeen, Duke Alexander was for many years Chancellor of King's College, Duke George succeeding him in Marischal College.

These were not the only noble celebrities the Medical Society pressed into its service. It had as patron a man of great distinction as a philanthropist, who was at the same time of the most extraordinary character, representing so much north-country vigour that his image rises into sharp relief—Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster, in Caithness, called "the Patriot," and related to the family of the Earls of Caithness, an exceedingly public-spirited and prominent man of his day. Sir John Sinclair inherited an estate of 60,000 acres, of which a small portion only was cultivated. He was not only a great practical farmer and landowner, but a student of medicine, chemistry, and the science of agriculture. His opinions

he flung broadcast through the land. It is calculated that during his long life he wrote about four hundred pamphlets, amongst them papers on "The Cholera" and "On Health and Longevity." Though interested in subjects medical, agriculture was his special study; and while attached to no political party, there was no interesting public question which he did not take up and distinguish himself for or against. At the call to arms in 1794 he raised a regiment of Caithness and Rothesay Fencibles from his own estates, dressed in bonnets, plaids, and "trews" of the red tartan of the Sinclairs. His men were splendid specimens of physical strength, and in Aberdeen at the camp were nineteen officers above six feet in height. While the volunteers were there, Sir John was for long a familiar figure in the streets of Aberdeen, tall, thin, erect, clad in showy uniform. He was interested in everything of a scientific nature going on in the town, and allied himself with much pleasure with the Aberdeen Medical Society. His great work, a national one, was entitled 'A Statistical Account of Scotland,' in twenty-one volumes, which occupied him for seven years. This work was a Herculean labour, in which he was assisted by the medical ministers of the rural districts, who put themselves to great trouble to supply him with information.

In 1792 a small portion only of Aberdeenshire was cultivated, and stone, morass, and barren moor comprised the rest. It was owing to Sir John Sinclair that £15,000 was given by the Government to assist the people of the north of Scotland overwhelmed by a long period of bad seasons. Member of Parliament for Caithness, President of the Board of Agriculture for Scotland, and a member of the Privy Council, there was not a public question of his time on which Sir John Sinclair had not plenty to say, and concerning which he had not plenty to do. It was his public assistance to the Government on important points of legislation which gained him his baronetcy. He died in Edinburgh in 1835, and has been described as a perfect type of the Christian gentleman.



Sir John Sinclair's disinterested efforts for the public welfare did not succeed without impoverishing himself, and his estates dwindled away. He was an intimate friend of Mr Pitt, who in his older years got him a Government post, to save him from the consequences of his generosity. It would appear that the questions of health and longevity had very warmly interested Sir John. He had one of the rooms in his house surrounded by portraits of people of a miraculous age. In the latter part of his long life he was remarkably abstemious, and at his friends' dinners was supplied with a special decanter by his own butler. An inquisitive friend investigating was surprised to find it contained "toast and water." His stay in Aberdeen must have been particularly gratifying to the Medical Society, for Sir John was himself a student of medicine. He studied in his elder years anatomy under the third Monro and the famous Dr Knox, and chemistry under Professor Hope. He was on intimate and friendly terms with them all, and had a great many private friends who were medical men.

On his estates Sir John Sinclair was the devoted physician of his tenants, and the fatherless and the widow rejoiced when they saw him. "To relieve physical pain," says his biographer Mr Grant, "was to him a labour of love." His poorer tenants came down in carts to be rubbed for rheumatism by the Baronet's own hands. Such was the character of one of the most characteristic, kind-hearted, and energetically disposed philanthropists that Scotland ever saw, a man described by his contemporary Sir Walter Scott as "of projects rife," and he might have added, "all for the good of others."

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE DOCTORS OF PETERHEAD.

Peterhead as a fashionable watering-place—The Duchess of Gordon—  
Dr Laing, Dr Moir, Dr Jamieson.

THE storm-beat town of Peterhead, in the north-east corner of Aberdeenshire, which has its own charms for its own people, and which others are apt to think bleak and bare, towards the close of last century was gay with rank and fashion, had its own train of doctors, and was patronised by the Duchess of Gordon, the acknowledged Scottish queen of society. It is difficult to realise how the cold little country town became changed all of a sudden, as if by magic, into a health resort for invalids; but so it was. Its mineral waters became heard of far and near, and it was as celebrated as a German spa. Obedient to the orders of her physicians, the Duchess went through a course of goat's whey every spring, followed by a visit to "the waters" of Peterhead, while humbler people betook themselves to "the waals" of Macduff.

A large building by the sea-side, doomed to remain, after fashion left the town, for many years gaunt and desolate, was built for salt-water baths. At this time the population of Peterhead was doubled; invalids came for their health, and gay people for their amusement. The doctors of Peterhead became naturally interested in its excellences, and talked of the health-giving chalybeate spring of Peterhead as being equal if not superior to the springs of Tunbridge Wells.

The Rev. Dr Laing of Peterhead had his pamphlet on the "Wine well"; the Rev. Dr Moir, who excelled in music, added to the charms of the place by musical parties in his manse; and one suspects Sir Walter Scott of having thought of Peterhead when he wrote of St Ronan's Well. Amid pigtailed and powdered gentlemen, and ladies in saques, going to the celebrated Wine well, wandered the figure of Beattie, poet and professor, looking out from promontories on the wide North Sea, with his delicate young sons by his side.

The fame of Peterhead as a fashionable spa, and the recommending of doctors to their patients of "a course of goat's whey and a month at the Wells," lasted as long as it was her beautiful Grace's pleasure to come there in summer. Its fame afterwards declined, and the crowding of summer lodgers among the few houses of the little town continued no more to shower wealth on Peterhead.

Peterhead was built by the same Earl Marischal who founded Marischal College. Its original charter, according to Peter Buchan, was given by him to fourteen feuars, and the Greenland fishing soon increased the little seaport. The character of the Peterhead people is of enduring quality, and men of distinction have come from the bluff north-eastern headland known as St Peter's, built on a rock. Nor was Peterhead without its physicians of note in old days. It was an aristocratic little place, intensely Jacobite, and was honoured, in 1715, by a visit from "the old Pretender," as he was called, who landed there and received the homage of the then Lord Marischal. The best families in Peterhead were loyal to the Stuarts, and a Peterhead annalist triumphantly quotes the words—

" 'Tis true that our reason forbade us,  
But tenderness carried the day;  
Had Geordie come friendless among us,  
Wi' him we had a' gane away."

Doctors were wont to be Jacobites. Dr William Bruce of Peterhead, educated at Marischal College and Edinburgh, was born amid

a nest of Jacobitism. His mother came of a family famous locally for its devotion to "the auld Stuarts." The exiled king passed the first night of his short sojourn in Scotland in the house of a relation. Dr Bruce's mother, devoured with a desire to see him, put on the servant's mob-cap and apron, carried into the parlour a cup of chocolate, and saw the rightful heir of Britain's throne standing with his cocked-hat pulled over his eyes in deep despondency before the fire. After his return to France he wrote letters to his Peterhead friends, and astonished them by saying that he was willing to give his cousin, the Elector of Hanover, called George I., a retiring allowance, and the nominal title of sovereign over Great Britain and Ireland. The after days of Dr Bruce were spent in devoted allegiance to the house of Hanover. His adventures by land and sea as a navy surgeon were manifold, and he was wounded at the siege of St Jean d'Acre. He survived to return to Peterhead, and practised there many years as a doctor, being remembered in his age as a fine-looking old naval surgeon.

The Rev. William Laing, M.D., of Peterhead, was honorary member of the Aberdeen Medical Society, and minister of St Paul's Episcopal Church. Chemistry was his favourite pursuit, and he possessed mechanical skill, taking pleasure in the exercise of the crossbow, and in his hours of leisure suggested a plan for the making of a church organ, which was afterwards adopted. He is said to have been an excellent physician, and a man of broad and liberal views, and of very pronounced character, sociable and friendly. Being an Episcopalian, he had much practice among the neighbouring country gentry belonging to his congregation. In 1793 he wrote an account of Peterhead and its baths, and, amongst others, of the six town springs, and made an analysis of the Wine well, which contained a sparkling and exhilarating water long famous for curing complaints of the stomach and bowels. He was the intimate friend of Beattie the poet, and of his second son, James, sent to Peterhead for his health, where he lived with Dr Laing, and exercised his mechanical ingen-

uity in building an organ, which, after his death, the sorrowing father gave a gift of to Dr Laing. Young Beattie, who died of a wasting complaint from the lungs, would hardly now have been sent for his health to so cold and exposed a place as Peterhead. Dr Laing's time was more occupied in medicine than divinity. He had a large practice, and was long remembered in Peterhead as a brisk, smart, active little man, busy and devoted to his Church and his patients. He was the father of Dr Laing of Aberdeen, and his two daughters, after his death, came to Aberdeen, where they opened a boarding-school for young ladies, and represented, through family relationship, the old family of George Jamesone, the portrait-painter, whose portrait, and that of his daughter Mary, was in their possession.

The Rev. Dr George Moir, of Peterhead Established Church, was father of Dr James Moir of Aberdeen, and was born in Ellon in 1741. He was educated at Marischal College, and ministered to his charge for upwards of half a century, having been presented to it by George III. He was an able physician, and a great authority on agriculture, assisting Sir John Sinclair in his 'Statistical Account of Scotland' by writing a history of his own parish. In Peterhead, at different times, he is said to have held "three churches, three manse, and received three increases of income." Being fond of a joke, it was said that he used to say, talking of his sexton, Mutch, an important official to the minister, and who lived hard by in Kirkhill, that there was "Mutch in Kirkhill, but More in the manse!" Dr Moir, an able successor of the old reverend and medical doctors with which Aberdeenshire in its rural districts was once replete, had an unprecedentedly large family of eight sons and nine daughters.

Dr John Ford Anderson, father of the late Rev. Dr Anderson of the Gymnasium, Old Aberdeen, was a member of the Aberdeen Medical Society. His father was Mr Alexander Anderson, surgeon in the navy, also a member. Dr Ford Anderson died of typhoid fever at the early age of twenty-six in 1820. His death was peculiarly sad.

The young doctor, who had a large practice in the surrounding district, was married, and had already four children ; a fifth was born shortly after his death. He was in partnership with Dr Marshall, who survived him only six months, and died of consumption. The two doctors—almost the only medical men in Buchan—kept several horses to ride about the country with, and were subject to calls at all hours of the day and night. Dr Anderson was roused up late and early for often trivial causes, and just before his illness had to cross in a boat to Boddam at night to see a patient in typhoid fever, whose head he shaved. On his return home he entreated his wife to take the children aside, as he was sure he had caught infection, which proved too true. His posthumous babe and the rest of the family were brought up by their grandfather, Mr Skelton, sheriff of Peterhead. The youngest survived till very recently in Aberdeen, as the wife of Mr Yule, formerly Established Church minister in Peterhead.

The Doctors Jamieson represented a race of well-established physicians in Peterhead. Dr Jamieson, the elder, was apprenticed in his youth to Dr Jamieson, of Fraserburgh, of the same name. Having spent the greater part of his lifetime in Peterhead, he strongly advised his two young sons, James and Patrick, not both to remain in Peterhead. Having drawn lots to see who should go into the world and who should stay at home, the lot fell upon James, who went to Aberdeen, while Patrick remained in Peterhead. Old Dr Jamieson meanwhile very sagaciously disappeared for several years from the town, in order to give his son a fair chance of success, and in his older years returned and spent the rest of his life in retirement in his native town.

Thus has been attempted to be given some slight notice of the doctors of Peterhead, all of whom were, from an early date, members of the Medical Society of Aberdeen. It may not be amiss to give also a short sketch of a few Aberdeenshire country physicians of character and interest in other parts.



## CHAPTER XVII.

## SOME OLD COUNTRY DOCTORS.

Dr Dougal of Keith—Dr Watt of Old Deer—Dr Morison of Strathpeffer.

THE thought of the country doctor, skilful and racy, the friend of high and low, the beloved benefactor, the autocrat of his district, leads to a pleasant bypath in old home history. When he happily possessed great natural parts, was well gifted in hands and head, and had a kindly heart beneath a perhaps somewhat rough exterior, he was priceless. How they toiled, the country surgeons of old ! One has visions of them in wonderful old greatcoats. Grandmothers tell of them as in their young days booted and spurred, clinging resolutely to their own style of dress, so that the doctor's wig, or gold-headed cane, or green driving-coat, or still more the canter of his favourite horse, was known all over the country-side. The Aberdeenshire doctor had his own special way of going about his work,—a quite original way, too, we may be sure ; and the glad cry of weary watchers by the sick-bed would often hail him on his hurried way. There were different types of the country surgeon, no doubt, such as the man of talent, independent and invaluable, and the obsequious hanger-on upon nobles and gentry.

Occasionally one meets in tradition with the mixture of acumen and oddity known as "character," which, found in the country doctor, makes him long remembered as a household word. The

good, the noble, the self-sacrificing, even the man of genius, may be forgotten, but the man of character lives in memory, as stories go from one to another, of old Dr So-and-so, winding up with the remark, "There are no such men nowadays," which in some cases cannot be considered a loss.

Dr Dougal of Keith, made honorary member of the Aberdeen Medical Society in 1795, was "a character." He lived long in the recollection of many old inhabitants of Keith, and was the son of a minister of Elgin. He is described by a careful village chronicler as having been of simple and humble life, exemplary in his religious duties, and devoted to the service of his fellow-creatures. His house and shop were in the north-west corner of the Square of Keith, where were also the old town-hall and the school, and he had there a good collection of medical books, for Dr Dougal had the education of a gentleman. He was a man of herculean strength, with strongly marked features. His snuff-brown coloured single-breasted coat with basket buttons, his brown vest with flaps hanging half-way down his thighs, his small-clothes of plush or velveteen, his buckled shoes and galligaskins, gold-headed cane, tie, wig, and tricornered cocked-hat, were classic objects in Keith for many a long year. He was looked upon with fear and respect, and was a strict Presbyterian, enjoying to fight the battles of the Kirk. Many are the amusing stories told of Dr Dougal, which show caustic wit, or the hasty wrath of an intelligent man at the intense stupidity of an ignorant public. On one occasion a man came into Dr Dougal's drug-shop in agony with toothache and asked him to draw his tooth, when the following colloquy began:—

Dr Dougal (who was of a contradictory nature, and who was of opinion that the tooth should not be drawn)—"Man, you're no' needing a tooth drawn : gae awa' hame and pit tee a poultice to it, and tak' a pill when ye gang to your bed."

An argument ensued, during which the sufferer declared that he

would have his tooth drawn ; and at last said, driven to desperation —“I dinna suppose, doctor, that ye can draw teeth.”

This roused the wrath of Dr Dougal, who, indignant, seized a formidable-looking instrument used as a tooth-forceps, and jumped over his counter, crying—“By God, I’ll draw every tooth in your heid!” So saying he pursued his patient, who, while rushing through the Market Square of Keith vainly shrieking for aid, was outstripped by the doctor, who, as he stumbled, got him down on his back, and triumphantly took out two of his teeth on the spot.

Another story shows the doctor in better humour. Two women called at the shop, each with a baby. One displayed hers with pride as being a son of Lord Fife, whom she was employed to nurse.

“A lordie !” cried Dr Dougal with enthusiasm, tossing his wig recklessly in the air, which landed on some bottles and smashed them ; “I never doctored a lordie afore. Lord ! I’m gettin’ up i’ the world. It’s nae be for the last time, I’se warrant, that I’ll hae a lord in my shop. And” (turning to the other woman) “wha’s your bairn—is’t a lordie too?”

“Na, na, preserve’s,” said the woman ; “I’m the guidwife of Aschogel, and this is my husband’s bairn.”

After the two bairns had been duly doctored the goodwife of Aschogel ventured to ask what the doctor was to charge for her bairn. “Hoots, ye needna speir,” was the doctor’s reply in a loud whisper. “It’s nae ilka day I get a lordie. I’se mak’ Lord Fife pay for baith.”

Dr Dougal one day gave a prescription to a young man written in abridged form as “syr. ram. cat.,” which was given to a Fochabers druggist to make up. A day or two after the young man’s mother made her appearance at Dr Dougal’s house, asking very angrily what made him order her son syrup of ram’s guts. There wasn’t such a thing in Fochabers ! Dr Dougal was speechless with anger,

and finally burst forth with, "Div ye no' understand a recipé, wuman? it's seerop of buckthorn." "Dod," he ejaculated on repeating the story, "heerd ever ye the like o't? The muckle wife coming here yelling about ram's guts; it beats cock-fechtin'."

Such were specimens of the doctor's rough-and-ready style of wit, if it dare claim the name. His replies were short and incisive, and had a good deal of "hame-ower" wisdom, as when a patient said—"I've a deal to suffer with my een, doctor;" and the answer was, "Better suffer with them than without them."

Another remarked, "Sic an awfu' heid I've got, doctor; can ye do naething for't?"

Dr Dougal—"Weel, weel, lassie, it's nae muckle o' a heid, but ye'll hae to be doing wi't, for it's just a' ye hae for't, ye ken."

"Doctor," said a talkative wife, "what's the matter wi' my tongue?"

"Just needing a rest."

Leaving the hot-headed, warm-hearted, irascible, and homely doctor, we come to Dr George Watt, of Old Deer, who joined the Aberdeen Medical Society in 1791. He is notable as the founder of the Aberdeen House of Refuge by the gift of lands at Whitemyres, in the healthiest neighbourhood of Aberdeen, by the Stocket Commonty, where the pure and bracing air is health-giving as that of Braemar. The value of these lands increased so much that a Reformatory for boys at Old Mill was built upon them out of the overplus. Dr Watt made a large fortune as a country surgeon. There is a "speaking" life-size portrait of him in the Reformatory, painted by Giles. It represents a characteristic-looking old gentleman, of professional air, wearing an old-fashioned swallow-tailed coat; his legs covered with "boot-hose" drawn over the knees and stretching to the waist, buttoned up the legs. A plan of his lands lies at his feet. A statue behind him represents Charity. It forms a very interesting historical portrait, minute and accurate, worthy of the best style of the artist. Dr Watt, like Dr Dougal, was "a

character." He was born in 1762, was married to a daughter of Dr Findlay of Fraserburgh, and had an only child, George, who died a young man, to the great grief of his parents, who were thus—unfortunately for them—enabled to leave their means to charities. Young George Watt, who was an Edinburgh Writer to the Signet, died of cholera under peculiarly distressing circumstances, having gone to London to the funeral of a friend who had died of it.

In his later days Dr Watt was shrewd, worldly-wise, rough, and outspoken. He lived in Drummond Place, Edinburgh, after his retirement, and, as an old man, is remembered in Aberdeen going about dressed in his swallow-tailed coat in Union Street. It was generally acknowledged that he was a very clever and successful operator, especially in cases of lithotomy. He had not only skill but celebrity, and used to be sent for from Old Deer to districts far beyond Buchan. The nephew of Dr Watt was the late Sir Alexander Anderson, Provost of Aberdeen. Dr Watt attended the meetings of the Aberdeen Medical Society sometimes, and presented it with specimens for museum purposes. He was an original thinker in medical matters, and gave himself very little trouble as to what people said of him. Daring in matters of medical science, he and Dr French, the Professor of Chemistry, were looked upon with superstitious awe by the vulgar. Dr Watt's conversation was calculated to set story-tellers talking. Stories used to go the round about him which were told as "Dr Watt's last." As the thoughtful person scarcely exists who, when he hears a witty remark, goes home and at once puts it into a book for the benefit of posterity, witticisms are not preserved in their original condition.

Stories, such as they are, show that Dr Watt was industrious, careful, sordid, pawky, greedy, and a wit not of the highest order, besides being a clever surgeon and attentive physician.

This sketch would not be perfect were it a panegyric. Dr Watt's generosity showed more in his death than in his life. He was not a favourite with his fellow-doctors, for he was not generous to them,

and his boldness in operations was thought rashness. No other Aberdeenshire doctor of his time, however, was consulted as he was, and he sometimes sent his apprentices all the way from Aberdeen to Ballater. He did what others dared not do, and his medical reputation rose high. Meeting a country man at Cruden on the hills by Dudwick one day, he performed then and there upon him a successful operation for tumour in the head, which the Aberdeen Infirmary surgeons had just declined to do. "There," said Dr Watts, with ready wit, to the grateful patient, "I've done what the Aberdeen doctors can't do. Just you go and tell folk that. If they ask who cured you, you can say it was Geordie Watt." Dr Watt had a great many apprentices, of whom one of the last was Dr Lawrence, elder, of Longside.

A few funny stories are still told about Dr Watt. A farmer came in once to pay an account, and asked how much it was. "Five shillings," answered Dr Watt. The farmer brought out in haste a pocket-book bursting with notes.

"Boys," said Dr Watt, turning to his apprentices who kept the books, "I doubt there's some mistake here." The apprentices took the hint, and after careful examination discovered that the farmer owed five pounds.

"Give the good man," said Dr Watt, as the farmer turned to go, "a drink of beer."

"Na, na," answered the victim, "I've got a richt slockening."

Sometimes his love of a good fee was played upon. A well-off rustic, who had been attended by him for some time, called and presented a pound-note to the doctor in public. "Doctor," he said, "I canna pay you. I never can. This is no' payment, but it's all I hae, ae pound-note, tak' ye it. That'll nae pay you, I ken weel. But I hae a gweed plaid on my back; I'll gang without it hame, and I'll get ten shillings on it, and you shall hae it, doctor."

"Ye scoundrel," replied the insulted doctor,—“what! would you tak' your plaid off your back? Be off with you, pound and



plaid baith." This story caused a great laugh at the doctor's expense.

Another time a man on horseback tendered his purse to Dr Watt to pay himself out of it, expecting that the fee would be abstracted and the "change" returned to him. "But," says the story-teller ruefully, "Dr Watt only said, 'A full purse, a heavy purse, too much for you to carry,' and kept purse and all."

On another occasion, when a rustic went to pay his account, he met with Dr Watt.

"What's your name? Ay! You're John Anderson. James Anderson, said ye? Weel." After an apparent search through a ledger, and a stealthy glance at the patient's belongings, Dr Watt said, "Four pounds, that's your account; but mind ye, ye're a lucky man, James, for had ye been John instead o' James it would hae been three times that."

Dr Watt was an operator zealous for surgery at any cost. In his theatre one day a poor girl fell down dead after an operation.

"She's deid, doctor!" said an awe-struck student—"she's *really* deid!"

"God Almichty!" said Dr Watt, "so she is! But it's nae fault of ours, lads, we've done the operation."

With such scraps of character-stories is the memory of Dr Watt of Old Deer embellished. A later portrait was taken of him by Giles, which went to his relations, who were not to benefit by bequests, these going to his native town. Dr Watt was one of the last of the old characteristic Scottish surgeons, whose stern exterior and harsh humour seemed not to detract from a belief in their medical powers, but rather to add to them in the eyes of the public. His gift of a reformatory school to Aberdeen was munificent. At the time of his presentation there were a great many ladies' societies in town for the aid of the poor, separately established, without funds and inefficient. It was necessary to have something like an industrial school. In Edinburgh and elsewhere such schools were

the fashion, notably the "ragged school," afterwards called the "industrial school." Dr Watt also desired to appoint a house of refuge for homeless men, women, and children, and a Magdalen asylum. His disposition begins: "I, George Watt, surgeon in Aberdeen, . . . considering that I some years ago conceived a desire to bestow, in my own lifetime, part of the fortune which I was enabled to acquire through the exercise of my profession, in an endeavour to ameliorate the condition of my fellow-creatures less favoured with the temporal gifts of Providence than myself——" The disposition goes on to say that his proposal to gift a house of refuge in Aberdeen was warmly responded to at a public meeting of the inhabitants called by the Lord Provost of the city, and followed by a public subscription through town and country. The lands of Old Mill Dr Watt added to his gift, that they might be devoted to the building of a school to be called "the House of Industry and Refuge." The buildings at Old Mill were to be capable of enlargement if necessary, and constructed without ornament. Industry and frugality were to be maintained in them, the younger inmates to be trained as servants for the colonies, and the spirit of emigration to be encouraged.

The land at Old Mill consists of fifty-four arable acres placed amid the best approach to Aberdeen. The Magdalene Institution was given up by the trustees as unsuitable. The two houses—the refuge and the reformatory—are governed conjointly, and the directors of both are the same, the one institution being, as it has been observed, for the bodily, the other for the morally, destitute. It has been arranged that, though under one management, the two houses are separate as regards funds, records, and officers. The school buildings of Old Mill were not completed until 1856. On reading the reports are seen the trifles for which boys used to be sent to prison and degraded for life—thefts of bread, potatoes, or apples, mingling with more serious depredations. The lads receive a good education at Old Mill, tempered with refining influences

such as music and singing. They help with farm and garden work, and are healthy and happy.

The House of Refuge cost £2000 to build, and was removed to George Street, beside the Rev. Mr Arthur's old church. The applicants are taken in for the night, get a bed and breakfast, and do some oakum-picking as payment. Such an institution, so remarkably patronised, recalls the day when poverty was poverty indeed to an extent known no longer in our country ; while Dr Watt in his philanthropy recalls the "Man of Ross" and the happy lines of Pope—

"He feeds yon almshouse, neat but void of state,  
Where age and want sit smiling at the gate.  
Him portioned maids, apprenticed orphans blessed,  
The young who labour and the old who rest."

To these names may be added another of an older date, one who survived to later times, and who, though he made his reputation out of his native place, is best remembered within it,—Dr Morison of Strathpeffer. Dr Thomas Morison, the third Aberdeenshire physician of note of the name, was one of the first honorary members of the Medical Society, and was well known as a successful London physician. He was the son of Morison of Elsick, Provost of Aberdeen during the Jacobite rebellion, mentioned in the pleasant book upon Disblair by Mr Alexander Wood, Dean of Guild, known as "Provost Positive," who was marched by the soldiers of Prince Charles Edward to the Castlegate, where with drawn swords raised above his head he was ordered to drink the Prince's health, which on refusing to do the glass of wine was flung over his lace cravat. The provost was commended by the Hanoverian Government for his resolute conduct and brave stand against insolent usage ! The whole family was remarkable for vigour and determination of character. Dr Thomas Morison's brother, the Rev. Dr George Morison of Nether Banchory, ceaselessly laboured as vaccinator of a large district, and was the builder of the suspension bridge over the Dee. Dr Thomas Morison returned to his native country when

he succeeded to his father's estate of Elsick, bought from the old Bannerman family. His likeness, as that of a grave, dark, observant-looking man, well dressed in the fashion of his day, is in the house of a relation ; and his portrait was hung in the pump-room of Strathpeffer Wells, of which he was the founder.

To the country doctor and the medical minister the Aberdeen Medical Society became a great benefit when the Hall, which had been so long in project, was built. They could then come easily into town for a few days, see all that was to be seen, do business, and have a comfortable club where they could meet medical friends.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE MEDICAL HALL, 1820.

Subscriptions—Address to King George III.—Presentations.

THE Medical Society of Aberdeen had been for years saving up for a Hall to take the place of inconvenient rooms hired here and there through the town. The wish for a Hall dated from the first years of meeting, but it was long before even the beginning of a fund for the purpose was begun. The trust-deed with Marischal College awakened a general interest in the extramural school, which was sending out year by year its young medical men to good and useful careers, some of whom were already growing rich abroad, and, in their love for home, gave gifts in gratitude to the Association which had helped to make them what they were. In 1792 Dr Livingstone's hall was to be enlarged by subscription, but this idea was given up when it was found that its use was only granted during his life. For eighteen years it had supplied all the uses of a hall, the rest of the house being taken up by the museum and library of the Society.

In 1812 Dr Livingstone's house was finally voted too small for the increased number of the members, and a hall was got in North Street. The Society also met for some time in Long Acre, by "Mar Castle," and Lord Byron's home. A member of some means, Dr James Brown, physician in Aberdeen, headed the subscription

for a Medical Hall with two guineas. Sir James M'Grigor, as director of the medical department in the Peninsula, sent £50 along with a sum collected from those of his staff who were Aberdonians, and who gave, like himself, with all their hearts. Among the subscribers were : Mr Alexander Brown, bookseller, Aberdeen ; James Chalmers, printer ; Dr Andrew Duncan, Edinburgh ; Dr James Gordon, Old Aberdeen ; George Innes, druggist ; Mr Forbes and Mr Hay, bankers, Edinburgh ; Dr Andrew Marshall, London ; Dr Anderson, Peterhead ; and the Rev. Dr Patoun, Aberdeen. Dr William Dyce, Dr Charles Skene, Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo, Dr Alexander Robertson, Dr John Grant, Dr Leighton, St Petersburg ; Dr Francis Knight, Inspector-General of Hospitals ; Dr Willan, Dr William Hunter, Calcutta ; and Dr Andrew Ligertwood, surgeon, Bombay, subscribed largely.

Every effort was made to arouse enthusiasm in the project of the new Hall. Times were altered from the old days when James M'Grigor, returning from London, inquiring into the state of the Society's funds, was told that they amounted to £4 sterling. They were now considerable. The country doctors who joined as honorary members contributed well. Dr Christie, of Huntly, and the Rev. Dr Laing, Peterhead, were gratified at being sought by the Society as members at this time. Dr Laing, in a grateful letter, placed at the Society's disposal one guinea to buy a book for the library, "as a small memorandum of indelible affection." The professors of Marischal and King's Colleges gave generously on a second request being made to them.

The Society in its desire to obtain its end courted even the favour of royalty. An address was written and sent to King George III., and delivered at his Majesty's Court by one of his physicians, who was an Aberdonian, in a manner calculated to show that the hearts of Scottish courtiers were in the right place as regarded their fellow-countrymen. The address was offered on the occasion of "his Majesty's late providential escape from an assassin,"



but the members had not the good fortune of a royal gift. The writers were much impressed by "a deep sense of the important privileges which they enjoy under his Majesty's most excellent government," and "cannot but lament that there should be in our nation any so blind to their own interest and their country's good as to act in a manner unbecoming the character of a British subject." The address wound up with the loyal peroration,—“At a time when the fate of all Europe so much depends on that of our country, we cannot but admire the wisdom and judgment which you have displayed in the government of the nation. . . . That Almighty God may protect and defend your life, and that you may long continue to sway the sceptre over a dutiful and an affectionate people, and at last retire to wear an everlasting crown, is the earnest prayer of, may it please your Majesty, your most devoted and obedient subjects, the members of the Medical Society of Aberdeen.”

Sir William Ferguson, M.D., of Aberdeen, physician to his Majesty, returned in answer a letter to the secretary of the Aberdeen Medical Society, saying that he had delivered the address into the king's own hands, and that he had received it in the most gracious manner, and asked a number of questions about Sir William's old *alma-mater*. For himself, the courtier physician wrote, "I beg you will present my best compliments to all my medical friends, and say how much I wish success to the Society and the medical pursuits of Aberdeen." He remarked that Dr, afterwards Sir Gilbert Blane, who was at the head of the Naval Medical Board, had repeatedly said to him that the young surgeons who came from Aberdeen he always found "particularly well informed."

At last a fund was collected, and a thousand pounds were laid by for the building of the medical hall. A suitable site was diligently sought. The majority of the members were in favour of the hall being placed in Union Street, or in King Street, and a few wished a site in Blackfriars Street. Great discomfort was felt from in-

sufficient accommodation. The Society's library was crammed into a house belonging to one of the members, Dr Morrison, since Dr Livingstone's death, and was without a lock to protect it. The house was divided among several tenants, and it was thought advisable that Dr Henderson of Caskieben, one of the most scholarly of the members, should take charge of the books, and that they should be insured from fire to the value of £300. A feu for the new hall was unadvisedly taken from Gordon's Hospital, in the School-hill, and the Society had to pay a fine before it could be got rid of. It was suggested to propose through the city magistrates for leave to build opposite Mr Garioch's house in Union Street, but the idea was not acted on. Mr Wilson's house at the head of College Wynd was thought of, as it was in close proximity to Marischal College; but it was considered overvalued by the owner, though it was arranged that an entrance be made through it to the college. £1040 having at length been collected for the hall, the members negotiated for a suitable feu in King Street, and contracts for building were sent in: the cost of the hall was to be £1700, including £445 for carpenter and slater, and £216 for plumber and plasterer. The present handsome building, designed by Archibald Simpson, architect, was built, and was finished in 1820, at the cost of upwards of £3000. Its portico of four Ionic pillars, rising 27 feet high, is of classic design. The medical hall, of massive granite, added to the appearance of King Street, one of the finest streets still in Aberdeen. It was looked upon when new as a magnificent building, and is as fine a specimen of the kind as could be built, but it cost so much that the funds were exhausted, and the hall remained for some time destitute of furnishings. Dr Watson, first member of the Medical Board in Madras, an old member, sent, to help to buy furniture, £41, being the balance of his subscription. He showed the importance of the Aberdeen Medical Society abroad, stating himself "anxious to address circular letters to all the superintending surgeons of various divisions of the army, calling

on each to furnish the Medical Board with essays and important cases from medical officers, especially dissected cases, those worthy to be laid before the Medico-Chirurgical Society, to be forwarded to Aberdeen."

The peculiar *esprit de corps* which characterises the Aberdonian was spreading to India and the Colonies, and the Aberdeen Medical Society had powerful friends all over the world. At home donations were rife: a superb president's chair was presented by Sir James McGrigor, who also gave a set of handsome mahogany chairs for the members. A presidential chair for the junior class of the Society was at the same time ordered, but was finally given by Harry Leith Lumsden, laird of Clova and Auchindoir, instead of his subscription. Gifts from abroad from time to time came to the museum, conspicuous amongst which were those of one member, Dr Alexander, of Prince of Wales Island. The Society's Secretary became emphatic on the subject of an alligator presented by Dr Alexander, afterwards described as a crocodile, in later years the cause of much discussion, and whose journey cost ten pounds. The Secretary writes: "This present, though highly ornamental to the museum, the Committee are sorry to say is of a nature that scarcely admits of its being made subservient to the purposes of the Society, and they cannot help recording their wish that members who may be disposed to present the Society with rarities would bear in mind the state of the finances."

Before the members adjourned to the new hall in 1824, their old benefactor Dr Livingstone was no more. It was resolved to intimate to Mrs Livingstone that her husband "having been an early patron, and for a long time honorary president, and having contributed in every way to its support and final establishment, the Society would be much gratified if she would allow her picture of Dr Livingstone to be copied for the membres."

At length the new hall, sumptuously supplied with furniture, and available for meetings, was thrown open as a place of call for every

member. The Council Chamber, with its wide space, was generally admired ; its once bare windows had been supplied with curtains at the expense of Sir James M'Grigor. Behind the rich presidential chair, presented by himself, was placed his portrait sitting in that chair, painted by Mr Geddes, R.S.A., smiling affably, as if in the act of bending forwards to direct and counsel. Opposite is the portrait of Dr William Dyce, by his brother Mr Dyce, R.A., the distinguished artist. The portrait of Dr Livingstone with benign expression looks out of its canvas.

The medical hall was eventually fitted with gas, and with its bright light vanish away old times, and we find ourselves in the new, and are sensible that the little band of youthful students of 1789 have become grave and middle-aged. We shall now take into consideration the young medical students of the Society known as "the second class."

## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE ABERDEEN MEDICAL STUDENTS.

Meetings of the second class—Essays and debates—Very young critics.

THE Aberdeen Medical Society was now divided into a first and a second class. Since the trust-deed with Marischal College, it had become necessary to change the old arrangement by which lads of from seventeen to twenty had the entire command of what was rapidly becoming an important association. The first class or ordinary members were the town physicians, and the younger members became the second or junior class, representing the young students of medicine who founded the Society in 1789. According to the trust-deed, the first class could only add to its number by electing an honorary member and putting it into his power to become an ordinary member. The second class had its own president and secretary, and its meetings were independent of those of the first class, who sometimes showed a fatherly interest in the juniors, for which they were not at all grateful.

The entrance examination of the second class was in Osteology, Greek, and Latin. All who wished to belong to the second class must have certificates of attendance in *some* university for two years, testifying to literary acquirements, and especially to a knowledge of Greek and Latin received at some "respectable seminary," stating that the applicant had studied medicine for at

least four months, and was not under sixteen years of age. Two ordinary and four junior members signed the paper certifying "that the candidate was qualified, in point of morals and education, to become a member of the junior class of the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Aberdeen." The fee for admittance into the junior class was fixed at three guineas, and the meetings were twice a-week. On Tuesdays there was a medical discourse and an examination of the class in anatomy, physiology, surgery, or midwifery. On Saturdays there was one in chemistry or *materia medica*, and the place of examiner was taken by members in turn. A discourse on practice of physic or physiology was given every Saturday, and *queries on cases* were allowed after the regular business was over. The anatomical examinations were divided into osteology, myology, syndesmology, splanchnology, angiology, and neurology. In surgery, inflammation, erysipelas, ulcers, venesection, hæmorrhage, aneurism, gunshot wounds, fractures, dislocations, bone diseases and tumours, cancer and scrofula, were treated of, also chemistry and *materia medica* and the physiology of plants, pharmacology, and medical jurisprudence. The best was done to secure to the second class the benefits of an extramural college curriculum, as had been the original intention of the Society, and which at the time was very necessary.

Town physicians and grave professors were a great contrast to the rollicking young medical students, noisy, impetuous, full of enthusiasm, intolerant of sham, indignant at humbug, sensitive, outspoken. They busied themselves with medical essays, generally of a practical turn, while surgery was a subject of paramount interest to them; and they were in fact the youthful part of the Society through which it flourished.

The second class had its meetings in the library, which opened into the Society's museum, and was on the ground-floor of the Medical Hall. The library was rapidly reaching the number of 3000 volumes, and becoming one of the best medical libraries



in Great Britain. The junior class claimed a right to the library, which the first class refused. The juniors, in spite of the interference of their fathers and elder brothers, enjoyed independence as regarded office-bearers, and had their own case and minute books. Their entrance examination being in Greek, latterly hindered young men from joining it: six years had to elapse, also, before the junior left his class and took his place in the first class. There was a fixed aversion in Society matters between the students of the second class and the mature physicians, who looked upon them as children. A society of youths with a secretary and president of eighteen must be pardoned a little ebullition of feeling, a little pride in their own independence. At each meeting an essay or discourse was given and discussed, and an examination on some professional subject was gone through. A diploma was granted by the first class to junior members who had undergone "a regular orderly and faithful discharge of all their duties for two years, and who had shown correct moral conduct."

It was moved by Dr Torrie, and seconded by Dr Dyce, in 1827, that students not apprenticed to members of the first class should pay, on admission to the junior class, four guineas. Though on the whole the meetings were orderly, there were occasional disturbances in the second class, and at one time two presidents, elected by different parties, sat together. The class, on the whole, was most advantageous: members in after years looked back with pleasure to these young days, and testified to the good done to them by the meetings of the second class, telling, as old men, how they used to look forward to them. Some of the second class entertained the idea that it would be good to turn the Society altogether into a medical school, and begged that the members would consider the present state of the Aberdeen universities, and take some means of remedying it. The answer from the first class to this, the second considered "couched in subtle language." The secretary responded that "the members could not exercise any direct power over the

Medical School, and *not having a knowledge of its deficiencies*, could not enter into the consideration of connecting a school of medicine with the Society."

The juniors by sheer persistency managed to create quite a panic in the universities, through suggesting that professors should retire at a certain age, with a small allowance. The plan was naturally looked on with great distaste by the professors; but every attack on the *ancien régime* served to bring union of the colleges nearer—a union without which Aberdeen could never hope to have a great Medical School.

In 1829 the junior members dwindled down to a very small number, and the members of the first class were urged to induce their apprentices to join. No students came this year. All cases of importance were now left to be decided by the first class members, and to them the second class complained when presidents failed to give their addresses. Three or four presidential addresses in the year in each class were thought by some rather many. The late Dr Alexander Kilgour, as secretary to the junior class, at this time was brilliant, and often entertaining. When the library was misused, he graphically suggested that the words of the great Napoleon should be placed above the door, "Citizens, protect your own." The first class was sometimes appealed to by the second in vain, as when the president of the junior class refused to leave the chair when called upon in order that an investigation might be made upon his conduct.

The minutes of the second class were sometimes written in an amusing style, as in the following description of an essay-writer: "The scene began to change; his face glowed, and became radiant; his soul was on fire within him, the illumination extended to without until, like some blazing meteor, his whole head signified a ball of fire, and he burst and hooted through space, astounding the sublunary objects that beheld him; he stood erect, the mantle of Demosthenes had fallen on him, and he poured a fiery flood of eloquence into the ears of his entranced listeners, denouncing

a double dose of dire damnation on the devoted head of the absent secretary." Mr Thomson, in his essay on "Medicine," "trusted that the members were resolved to prosecute that noble profession to which they have devoted themselves, and which is second to none but that of our holy religion."

On another occasion the secretary wrote of a heated debate—"Long and loud were the disputes that took place, and numerous and poignant, yet perfectly harmless, were the personal remarks levelled with no little acrimony on either side." Mr Bothwell, who gave a discourse on Cholera morbus, is described sarcastically as "leaving off, for, to speak rhetorically, his discourse had no conclusion." One of the most vigorous of later junior members was Mr Stuart Glennie, now a London *littérateur*.

Some of the statements of the second class were sufficiently extraordinary, as, for instance, the following quotation from Mr William Keith of Aberdeen: "I have seen a case in which the patient very sincerely begged the physician to run a knife into his belly. The physician for some reason or other, perhaps thinking it a surgical operation which he thought foreign to his part of the profession, seemed nowise inclined to yield this solicitation."

Francis Ogston, afterwards Professor of Jurisprudence in Aberdeen University, joined the juniors in 1819 as an apprentice to Dr Benjamin Williamson, and at about the same time Mr William Pirrie bade farewell, as he was "about to leave Aberdeen, and had no intention of again residing in it." Instead, however, he became Lecturer on Anatomy, and afterwards Professor of Surgery and a distinguished local doctor.

The young medical students were proud of their "Miscellany" or "Thesaurus," where they kept record of their best essays. Sometimes a timid youth dared to hint that he did not think his paper "worthy to go down to posterity," whereupon the following motion was passed: "Those who refuse to comply with the request of the Society don't deserve any notice taken of their essay"!

The second class met, until the Medical Hall was built, frequently in the Greek class-room of Marischal College. It was said that at one time the juniors met in a stable by the Guestrow, and called themselves the Stabliad Society. There were legends of wild doings in the stable, and one member was said during a fracas to have charged down the Gallowgate with a drawn sword. The stable is supposed to have been in Barnet's Close.

In 1819, on the 2d of November, an attempt was made to have a commemoration meeting in the hall in King Street. Preparations were made for a supper, but the secretary and members disagreed, and the matter ended in a "private party met to pass the evening cheerfully." It was thought proper to have no business meeting on Christmas-day, but this reasonable proposal was violently resisted by one of the members, Mr Bothwell, "for reasons satisfactory only to himself." When unable to attend the meeting to carry on the dispute, he deputed the matter to another member, who, say the minutes, "had hitherto sitten in obscurity, but who started up at once, and rendered himself conspicuous, conspiring to waste the time of the Society for this lamentable motive."

Alexander Kilgour, afterwards a great physician, became rapidly leading member of the junior society. Well read, brilliant, and literary, as secretary he was quietly sarcastic, without giving offence. "Those having been blamed who, considering the Society a trivial affair, stay away deliberately and pay fines," Mr Kilgour remarked, "He had seldom in his power to record their fine talents, but should the collector's cash-book be in existence, posterity will see the immense consequence of the gentlemen if esteemed by the extent of their purses."

In July 1820, Dr James Corbet, afterwards of the Indian army, and residing near Aberdeen, being president of the junior class, Sir James M'Grigor arrived in Aberdeen after the Peninsular war. Mr Finch proposed that "as all the junior members were aware of Sir James's many valuable presents, and how he had

contributed to their knowledge, having been one of those gentlemen whose exertions in promoting a Medical Society had thrown the first effulgent ray on the study of that science in Aberdeen," an address should be sent him. The Society had been raised by his efforts "from its then humble but enthusiastic condition to the present respectability it now holds." The letter to Sir James was signed by Alexander Kilgour, secretary; W. Leith, treasurer (afterwards minister of the South Church, Aberdeen); and Cuthbert Finch, president (afterwards settled in the East Indies).

The result was a very kind answer from Sir James M'Grigor, addressed from Dempster's Hotel, commonly called the Royal Hotel. "It is with pride," he wrote, "and pleasure that I have constantly mentioned the advantages which students receive from your Society, and I should have been ungrateful if I had failed to render it any little assistance in my power. I trust all of you will through life continue to afford every support in your power to it. Then if you return to this city, and meet there your companions who remain, you will be sensible of the happiness I now feel." He ends with the promise never to slacken his exertions "to promote the prosperity of the Society."

Sir James's patronage of the Aberdeen Medical Society was persistent. He never allowed any doctor to enter the army from Aberdeen who did not belong to the Medico-Chirurgical Society, and induced Sir William Burnett, the head of the navy, and honorary member of the Society, to do the same. He even wrote a letter suggesting that Dr Patrick Blaikie and the other then Infirmary physicians should present a petition that the Honourable East India service only take from Aberdeen medical men who are members of the Medical Society. As first Director of the British Medical Board, he favoured Aberdonians before all. It was whispered that he had two lists, one for the members of the Medical Society and another for "other Aberdonians."

James Cecil Burton, M.D., the author's uncle, an Aberdeenshire



man by birth, who studied medicine in Edinburgh, failed to catch the great man's favour. He succeeded in getting a post as army surgeon only by family influence being brought to bear upon a member of the Cabinet.

Among locally distinguished doctors we have record that Mr Lyon, afterwards Dr Lyon of Peterculter; Robert Dyce, afterwards Dr Dyce of Aberdeen; and Mr Robert Foularton, afterwards of Drumminner, became junior members. In the secretary's minutes were some severe criticisms. Mr Kilgour gave a paper on the "History of the Origin of Medicine," satirised thus: "He clearly showed Adam to have been a surgeon, and Æsculapius the first physician. He dived into fabulous relations with poetical enthusiasm, and on the whole made a highly entertaining if not over-instructive discourse."

There was a great discussion about the distrust and jealousy which existed between the first and second class. The younger members were accused of keeping confused accounts, but it was proved that their treasurer was only 8d. wrong! Alexander Angus, secretary, writes to the seniors stating that eight members will pay 1d. each to reimburse the 8d. The writer trusts his colleagues "will always be able to defy the threats of captious oppressors"! Charles Grant, secretary, noting a debate, says: "There was a great deal more both of irrelevant and irreverent discussion, which it would require the patience of Job to write, and the genius of one of the immortal gods to comprehend, and as I possess neither I must decline reporting it."

On all subjects of idle speculation in medicine the two classes of the Medical Society were indifferent. On an essay being given on "Is there any truth in Animal Magnetism?" Mr Bourne spoke of "the prejudice in British minds against everything approaching the marvellous or theoretical."

The Society was in constant touch with the universities and the Infirmary, and there was a motion at this time carried that a list of



the Society's business should be placed in the admission-room of the Infirmary, and that a copy of the library catalogue and laws should lie on the table of the hospital museum. Some of the professors were hostile, however, and in the notes for 1841 it is observed that one professor, whose name is not given, did everything in his power to prevent students from joining the Society. John Urquhart, physician in Aberdeen, joined the junior class in 1844, in which year Archibald Simpson, afterwards a doctor in London with an extensive practice, gave an essay on "Fracture of the Skull."

The youthful members were faithful to their *alma-mater*, and one of them was expelled "for speaking lightly of our respected University." From time to time they received offers of help from the first class, and Drs Ewing and Blaikie offered to give them lessons in anatomy and surgery. The class continued to exist until merged in the first class, and the union of the colleges rendered an extra-mural medical school no longer necessary.

Thus died away the later representatives of Scottish youths who came through almost unconquerable difficulties from their rural homes to struggle to a noble name or an honest competence. Students of medicine lived in modest lodgings in the Spital, where the boys called them "buttery bajeants," many of them not unlike the student whose landlady invited him into her room to dinner on Sundays "because she couldna see the creatur' hungered"! A little meal from the paternal croft was not enough to sustain a growing boy, even when plain living and high thinking filled the country. Sometimes tragedies took place through want of sustenance, which, judiciously given, might have saved valuable lives. One young student of medicine's sad fate represented that of several. He used to go home for the holidays to heavy "harvest work" in summer. Leaving Marischal College covered with honours, he went up to London, and for a short time had a high official post, but broke down and died, having overtaxed his strength.

It became at last impossible to prolong the existence of the second class. The 'Aberdeen Lancet' strove to advertise it as a better and cheaper aid to medical practice than medical apprentices. "The examinations," said the writer, "are conducted by the young men themselves, and they are of much more consequence than anything their masters could do in that way, who have so many medical students attached to them that they do not know their own apprentices when they meet them in the streets."

## CHAPTER XX.

## DR SKENE AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

Dr Charles Skene—Dr John Charles Ogilvie—Dr William Dyce—Dr Patrick Blaikie  
—Dr Alexander Ewing—Dr Alexander Fraser—Dr James Gordon of Old  
Aberdeen.

THE young students of the Medical Society had now become the grave seniors who sat in the place of honour, and looked with gravity on the pranks of "the junior class." As was natural, the physicians of Aberdeen loved the Hall in King Street as they loved their University, for the Medical Society had been truly their nursing mother. The cares of public and family life made the rising medical man a poor attendant on evening meetings, but he showed for his medical school constant care and gratitude. There was no doctor of any standing in Aberdeenshire and in the North of Scotland who was not connected with the Society, which began so humbly, and was making itself so worthy a history. The younger doctors were living much as their fathers had lived before them. It was some time since the princely way of Union Street began to give character to Aberdeen, showing by its spaciousness how much required to be done for the rest of the town. The doctor still lived above his drug-shop, and was at hand for medicines and medical advice. The profession continued to maintain its social standing, and there still lingered the spectre super-

stition, which caused the ignorant to revere mystery and fraud more than common-sense and skill. The chief town's physicians conducted their practices each in their own special manner, from the medical aristocrat downwards.

Dr Charles Skene, born in 1777, son of Dr George Skene, held the highest position as a town and county physician. From 1823 to 1839 he was Professor of Medicine in Marischal College. Dr Skene's place, professionally, was rather with the nobleman and his lady than with common folks. His portrait as a young man shows a well-developed head, firm mouth, and sanguine complexion. He wore fine ruffles, and his own hair. Painted about the year 1800, the likeness gives a vigorous representation of a young medical practitioner ready and able to make his way in the world, proud of a wide "connection," which should give a "royal road" to reputation, and of the good family to which he had the fortune to belong. A portrait by Nasmyth represents Dr Skene in his older years, when youthful enthusiasm passed away: he is seated sedately amid opulence. There is a dignity in Nasmyth's picture of the old gentleman in black with knee-breeches, sitting in his arm-chair, his ruffles replaced by a large white neckcloth, and in his lap a soberly bound volume. As an old man, he was to be seen every day strolling down Union Street to the Athenæum reading-rooms in Castle Street, wearing a white hat. The 'Aberdeen Medical Journal,' produced by the medical student of the day, was very hard on Dr Skene, and called him "a great obstructionist," and his professor's post in King's College a sinecure; but when is the detractor not ready to speak evil of established success? Dr Charles Skene possessed a fine portrait by Nasmyth of Sir Walter Scott.

James Skene of Rubislaw, his cousin, was an intimate friend of Scott, who dedicated to him a canto of his 'Lay of the Last Minstrel,' in which are these beautiful lines, unfortunately prophetic of his own sad fortune:—

“Changes not so with us, my Skene,  
Of human life the varying scene?  
Our youthful summer oft we see  
Dance by on wings of game and glee,  
While the dark storm reserves its rage  
Against the winter of our age.”

A brother of Dr Skene settled in Edinburgh as an advocate, and became Solicitor-General for Scotland. Dr Skene left no son to succeed him as physician in Aberdeen and representative of a distinguished family of town's doctors. Misfortune of a peculiar nature overtook one of his sons, a young officer in the army, who with his wife went out to India. They met, with their two children, a tragic fate during the Indian Mutiny, the circumstances being of so terrible a nature that the whole family was for long plunged in grief.

Dr John Charles Ogilvie, connected by birth with the old county families of Aberdeenshire, in his aristocratic style was like a gentleman of the *ancien régime* lingering amongst a later generation. He was remembered in his older years as scrupulous in his dress, wearing powdered hair tied with a ribbon, a long coat, frilled shirt, knee-breeches, black silk hose, and silver-buckled shoes. He was looked upon with the greatest veneration by the townspeople, meeting among his landed relations, on the other hand, with some distaste to the profession by which, like some other young men of good birth and small means, he made his living. Dr Ogilvie's father was George Ogilvie, proprietor of Aucheries, and a relative of Lord Pitsligo. His son, Dr Ogilvie Forbes of Boyndlie, became Professor of the Institutes of Medicine in the United University of Aberdeen. Dr Ogilvie constantly attended the Medical Society, and wrote out with care a catalogue of the library. He was President at the time of the trust-deed with Marischal College in 1817, and took a great interest in the affairs of the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, of which he was a life manager. His portrait hangs in the great room of the Medical Hall, painted by Giles, and gives a very pleasing likeness of the old Episcopalian physician.

Dr William Dyce represented the reticent, sagacious practitioner, purely professional, presenting few characteristics, and marking the town in which he laboured as becoming less rural. Owing to his having been succeeded in his profession by a son whom many remember as an old gentleman, he does not seem far removed from our recollection, though he became an honorary member of the Medical Society in 1799. One of his sons was a historical painter of high ability. Dr Dyce, who had considerable skill as a chemist, and who in his private laboratory was said to have brought to light wonders which he had no leisure to bring to the notice of the world, and which were afterwards claimed by more pushing discoverers, had more sympathy with science than with art. Finding his artistic son unwilling to follow his profession, and thinking that his sketches disclosed some genius, he sent them anonymously to Sir Thomas Lawrence, asking him whether there was any use of the young man who sent them studying painting. The reply was that if he did so he would soon be at the head of his profession. Principal Brown, of the Free Church, Aberdeen, whose wife was a daughter of Dr Dyce, possesses a fine portrait by his brother-in-law of the old doctor, whose well-formed head and grey hairs are depicted with loving care.

The first doctor's carriage recollected in Aberdeen was Dr Dyce's small chariot, supposed to have been the gift of one of his sons. It was irreverently styled "the pill-box," and the doctor sat alone very comfortably in it. In his elder years he was remembered as a tall, spare, iron-grey-haired man of sharp expression, stately, stiff, and unbending, so severe in air that his younger patients held him in awe. An attitude of erect dignity characterised him even when an old man. One evening a young member of the Medical Society meeting Dr Dyce looking very feeble offered him his arm, and was indignantly repulsed. He had great medical practice, chiefly amongst ladies, and inherited the property of Cuttlehill, near Aberdeen. A lawsuit once taking place between him and a brother physician who accused him of killing a patient, Dr Dyce, it was



said, obtained heavy damages, which he returned to his accuser, saying that he only wished to vindicate his character as a physician. In his home life he was devoted to his family, which numbered eleven sons and daughters. One of these survives as the wife of Emeritus Professor Campbell Fraser of Edinburgh University.

Dr Patrick Blaikie of Aberdeen was the son of the head of the firm of John Blaikie & Sons of Outseats, master plumbers, whose warehouse was in John Street. Blaikie of Outseats did not belong to one of the old-established town's families, and a master workman of industry and perseverance was looked on with a jealous eye. There were stories as to the family coming over the hill of Fare with tools in their hands, and of Mrs Blaikie, carrying her infant son, afterwards Provost of Aberdeen, in her arms, accompanying them; but, like most such stories, these went beyond reality. Mr Blaikie's father, who was a Jacobite farmer, had been out in the '15, but when wanted at '45 found it better not to follow Prince Charlie. The Blaikies were a pushing family, and rapidly attained to municipal power in Aberdeen. The father of Dr Patrick Blaikie supplied the town with water, and was publicly presented by the townspeople with two handsome silver goblets. Dr Patrick Blaikie's wife was a daughter of Captain Livingstone, brother of Professor William Livingstone, the patron of the Medical Society.

Dr Blaikie lived for a time in Marischal Street, and afterwards in a large house on the Castlehill, now the Sick Children's Hospital, which had belonged to Captain Livingstone, his father-in-law. In his early days he was a very vigorous member of the Medical Society, and was particularly active as a resurrectionist. The Blaikies were of handsome presence, and Dr Blaikie, though not so fine looking as some of his brothers, was distinguished in appearance and of determined demeanour. He was adored by his family, and soon showed signs of being able to rise to distinction in his profession. After some years' attendance at the Medical Society after college days, Dr Blaikie joined the Royal Navy. Returning after Waterloo, he went in the ship *Bellerophon* with Admiral Exmouth

to take Napoleon to St Helena. He used to say in after years that he could never hear the Old Lancers quadrille without remembering that the "grand chain" was danced to the tune to which the emperor was marched on board the ship which took him for ever out of the world's history.

Before returning home, Dr Blaikie passed some time in the hospitals of Paris, and came back to Aberdeen in a smack, which took three weeks to sail from London. He made what speed he might, having been called in haste by his parents to attend his young sister, who was seriously ill. He arrived in the harbour on the morning when the bells were tolling for her funeral. Dr Blaikie's character, which was of a good, all-round, practical, common-sense kind, presented few idiosyncrasies. He was fond of music, and liked old Scottish melodies, preferring them to classical music, which Mrs Blaikie, who had been highly educated, played beautifully. He was lecturer on anatomy for many years in connection with Marischal College, and had a dissecting-room of his own in Littlejohn Street, where his father had his workshop. Dr Blaikie was made honorary member of the Aberdeen Medical Society when he commenced practice in the town. He was appointed physician to the Infirmary, and became first clinical lecturer there, succeeding the old days when an infirmary physician from Edinburgh came once a-year to supply the want. Like most steps in advance, the clinical lectureship was much obstructed at the outset. Dr Blaikie commenced lecturing in the Infirmary in 1826, in spite of a protest against him on the part of older physicians headed by Dr Ewing. Dr Ewing objected to the lectures because he did not consider them required in Aberdeen, as he believed that since the days of the great second Monro ninety-nine medical students from the north took their degrees in London for one that went to Edinburgh. The Aberdeen medical students, he was sure, would show no desire to go to clinical lectures, if there were any: furthermore, to teach clinics properly required a man of experience. Dr Blaikie's scheme, however, prospered.

The clinical lectures given by the young energetic physician were received by acclamation, and Dr Blaikie established the success of the Aberdeen Infirmary clinics. He died greatly regretted, at the early age of thirty-eight, of angina pectoris, and was deeply lamented by the students of medicine, whose kindly teacher and faithful friend he had been, constantly inviting them also to his house, where they were generously entertained. Dr Blaikie's brothers—Sir Thomas Blaikie, Provost of Aberdeen, and James Blaikie of Craigiebuckler—died very suddenly, also in the prime of life, of heart complaint. Dr Blaikie left behind him a son and four daughters ; Dr Patrick Blaikie Smith of Aberdeen is his grandson, and the Rev. William G. Blaikie, D.D., his nephew. Mrs Corbet, widow of the Rev. Mr Corbet of Bieldside, Cults, is a sister of Dr Blaikie, and the sole survivor of her family.

Dr Ewing, known as "of Tartowie," lived in No. 6 Golden Square, Aberdeen, where he did a great deal of private medical tuition, besides having a general practice. A medical lecturer in King's College, Dr Ewing shared with Dr Andrew Moir the honour of being the reviver of medicine in King's College. He was doctor to the dispensary, lecturer on surgery and medical jurisprudence in Marischal College, and was like Dr Blaikie a skilful operator. The medical students in their Journal were apt to be severe on Dr Ewing. They teased him about a case of femoral and popliteal aneurism which he operated on in the Aberdeen Infirmary, with Dr Lister from Edinburgh as consultant. Dr Charles Skene, before retiring from the chair of medicine in Marischal College, held out hopes to Dr Ewing of succeeding him. Dr Ewing unfortunately, in prospect of this, gave up his lectureship on surgery, and did not get the chair of medicine, missing also the professorship of surgery. In 1814 he was made surgeon to the Aberdeen Infirmary, and honorary member of the Medical Society. He is said to have been remarkable for openness of disposition and guilelessness. An oft-told story went the round, relating how the father of one of the students in Dr Ewing's class presented a turkey each Christmas to the doctor,

which he acknowledged with thanks in public before his class. Dr Ewing's son married the charming writer of stories for children, Horatia Juliana Ewing.

Dr Alexander Fraser, born in Tyrie, celebrated for his rough-and-ready character, and commonly known as "Sandy Fraser," and by medical students facetiously as "the Lieutenant," lived in the Schoolhill, in a house which is now Messrs Shirras's Oil Warehouse, and became junior member of the Medical Society in 1807. He was a keen, smart little man, with remarkably bright eyes and auburn-red hair, and was of brusque manners and irascible temper. The Schoolhill in his days was lively with the feet of town laddies going to the Grammar School, then on the outskirts of Aberdeen, where roses bloomed in gardens; and the Infirmary grounds, and the meadows and haughs of the Denburn, with its stream and cascades, made it a rural-looking place. Many humorous tales were told about Dr Fraser, a hard-working practitioner of the old school and an old naval surgeon, married to a lady of gentle birth, a Davidson of Balnagask in Torry, over the Dee, by Aberdeen. The penuriousness of Dr "Sandy" was said not to have tended to the comfort of his married life, and he was in such constant employment that Mrs Fraser complained he had no time to attend to the ailments of his own family.

Sandy Fraser toiled on, often but ill repaid for his labours, though he was so frugal that his wife thought him stingy. When Mrs Fraser, a woman of spirit, ventured to reprove him for what she thought undue economy—"Weel, weel, if you're no' pleased with me," he is reported to have said, "you can gang back to Balnagask." When Dr "Sandy" was approaching that age when medical men think that a little rest might occasionally be allowed on winter nights, his patients, when he did not at their beck and call immediately leap out of bed, answered, when he shouted to them from his upper window, "I'll awa' to a skeely young lad they ca' Pirrie, in the Upper Kirkgate." Dr "Sandy's" reply

to this was always more emphatic than polite, and young Dr William Pirrie sometimes gained a patient.

The stories which are told of Dr "Sandy" show that his humour must have been coarse even for his own day. In defence it is said that it was only now and then that he engaged in rough sallies of grim pleasantry calculated to gratify no one, and that he was in the main an unselfish, devoted, and kind-hearted doctor. His hasty temperament gleamed forth occasionally in an unmistakable manner. A patient of his, a gentleman, having been very subject to inflammation, his wife suggested he should be bled. The idea not having come from the doctor himself, he startled her by saying, with an oath, "I'll bleed him though he bleed to death in my hands!"

Dr James Brown, who lived in King Street, known familiarly as "muckle Dr Brown," in contrast with "little Dr Brown" of Skene Square, was one of the early members of the Medical Society. As a young man he married a lady nearly thirty years older than himself, Miss Cumine of Achray, whom he attended as a patient, and who fell in love with her physician, who was a very handsome man. Dr James Brown, after her death, married Miss Margaret Paton of Grandholm, who was as much younger as Miss Cumine had been older than him. Dr Brown was a generous friend to the Society, and was in affluent circumstances. His two brothers attained considerable fortunes. One son only survived to heir the properties of the family.

In Old Aberdeen at this time was Dr James Gordon, who practised medicine for a long lifetime. He was the son of the schoolmaster of Belhelvie, and joined the junior class of the Medical Society in 1794, as a lad of seventeen. Dr Gordon had a very large practice in the district, and used several horses but no conveyance. His sister, Lizzie Gordon, took charge of his midwifery cases, riding on horseback through as long and lonely roads as her physician brother. Dr Gordon's old-fashioned house, with its curious side entrance up a close, is still to be seen by the Town Hall of quaint Old Aberdeen. He may be mentioned as a type of a high-



class country physician, for his practice embraced a wide rural district, and he had the advantage of life in an old university town, with all its traditions of intellectual culture. Dr Gordon was succeeded in Old Aberdeen by his son of the same name. Dr Gordon in his earlier years travelled a good deal, and, visiting Paris, saw a lady medical professor who had a large obstetric practice, and gave lectures on midwifery to crowded audiences. The sight of this lady led him to think that his sister, an unmarried woman of ability, might devote herself to a medical life.

Mr Black, a chemist in the Broadgate of Aberdeen, was an honorary member of the Medical Society, and the proprietor of Clerk-seat by Forrester Burn, part of which was bought from him at the close of last century, and the Royal Lunatic Asylum built upon it. Mr Black's house stood by a little hill, and bears a strange appearance of pseudo antiquity: it is said to have been built as an ornament by him of bricks, in minute imitation of King's College. Mr Black, who was a man of strong character, was remarkable for his generosity and open-handedness. He had a very large family, and a brother dying, left two children unprovided for, whom he adopted, with the remark, "It'll only be two handfuls of meal more in the porridge-pot." Mrs Black, who came of the grand old family of the Marischal Keiths, was a near relation of Mrs Anne Murray Keith, immortalised by Sir Walter Scott as Mrs Bethune Baliol, and who had the merit of being the first discoverer of the great Unknown. When asked by Scott how she found him out, she said she recognised stories which she had told him in the pages of his novels. Mr Black's daughter was Mrs Brebner, wife of Mr Brebner, advocate, Aberdeen, who died some years since. His son, Alexander Black, amassed a large fortune in London, and has been a generous patron of the Aberdeen Infirmary.

We must shortly glance over those thrilling times known as "resurrection days," of which the medical students were at once the heroes and the scapegoats.



## CHAPTER XXI.

## “RESURRECTION DAYS.”

Letter to the Aberdeen Medical Society about “subjects”—London resurrection life—Night adventures of Aberdeen medical students—Banchory churchyard—The Burke and Hare panic.

THE grim times facetiously called “resurrection days,” which marked the difficult progress of the study of anatomy, were rife of incident in Aberdeenshire. During those years which elapsed while the young men of the Medical Society were settling quietly at home or in Edinburgh or London, or struggling to make for themselves a path far away, they looked back with eager remembrance to the time they spent under the greatest difficulties trying to gain a knowledge of anatomy in Aberdeen. At their meetings the students of medicine endeavoured as best they could to give themselves that instruction in anatomy their *alma-mater* denied, but the “weekly dog and calf’s-head dissections” carried on in the Medical Society by a set of young fellows alike ignorant of much they ought to know gradually failed to arouse their interest, which became less and less, until these words occurred in the secretary’s minutes: “We are ashamed to say there has been no dissection, even of a dog, in the Society for two years.” Mutual teaching continued in demonstrations of osteology, observations on blood-vessels, blood circulation, brains, nerves, viscera, the thorax, and abdomen; occasionally a foetus or still-born child was obtained, and pre-

parations of these were carefully preserved in the Society's museum.

The study of anatomy appeared at a standstill, yet never were times riper for its prosecution. Lifting dead bodies from churchyards was practised boldly in London and Edinburgh. Law-abiding cautious Aberdonians awaited with what patience they might a call rousing them to action. In 1794 a letter came from a few old members who had reached some distinction, which put the young men all in a flutter. The writer of the letter was Dr Wright, president of the College of Physicians in Edinburgh, who had just been made honorary member of the Society, and whose praise was noteworthy. He said: "We sincerely hope that every member of the Aberdeen Medical Society now attending is sensible of the great advantages he possesses. We say with confidence that none in Britain affords the same advantages, the same opportunities of improvement." After observing how already some of its early members, besides himself, were rising into public notice, he observed: "Above all, we would recommend the study of anatomy. We are sorry dissections have been so long neglected at Aberdeen. We are certain that proper subjects might easily be had there, and will certainly be had unless the students are wanting to themselves in spirited exertion or in common prudence. Bodies are procured in London for dissection almost every day; we leave any one to form an opinion whether it would not be an easier affair at Aberdeen." The letter was signed by George Kerr, extraordinary member, physician in Aberdeen; Alexander Mitchell, Esq.; Colin Allan, Esq.; James M'Grigor, Esq., afterwards Sir James M'Grigor, 88th Regiment; William Hendrie; and George Rose, extraordinary member,—all founders of the Society.

In London, under the leadership of Sir Astley Cooper, the violation of graves had become a horrible trade. Scandalous resurrection stories could not but reach Aberdeen, and in gruesome horror they were not to be equalled. To make the matter worse, grave

physicians and thoughtless young students were alike proud of what had for object the pursuit of science. The mind soon became used to what was at first revolting, while heartless desecration became a sacrifice to necessity upheld by the heads of the medical profession. A glance at the study of anatomy in London shows what pressure must have been brought to bear upon the members of the Medical Society to induce them to enter into a systematic course of body-snatching.

Professional body-snatchers were human ghouls, who robbed the dead for gain. Their work was well paid, but perilous to life on account of the hatred of the public, and a more depraved class of men did not exist. Private watchers, affectionate relations suspicious of the watchmen, would often by relays mount guard over the newly-made grave; but if sleep overcame their eyes for half an hour, the resurrectionist had his work done. This state of things led some people to employ the resurrectionist himself as a watcher. He was to be gained by a handsome bribe, but was often outwitted by some one cleverer than himself in the same trade, who succeeded without much difficulty in making him drunk and incapable. The scientific mode of proceeding to "lift" a body was to clear away the earth from the head of the coffin, and to force a strong crowbar made for the purpose between the body in the coffin and the lid, which was by lever power forced up. The weight of the earth generally caused the lid to be snapped across at about one-third of its length. Whenever this happened the body was drawn out. There was little chance of failure save among graves of the wealthier classes, with which the resurrectionist had little to do, and for whom strong coffins were made. The undertaker often arranged that the coffin fastenings were of an easy kind. The resurrectionists dexterously evaded the nature of the "narrow bed" by rounding the shoulders well over the chest; in drawing out the body they gave it a turn, so as to extract it by the diagonal opening already made. Everything was rearranged above the grave afterwards with the

greatest care, the slightest alteration in a plant or the grass above being enough to tell the practised eye of desecration. When professional resurrectionists liked to work, as they called it, entirely "independent," without being overlooked, they dispensed with the usual sack, put the body, doubled up, into a square green-baize cloth, tied the crossed corners, and left their burden in some half-built house, or out-of-the-way spot, all night. Next morning, as a porter, the resurrectionist carried it safely through the crowded streets of London to the hospital. Medical students were glad to employ such men, their interference being fraught with danger, owing to the knowledge that the lowest classes had of their doings. On one occasion a student with a body took a cab, and driving to his medical school, was horrified to see the cabman hasten to the police office, where he stopped, and opening the door, muttered, "My fare's a guinea, sir, unless you would like to be put down here." It was a common thing for anatomical teachers to be awakened in the early dawn by men offering to "work" three or four bodies at from £10 to £20 each, including money to bribe the gravedigger and watchmen, with, and swearing down curses on themselves if they should be induced by a higher offer to give the bodies to another school. Sir Astley Cooper, the king of resurrectionists, was in such intimate understanding with the Lord Mayor of London that he had complete immunity from the law, and the British Government understood that this crying evil must be allowed for the present, or the country could have no medical school.

Amusing anecdotes are told of hired resurrectionists, and their conspiracies with gravediggers and night watchmen, represented as incorruptible. A hospital demonstrator was taken by one of these "professionals" to interview a gravedigger as to the "working" of a body. The gravedigger represented himself as so indignant at being asked to betray trust, that he drew from under his bed a huge horse-pistol, the muzzle of which he presented to the demonstrator's face, with a volley of oaths. Escaping from the house, as he

thought at the peril of his life, the resurrectionist, who was in wait without, said, "Now you see, sir, what desperate ruffians I have to deal with; you'll need to give me something handsome to buy that man over." One more horror was added to the character of the professional resurrectionist. When not "working" bodies he was engaged in stealing teeth from wounded men on stricken fields, and haunted the battlefields of the Peninsula, adding still further to the horrors of war.

The laconic diary of a London anatomist in 1811, who had the assistance of two "professionals" called Jack and Butler, shows the wholesale way in which resurrectionists worked. "Got *six*, packed *three* for Edinburgh, *one* to Guy's. January 15. Packed *two large*, *1 small* for Edinburgh. Jack and Butler drunk as before." Jack (Harnett) generally worked with his friend Crouch, and these two combined the accomplishment of body-lifting with that of horse and teeth stealing, amassing thus £6000.

Such were the everyday occurrences of London medical life, and of such was the class from whom the murderer Williams sprang. The city was panic-struck, and the lower classes in a state of abject terror. The poet Hood took advantage of thrilling tales of stolen bodies to write as the ghost of a lately deceased lady addressing her husband—

" And as for my feet, the little feet  
You used to call so pretty,  
There's one, I know, in Bedford Row,  
The t'other's in the city."

In Edinburgh the fight for "subjects" was lively, and was carried on in a most indecent way by the assistants of the different medical lecturers, whose practice it was to take their stand on newly made graves and defy all comers. Blows were often interchanged in the churchyard. In Aberdeen body-snatching was carried on in a way less revolting. Here there were no professional resurrectionists. The Professor of Medicine sent out his students

to do the ghastly work, remuneration for which the Medical Society paid out of its own coffers.

The Society was not long before it acted upon the letter written by its old friends. From 1800 to the passing of the Anatomy Act, more than thirty years after, the violation of graves was continued. Many were the terrors of bereaved relatives, and of people who expected to have a plaster stuck on their mouths and to be carried off in a sack to the doctor. Many were the vows made to catch the "anatomies," as the students of medicine were called, who were supposed to delight out of mere devilry in desecrating the graves of the dead. Aberdeen cannot have this slur cast on her, that the vilest were employed in dirty work to save the white hands of gentlemen. In a sincere honest spirit the study of anatomy was entered into by the students of medicine, who had everything to lose and nothing to gain by what they did. Here was not to be seen the criminal tempted to murder whose ugly physiognomy appears in larger towns.

The medical profession was well pleased with the students' boldness, and professors and physicians opened their arms to the daring young men who braved so much danger for science. Dr Livingstone's loan of a house for so many years shows what were his intentions regarding work to be done there, and the town doctors readily assisted with dissections, leaving the finding of "subjects" to the students.

*Post-mortems* were now entered into with vigour, and the whole business of the Society became the study of anatomy. One member was made to resign office to save expulsion because he had allowed some servant-maids to get the particulars of a *post-mortem*. Another pled guilty to taking up a body "after dissection." Mr Paterson, assistant to Dr Andrew Moir, anatomist, moved that "every person absenting himself from depositing or taking up a dead body should be fined 10s. 6d. unless indisposed."

In 1805 bodies supplied by the Society were dissected by Dr



George Skene in Dr Livingstone's hall. It had become the fashion for daring young medical and art students to venture forth at dusk to the town's churchyard, and watch for a desired opportunity to get possession of a particular body just entombed. Lads of spirit joined in the ghastly work with thoughtless ardour. One theft from the 'Spital churchyard was discovered, and the body returned to its rest with the assistance of the town's sergeant. A deputation from the Medical Society waited on the sheriff in deep humility. The officers who interrupted the students in their occupation got from them "a small gratuity for their genteel behaviour." The Society was fined a guinea.

James Allan, President of the Medical Society, son of Dr Colin Allan, wrote to Mr Daune, sheriff-substitute, and begged pardon for a "fault which had for its object an improvement in one of the most important branches of medical knowledge." A letter was received in answer expressing mild disapprobation. The fiscal, Mr Thomas Burnett, subsequently remitted the Society's fine, and the affair blew over with the understanding that greater caution and secrecy in finding "subjects" must be exercised! Sheriff-Substitute Daune was not inimical. In a letter from him addressed to "Dr Livingstone, Upper Kirkgate," he suggests that to stop the clamour of "the woman whose husband was resurrectioned," it would be advisable to give her the unexacted guinea, which was accordingly done.

In 1807 Professor Charles Skene being consulted as to an anatomical class for the Society, "arranged to give instruction to the members, but asks them to see if they can get a subject." When by the laws of the land it was impossible for medical students to obtain practical anatomical instruction, and when university professors were obliged to ask young men "to get a subject themselves," body-snatching was inevitable. Members of the Society now living well remember the painful conditions of these times. Bands of young depredators haunted the churchyards

in the gloaming, and their companions, bent on adventure, joined them: among others Joseph Robertson, afterwards of archæological fame, and John Hill Burton, the author's father, who were youths at the time in Aberdeen, and many art and divinity students. Body-snatching, which was entirely in the hands of collegians, was looked on as a brave risk in a good cause, and was thus joined in by lads of spirit.

Sometimes the "anatomies" had a false alarm, as when watching by the town's church they saw a spirit-like form advance noiselessly in the dead of night, proving to be a woman who lived in the Schoolhill, the window of whose room opened into the churchyard, and who was enjoying a meditation amongst the tombs in her "stocking-feet." Another story told how a young man in the kirk-yard of Cowie heard groans, supposed to come from a disturbed coffin, which turned out to be emitted by an old tinker, who had taken refuge for the night in a sheltered corner. Many were the narrow escapes in lonely country burial-grounds of "anatomies." A grave was successfully robbed one night between periodic pistol-shots discharged out of a vestry by a person paid to protect the place. Sir Robert Christison, in his *Life*, tells of an old man shooting a burglar, and offering his corpse as a present to the doctors.

As good stories are those which are written as quite matter-of-fact in the pages of the old minutes of the Medical Society. A body was got from the town's churchyard by Messrs Bower, Blaikie, Torrie, Morrison, and two other members of the Medical Society. But betrayal was threatened; the Society was becoming large, and there was danger of a thoughtless word being dropped, which might cost much. A motion was therefore passed that "a person who can betray the secrets of the Society forfeits his word of honour, and ungratefully renders obnoxious to the laws of this country those persons who had risked even their own lives partly for his improvement and instruction." Such persons were to be

“extruded.” There exists, treasured carefully by the Society, a little, old, mean-looking note-book, which contains the minutes of the secretary of the Medical Society from 1806 to 1808, giving also characteristic notices of the resurrection days. The secretary was the afterwards distinguished Neil Arnott. Each student had to take his turn in watching the town’s churchyard, that of the ‘Spital, and of St Machar’s Cathedral. The fine of those who did not take their turn was divided amongst the employed, who, after successfully lifting a body, got 10s. 6d. each; the pay was afterwards increased, and 1s. allowed “to warm the insides of their jackets.” The Society had plenty of occupation for its spare money, as may be seen when it is considered that the expenses at a single resurrection were generally about five guineas at least, besides what had to be given as hush-money. Bodies could be procured from London for £20.

There were other watchers in churchyards besides the members of the Medical Society. No one of any consideration was buried without two of his friends watching his grave turn by turn all night. Many ways were taken to confuse the resurrectionists. Sometimes layers of heather were put among the mould to confound their spades, and some had relations’ coffins surrounded by a case of brick. Another mode was to place a great cast-iron safe on the top of the coffin, and massive iron cages were got for family vaults. Many a lodge was built at a churchyard gate as a watch-tower which would never have been there as an ornament. The work of raising the dead took about an hour of a dark winter evening with constant relays of workers. The digging, authority says, was done with short dagger-shaped spades. Fear became panic among the common people when it was declared that a coach had been seen driving through the quadrangle of Marischal College with the Professor of Medicine, Dr Skene, within, and opposite him the body of a lady dressed in grave-clothes. People were afraid to go on lonely roads or to be out alone at night. A poor

medical student, in desperation for a "subject," found the dead body of an infant on the sea-shore, took it home to make a skeleton of it, and, boiling it in the broth-pot, naturally roused the indignation of his landlady. That the resurrection parties were conducted with jollity and fun—the reckless fun of young lads to whom the horrors of death were no more than sham spectres—there is ample record. A young doctor, coming home in the early morning, told a friend that he and his brother had driven in from the country all night with a corpse sitting up between them "like a body." This being remarked by the young man in presence of his sister, "it took away her appetite for the rest of the day."

The Aberdeen Medical School astonished the rest of the country, not only by indomitable perseverance through difficulties, but by a miraculous facility in procuring "subjects," and becoming learned in anatomical research. Perhaps the hard-headed northern Scots were utilitarians, and had not the same objection to have their relatives' graves rifled as sentimental people farther south. Certain it is that the carrier's cart went in the dusk continually between Banchory-Devenick churchyard and Aberdeen with bodies. Suspicion was first aroused in the public by the horrid sight on the morning after a burial of torn grave-clothes lying about. Sometimes the resurrectionists got a check, as in the following instance. A boy died in the Aberdeen Infirmary, and the university lecturer hinted to the students that it was desirable he should be buried in Nether-Banchory churchyard, "in order that it might be found out what was the matter with him"! The burial accordingly took place, and a few evenings after a band from the Medical Society set out on a frosty moonlight night for Banchory churchyard. Safely arrived there, their spades broke in the hard ground, and they forced open the sacristy door, taking from within the "bawbee ladles" of pewter used for Sabbath collections, found next morning in the churchyard, and with them did effective work. The body was huddled into a sack, and the procession started home in haste

—"Long Ned," as the ringleader was termed, charged with the sack, and rushing back to town. The robbers reached the old Bridge of Dee with its seven arches, and were half across it when they were aware of a band of men in hot pursuit from Aberdeen at the other end. Turning to fly, they were met by some more who had followed from the churchyard, where they had discovered what had been done. "Long Ned" was advised to drop the body into a "canny" ice-hole beneath the bridge, whence it might be conveniently reclaimed; but being "nervous" he let it fall into the open river, where, after a general rush, it was rescued by the boy's relatives. A riot took place between the students and the townsmen, with the result that the former had to disappear from Aberdeen till the storm had passed. One of the Society members who had taken a prominent part, and who became in after years the chief physician of Peterhead, retired for three weeks at this time to stay with an uncle at Ythanmouth.

To later resurrection days belongs the story of a doctor who was so zealous in anatomy that he concealed a body in one of his father's flour-sacks in his baker's shop: his trade was ruined, and the young doctor soon under a considerable cloud. He and his comrade, Dr Campbell, were imprisoned for a lengthened period, and heavily fined. Sometimes bodies, though successfully taken from the churchyard, were inopportunately captured in some nook where they had been laid till they could be safely smuggled into town; as when a body, to the horror of the minister's man, was found one morning in the "fog-house" in the manse garden at Bielside.

Empty or conveniently placed houses were thought to be haunted when used as places of concealment for bodies or as rendezvous for members of the Medical Society. A house in Mary Place, Aberdeen, in the beginning of the century a handsome villa, was for some months visited by spectral figures in grave-clothes, who flitted in and out in the dusk mysteriously. A gentleman and his wife living near were applied to in great distress by the ladies of



the house to help them to lay the ghosts, and between them one night they captured one of the apparitions, who proved to be a young medical student, a familiar friend of both families. He confessed the house was a great convenience, having a door of entrance at each side, for a short cut to and from Old Aberdeen when it was necessary to watch in the churchyard there and "lift" a body.

A distinctive "character" in the resurrection days of the Aberdeen Medical Society was George Pirie, the sacrist of Marischal College, who signed, as witness, the trust-deed with the Medical Society in 1817, and who is frequently mentioned in the secretary's minutes as assisting in the lifting of "things," for which he got a regular fee, and in return took the medical students under his protection. He showed to great advantage on occasion as a jolly little man, who bore the college mace with dignity, and was a general favourite. When the bursary competitions were going on in Marischal College, he stationed himself in the Hall ready to bestow a "bawbee bun" and a glass of cold water on the candidates.

The Society at length in 1828, along with the Edinburgh Medical Society, swelled the list of names in favour of a bill "to remove obstacles in studying anatomy." The petition was zealously furthered by Alexander Cromar, oftentimes President of the Society, and on the testimony of his companions "a very jovial fellow," and a great practical joker. With the sanction of the law came latterly an indifference to "body-snatching." About twenty years ago, long after "burking" was all but forgotten, some young students and their friends, when the tide of the Dee was high, went by boat, and landing at Peterculter churchyard, lifted a body without any difficulty, rowing home with it. There was never a word said about the matter, though even in its day fraught with some danger.

In 1828 in Edinburgh occurred the horrible episode of Burke and Hare, who, in a low lodging-house, smothered their victims and offered their bodies for sale to doctors. Dr Knox, the gifted extra-mural



anatomical lecturer, was believed to have received the victims of these wretches still warm and flexible. In his defence it was asserted that he did not know that murder had been committed, but it may be contended that if he did not know he certainly did not care to know. Such terror spread through Edinburgh that Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster's men-servants objected to opening their master's door to Dr Knox at night except in couples. Burke and Hare were arrested for fifteen murders, and all through their trial fearful tales were told of them, as how they had been overheard by their wives to say that if bodies failed them they would not starve so long as they had them to fall back upon. This is worse than the story of the London resurrectionist who confessed that if he could have been smuggled into a medical school somehow, he had no doubt he would have been made away with long before the 'Natomy Acts. Burke and Hare murders were happily far from Aberdeen. The lurid scene closed hideously with the rush of thousands of students into the Edinburgh Anatomical Theatre to dissect the body of Burke after execution. Aberdeen had its own burking story, as the following chapter on Andrew Moir the anatomist shows.

Paris was the paradise of the anatomist, on account of a great number of subjects to be easily got there, the indifference to human life during Revolutionary times, and the absence of awkward inquiries about suspicious deaths. The French were very zealous anatomists, but had no need to hide their projects in pursuit of very necessary labours. A story was told of the physician of a well-known Parisian hospital, when he was asked for subjects, regretting that there had been "an epidemic of health in the hospital"!

In 1829 the 'Aberdeen Journal' reported that in Paris a body could be got for less money than a porter would like to carry it down a street in Scotland. Opened subjects cost three francs and a half, unopened five francs. At the hospital of La Pitie eleven bodies in one day were sometimes distributed. The students were

divided into four classes—boarders, day-boarders, hospital-dressers, and assistants.

In Aberdeen there was, at a time when he was most needed, an anatomist of high ability, who supplemented the work of the medical students in a masterly way, and whose life deserves some notice.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## ANDREW MOIR, ANATOMIST.

Early struggles—The teaching of medicine in King's College—An anatomist's love-story—The burning of the "burking-house."

"SOME are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them," said Shakespeare. It might be added, "and some would be great if it were not for circumstances." Some under a lucky star rise to the summit of their ambition, while ambition neither helps nor rewards others equally gifted.

Andrew Moir, anatomist, had the rare gift of Hunter and Bichât, but destiny relegated him to comparative obscurity, whence unsatisfied ambition did not seek to take him. He was born in Aberdeen in 1806, and became a member of the Medical Society in 1835. Though a great anatomist, he had no place in larger fame. Had he lived in more generous days, he might have become a great medical specialist and a man of fortune. He possessed that rare and lovable but unremunerative gift which works for others without a thought of self, and with careless profusion imparted his wealth of research to others, only to be discarded for more showy personages. Highly valued and long remembered with tender regret by his friends, he was gentle and kindly, and far from the ruthless anatomist he was imagined to be. His parents had fallen into humble life, but were of the good old stock of the Aberdeenshire Moirs,

which had produced several physicians of some distinction. His father was said to have been sexton of the churchyard of Nellfield near Aberdeen, looked upon as an important and respectable employment, and he made every exertion to give his children a good education as far as it was in his power. One of them became a minister, another was apprenticed to a shoemaker, a third became a physician near Edinburgh.

Andrew Moir received a good Aberdeen Grammar School education, and passed to King's College, where he became a distinguished student. He intended at first to join the Church, but after two years spent in studying divinity he turned to medicine, encouraged thereto by the gift of a medical apprentice fee, through Dr Milne's bequest. For a time he mingled his two studies of anatomy and divinity, studying anatomy at Marischal College and divinity at King's, and used to be seen hastily wiping his hands after dissection, saying, "I must be off to read my Exegesis in the Old Town." Anatomy was his forte, and he devoted himself to it with that incessant labour which is no toil but pleasure. His skill in the science of anatomy, a science then highly prized in the north of Scotland, made him equally valued among students and professors. An enthusiastic admirer of the great anatomists of the Continent, he contrived to learn French and German in order to read their works. In 1828 he passed the Royal College of Surgeons, and retired to Kincardine O'Neil, where he began country practice, until a post of army-surgeon, of which he had some prospect, should be open. A few months of stay there brought urgent letters from the medical students of Aberdeen, begging he would return to his native city and lecture to them on anatomy. Andrew Moir had given up all idea of the Church, and now he was to lay aside all hope of fame beyond "the four Bows of Aberdeen." Burning with ardour for scientific research, he returned. For eleven years he was private lecturer on anatomy in Aberdeen, and kept his students fascinated by his masterly anatomical knowledge, and by his spirit, unremitting

in its enthusiasm for scientific truth. He had all the ability which should ensure brilliant success,—he did the work, anatomised in the most skilful manner, and for minute anatomy had a passion. He inspired his students with a thorough knowledge of his art, and yet Andrew Moir, the most unworldly, sincere, and humble of men, with small opinion of his own powers, but a God-given energy he could not repress, remained unknown. His natural disposition, extremely shrinking, modest, and sensitive, was no doubt a good deal to blame for this. His daily work was the lowest drudgery, and it is difficult to believe how a man of such scholarly and classic attainments could have endured it without a hope of something more worthy in the future. It was said of a great Edinburgh professor that he “would never have wooed the ugly jade Anatomy if it had not been for the dower she brought him.” Andrew Moir got no dower with anatomy, and had nothing during his lifetime to look to but being hated as a resurrectionist; no instruction to give but wearisome lecturing to a set of young fellows whose knowledge of anatomy was crude and elementary, many of whom, armed with the fruit of his labours, became distinguished elsewhere, while he remained unknown. He carried anatomy to a perfection hitherto unattained in the north of Scotland; but Andrew Moir had unfortunately no oratorical gift, and his lectures, crammed with information, delivered in a humble manner, pleased his audiences often much less than a few showy simple illustrations would have done. Yet these lectures were long remembered for their anatomical value. As a demonstrator he was not successful, as he had no gift of extempore speech, and could not please the ignorant like some who had not a tithe of his knowledge; but his skilful handling was unparalleled, and his accurate dissection of minute structures marked the true anatomist. His lectures to his anatomical class contained the most extraordinary medical research. He was fond of giving sketches of Vesalius and other great anatomists, with whose lives his own had some strange similarity.

In them he indulged also in a self-dissection in which he deplored his shortcomings. He sometimes would speak pathetically of his losses. "I have reason to thank my God," he said in one of his lectures, "that my wants are few and easily supplied, and that if He has made poverty my lot He has likewise given me strength to support it with a patient and equal mind." In the middle of a lecture he would speak with fervour on the dignity of medicine, which "should breathe benevolence to all mankind: man civilised, man the barbarian, man temperate, regular, virtuous, and even man dissolute and debauched by every vice, and indeed man in every possible relation, is to be studied by the scientific physician."

By his students Andrew Moir was adored. Among those whose progress he watched in their native city may be mentioned Dr Robert Rattray, resident superintendent of the Aberdeen Infirmary; Dr James Philip, physician in Aberdeen; Dr Polson of Old Aberdeen; and Mr Davidson, druggist, of Messrs Davidson & Kay, Aberdeen. He followed lovingly the wanderings of old students abroad, and kept up correspondence diligently with them. Among those who went to India and were successful there may be mentioned Dr Corbet of the East India Company, later retired to the neighbourhood of Aberdeen. In London Sir Astley Cooper and Dr Guthrie congratulated Dr Moir on his finely equipped students. Two of the best and most distinguished of his pupils were Dr Kilgour of Aberdeen and Dr Matthews Duncan of London, whose great names serve to show what manner of men he helped to fame.

As a resurrectionist he was an enthusiast amid the ghastly horrors of stolen "subjects." Tales of strange pleasantries were told of him. As, when busy at the head of a party of students one night he went down into an open grave and attempted to wrench a coffin lid open. His hands stuck as in a vice, but nothing daunted he cried to his assistants, "Heave down the earth, lads!" Sometimes in pursuit of subjects he made raids upon his brother's churchyard, and was hooted down the village street.



The obloquy attached to raising bodies prevented Andrew Moir from having any medical practice. Sometimes he made chance fees; and it is remarkable that he should have had an income at all as a private lecturer on anatomy, when the students who attended him were often as poor as himself. With a princely generosity he assisted all who sought his aid, and to the stranger and solitary gave medical service without accepting any reward. The 'Aberdeen Medical Journal' showed that it was on the side of poor but honest worth by espousing his cause. The established university lecturers received little honour from this paper, which declared that "as long as lecturers by a system of grinding and false certificates can pocket their hundreds a-year, so long will the public be kept in the dark, or supplied with false information of their proceedings."

In 1839 Andrew Moir was chosen by the professors of King's College lecturer on anatomy; in 1840 they unanimously accorded him the honorary title of M.D. His services and sacrifices in these changed days were hardly appreciated. When he commenced to lecture in King's College, medical lectures were given there only three times a-week for five months, and could only qualify for a diploma in London. Against this the students complained to the University Commissioners. The requirements for anatomy were a course of lectures for six months, five days every week, with a course of practical anatomy and demonstrations. Instead of taking three hours' teaching in the week, Andrew Moir began at once with ten, and continued thus for six months every year. It was the opinion of every one whose opinion was worth anything that medical university improvements in Aberdeen were wanted.

Dr Moir left an interesting sketch of the Aberdeen anatomical school of King's College in his day. Previously to 1825 he attended lectures on chemistry and botany, but only as branches of general education, though he used certificates got in these classes for his surgeon's degree. There were no extra-mural medical lec-

turers. The Aberdeen University medical lecturers then were: Dr Alexander Ewing, anatomy, three times a-week; Dr Patrick Blaikie, surgery, three times a-week; Dr Charles Skene, the practice of physic, occasionally; Dr Henderson, materia medica; Dr Patrick Forbes, chemistry, in King's College; Dr French, assisted by Dr Henderson, chemistry, in Marischal College.

Professor Patrick Forbes's class on chemistry was attended by "the gown students," and was not considered a medical class. Both it and the Marischal College chemical class were visited by some out of curiosity, and by others engaged in manufactures. In 1826 or 1827 Dr Alexander Fraser was appointed lecturer on midwifery. Dr Moir attended his class. Professor Knight was "generally considered" King's College lecturer on botany, and a few years later the college appointed Dr Torrie lecturer on institutes of medicine. At a later time there were between King's and Marischal Colleges in all nine university lecturers, and a whole crowd of extra-mural lecturers. King's College students attended anatomy, surgery, practice of medicine, and midwifery. The lecturer on materia medica, Dr Henderson, had only three students in his class, and during a year's time, 1827-28, gave three lectures! Dr Moir was of opinion that "in these days students attended lectures only as a matter of form, and for the sake of the certificate, relying mostly on their own exertions for picking up a knowledge of their profession." "There was in my time," he said, "no teacher who concerned himself in the least about the progress of his students, or who took any pains to instruct them. We mostly studied anatomy and practical surgery, and these we learned at the dissecting-room, all groping our way as well as we could, and the older students assisting the less experienced. We never saw our teachers except at the lecture hours, and many of us were vain enough to think ourselves as wise as they were, or even vastly wiser." He gives a graphic picture of the medical student's anatomical knowledge in the words: "In these days, if we had

plenty of subjects we thought all was right. Our knowledge of practical medicine, such as it was, we got at the hospital, and to the hospital shop we trusted for *materia medica* and pharmacy. About midwifery we never thought seriously, and chemistry we conceived we had learned long ago."

Every medical student of respectability in Aberdeen belonged to the Medical Society, and its weekly meetings, and the preparations made for them, were a source of great advantage. In 1825 Aberdeen had lectures in all the medical subjects prescribed by the London College of Surgeons, the Aberdeen Hospital certificate was fully recognised, and many became surgeons who had only studied there. The university lecturers had everything their own way, and there was no opposition. "The students being obliged to provide *themselves* with their certificates, the lecturers only laughed at the opinion of the students, who expected nothing for their money but a testimonial. The lecturing was a mere sham, and any one was qualified in this way to be a lecturer on anything." The then low state of the Aberdeen University Medical School was thus fully accounted for, but occasionally one or other of the colleges "lighted upon"—Dr Moir refuses to say "selected"—a lecturer or professor of *parts and principle*, but "it was notorious in Aberdeen that persons were never selected for their fitness to teach their special subjects." Extra-mural lecturers sprang up, young men of vigour and talent, who gave new life to the medical school. Of such, practically, was Andrew Moir himself.

In this review of matters medical in Aberdeen, written by request, he shows neither rancour nor scorn. Feelingly he speaks of the disadvantages of lecturers not honoured with Marischal College favour, and of their small emoluments, and does not go out of his way to remark that they would never have been in existence in the limited circumstances of Aberdeen if it had not been for the inefficiency of the professors. Shortly before his death a change for the better, medically, set in in both the colleges, but in neither

was he invited to take a Chair, not even when an anatomical professorship was founded in 1839, and Allen Thomson, afterwards of Glasgow, was appointed. His views on professorships were valuable. He considered that the university curriculum should consist of just about the extension which medical education has now attained in Aberdeen. The endowments of professors, he thought, should be supplemented till they became an income of £100 a-year, which would make them "independent of practice, and allow them full time for their duties as teachers." What would he say to professorial incomes now? How fortunate the man of genius would have felt himself with an income of £100 who was "passing rich on £40 a-year"!

In his home life Andrew Moir was more fortunate than in public. His earlier years were enlivened by a solitary trip to Paris, which he celebrated in a diary, a few remarks from which may not prove uninteresting, and which shows that, while his mind was bent entirely to his only peculiar subject, he was not averse to foreign influences, which widen provincial views of things. He was a frugal man of small wants. When he thought the foreign charges unreasonable, he wrote on the margin of his paper, "Too much," and in some cases, "A cheat." Arrived in Paris, he subjoins a copy of the bill at Prince Regent's Hotel, which, he says, "requires no comment." He becomes eloquent on ale, which cost fifty sous, and "pain beurre" "about the size of a farthing roll," which assumed the majestic proportions of "one franc and a quarter," not to speak of one quarter of a fowl at an "extortion," and soap in proportion. He calculated that in Aberdeen, in the Lemon-Tree Hotel, he would have got better service at less than half the price. He was fond of paintings, and frequently went to the Louvre. A great object of interest to him was the Morgue, which he visited daily to look upon the unclaimed bodies of the drowned. At the École de Médecin he heard Pelletan lecture on electricity, he visited the Hôpital des Invalides, went round the infirmary with Baron Larrey, and to the

Hôtel Dieu and round the wards with Dupuytren, Breschet, and Chomel. At another time he attended Chomel's clinical lecture on rheumatism. At La Pitie he heard Lisfranc lecture on "abscesses from congestion." Thus the Aberdonian abroad felt far away in a foreign world, apart from provincial life, till he got quite a fright one day, thinking that he saw, in one of the Paris beggars, "the Partan," a well-known character in the streets of Aberdeen, with crab-like limbs twisted from the knees.

Upon this forlorn and lonely life of his there shone a light of love as pure as that of science. Andrew Moir had courted as his future wife a very young girl from Aberdeen, who went out to Toronto to be beside a married sister, and who took a situation as companion or governess in the family of Chief-Justice Robinson. He wrote to her from Aberdeen beseeching her to come back to Scotland. His letters are a model of fine writing and thoughtful affection. Exact, careful, economical, and punctual, he rallied his young friend on remissness in writing to him, with despondency, as if inclined to say he had been disappointed in everything else in life, and it were but of a piece were he disappointed in love also. It is taking a cruel advantage of a man to quote from his love-letters, but those of Andrew Moir were written with deliberation and without extravagance of language. For a considerable time he received no letter or message from the young lady, and feared he had lost her, but he remained still patient. "The promise," he wrote, "I made to you I hold most sacred—to fulfil it I would wander the world over. I wished to extract no corresponding promise from you, because I did not wish to bind you to anything which you might afterwards conceive to be against your interest. . . . God forbid that ever I should cause you a moment's uneasiness. I have, by the aid of the Almighty, borne many trials, losses, and afflictions, I hope with patient resignation, and many more I still look to bear."

A brother of Andrew Moir's was now in Toronto, the Rev. John



Moir, and to him he wrote, as well as to Chief-Justice Robinson, about his betrothed's return to Aberdeen in the ship *Brilliant* with Captain Elliot. Justice Robinson had a daughter, Miss Louisa Robinson, who had a great affection for Agnes Fraser, Andrew Moir's betrothed. Her Toronto friends seem not to have been in any hurry to induce Miss Fraser to return to Aberdeen to wed a poor anatomist a great deal older than herself. She was a pretty girl, very fond of admiration, and had two offers of marriage in Canada while secretly engaged to Andrew Moir. Years passed away, and still the anatomist was true to his beloved, and Agnes Fraser returned to Aberdeen and became his wife in 1839. The marriage took place at Stoniton, a farmhouse in a suburban village, now pulled down, which stood on the site of Carden Place, Aberdeen, and which was the home of Mr Nisbet, who, with his family, had a great regard for the young couple. After Miss Fraser had been married to Andrew Moir for a year or so, a third offer of marriage came to her from Canada from a young man acquainted with her there, who had waited for a competency before declaring himself. In his marriage, as in everything else in life, Andrew Moir showed that unselfish devotion which characterised him. His love for a stranger and dowerless maiden, who, though constant to her first love, would with small persuasion have found a wealthier husband, was most unselfish on his part. Mrs Moir proved a model wife. The married life of Andrew Moir and his bride was spent in the Guestrow of Aberdeen, still not entirely out of some fashion, as about this time the Duke of Gordon attended a marriage party in Thornton's Close there. In this ancient street, "the Holy Ghost Row" of the old Roman Catholic days, there is a handsome house, a relic of a noble mansion, known afterwards as a model dispensary, in part of which they lived. Dr Moir continued his busy labours, being constantly engaged in dissections and in the guidance of his pupils in resurrection raids.

In 1831 took place the burning of "the burking-house," as his



anatomical theatre in St Andrew Street was called, and which had been built by some gentlemen, who formed themselves into a building company and took shares in it. It was to be regretted that a certain slovenliness in the anatomist's work caused the populace to look with the greatest horror on the theatre. A dog scraping in the open ground behind it revealed one day to women passing to and from the bleach-green, by the Denburn, a mangled human limb. An infuriated mob collected, and it was found that the fragments of a dead body had been carelessly earthed. The theatre had an ugly look ; three false windows filled its front, and all its light came from the back of the building. An angry crowd broke into the house : three bodies were laid out within ready for dissection, and were carried off in triumph. The place was speedily emptied, and the surgical instruments and all the furnishings destroyed. The crowd returned in haste, swelled by thousands, among whom were jostled Provost Hadden, the Town Council, and soldiers from the barracks, incapable of action amid the howling mob. Andrew Moir, crossing the Denburn on this ill-fated January day, hurrying along with his pupil, Robert Rattray, afterwards Dr Rattray of the Infirmary, was astonished to see smoke rising before him. On asking a man who came towards them what was burning, they were told it was the "burking-house." Andrew Moir rushed to the spot, and, at the peril of his life, strove to rescue his property. The furious multitude would have killed him had he not, seeing resistance was useless, fled by Crooked Lane and St Nicholas Street, and jumped out of a shop-window into the back of the town's churchyard, where he lay concealed among the tombs.

Many were the accounts of the burning of the "burking-house"; before the blaze was over the whole town was in the streets. The horror of the anatomical theatre was widespread, and the women of the neighbourhood told how, going to bleach their clothes by the burn, the stench rising from the waste ground behind the theatre

was sickening. The procession, accompanied by the town's house officers, of the poor mangled bodies on stretchers going to Drum's aisle, brought yells of vengeance from the crowd. It was then that the house was fired, and a cry rose for shavings, and for tar-barrel staves. The back wall was undermined in five minutes by large planks—one being used as a lever and one as a battering-ram; the front wall gave considerably more trouble, being sunk. Meanwhile Provost Hadden wandered about among the infuriated populace, warning those who took the law into their own hands that they would have to answer for their doings. Ironical cheers were the reply. The scene of the burning is said to have been awfully sublime. In an hour the front wall fell, leaving the two gables and the roof standing, which formed one grand burning arch. The whole scene was extraordinary, and the blaze glared down upon the upturned faces of twenty thousand people standing between Charlotte Street and Sim's Square. Fire-engines came, and were hustled back by the angry crowd, and the 97th Regiment from the barracks only got the length of Gordon's Hospital gardens, where it stayed till the end of the drama. It soon came: amid one tremendous cheer the theatre was torn down, and literally not one stone of it left on the other. Thus ended the lynch-law which the people of Aberdeen, in the spirit of the Porteous mob, ruthlessly exercised.

While the crowd was dispersing a medical student was seen: chase was given, and refuge having been taken in a house in the Schoolhill by the terrified youth, an angry mob surrounded it demanding the "burker," who got with difficulty out at a back window. At Andrew Moir's house in the Guestrow a large crowd collected, under the belief that bodies were there, but the streets were quiet by night. The anatomist, overwhelmed with insult and reproach, for once lost his equable temper, and wrote to the 'Aberdeen Journal,' which gave in its pages a minute account of the destruction of the theatre, and accused it of befriending in-

cendiaries. The Journal generously excused the much-tried scientist, and trusted the "lesson" would be a warning to Dr Moir to be more careful in future. Two men, ringleaders of the riot, were tried—they belonged to the lowest class; and one was pardoned, as he believed his grandmother's body to have been among those in the theatre.

Reading the 'Aberdeen Journal' of the day, contributed to by Dr Kilgour and other bright particular stars of the Aberdeen firmament, we are led to suppose that the medical hall was threatened that night, but the rioters would have found it difficult of access. A thrilling description of "the burkin'-house burning" is to be found in the pages of 'The Heir of Glendornie,' a valuable addition to local fiction.

There was no more peace for Andrew Moir after the burning of the "burking-house," and every medical student was persecuted as being connected with him. Even the quiet home in the Guestrow was not safe. One day Joseph Robertson, afterwards the famous antiquary, and a clever young Irish medical student called Moore, came out of the law class in Marischal College, and being pelted with dead hens by the roughs, and called "burkers," took refuge in a friend's house in the Guestrow. Aware of the proximity of Moir's dwelling, the pursuing mob threatened dire vengeance, and were with difficulty prevented from raising a huge paving-stone to hurl against the door. Joseph Robertson and his friend happily escaped without more injury than the destruction of their hats. Ever after the anatomist had a celebrity attached to his name in the minds of the ignorant populace not to be envied, and was looked upon as an incarnate spirit of *diablerie*, besides a profaner of the quiet of the last long sleep. He had been long known by the medical men in town as "clever, dirty Andrew Moir," in allusion to his unpleasant work and his gift therefor. The difficulties he had to contend with would have been insurmountable to any one else but himself in the wretched place he had to work in

after the anatomical theatre was burned, which, when he was appointed lecturer to King's College, was in the Vennel, St Paul's Street.

The life of the anatomist was quiet and uneventful, save for the scandal of the "burking-house." A second burning was enacted when Dr Moir took refuge in another building. Decidedly he had not the social gift, nor the aptitude for dress-suits and small talk, which might have spread his fame in some ways; yet, when Andrew Moir is dead and gone, how much more grateful is the recollection of the shrinking, shabby, gentle figure of the martyr to science than that of Knox of Edinburgh, with his diamond-rings and flash address! Supported in his later days by the distinguished Dr Alexander Kilgour, also a King's College medical lecturer, Andrew Moir's reputation improved. By Dr Matthews Duncan of London, who spoke of him with admiration, he was called the founder of the Aberdeen School of Anatomy.

After the passing of the Anatomy Act bodies ceased to be scarce in Aberdeen, and the zest for nightly excursions was gradually extinguished. Bodies were sometimes got from London, and at a comparatively modern date we hear from the statement of Dr Moir himself that the House of Refuge afforded most of the bodies granted to the medical students of Aberdeen, and that many were got by sale from relations. In order to understand "resurrection days" in the north of Scotland, and all the wants felt in the curriculum of a medical student fifty and more years ago, there must come before the mind the personality of Andrew Moir. In 1841 he was consulted about the working of the Anatomy Act in Aberdeen, and confessed that the supply of "subjects" had not been at any time equal to the demand, that only stray vagrants can be got now from the parish of St Machar, and that the kirk-session had the power to retain even these. Speaking of the supply of bodies after the Act, he mentions three or four annually got from the House of Refuge founded by Dr Watt, and several

from the Infirmary "when the matron pleased." It was his opinion that more bodies would be got if the ratepayers managed the matter instead of the kirk-session.

Dr Moir died in February 1844 of typhoid fever, and was attended by Dr Kilgour, whose duty it was to tell the young wife, about to be a mother, that her husband was dying. Cut off in early middle life, leaving a young widow, children, and a post-humous child, the untimely fate of Andrew Moir was deeply regretted, especially as his late appointment as King's College anatomist promised him some prosperity. The Society accompanied his body to the grave, the funeral starting from the Medical Hall; thus the members showed what honour they could by public obsequies. His funeral was also attended by the medical professors and lecturers of King's and Marischal Colleges, by the students of medicine, and by a large number of friends. It is pleasing to turn to the story of Andrew Moir and his single-minded devotion, from the horrid study of Burke and Hare in Edinburgh.

Andrew Moir's death took place before he was forty years of age. He had not long been married, and his wife was left at five-and-twenty years with very slender resources. A young babe was born to her three days after her husband's death, while the grave-clothes were making in her house. Mrs Moir received ultimately a small pension from Government, for the honour of anatomy be it said, which was got for her by the exertions of fellow-citizens. Andrew Moir had a fine, expressive, well-featured face, with a happy and a pleasing smile. An excellent portrait of him, by Mr Cassie, A.R.A., is in the house of his daughter, Mrs Malcolm. He lies buried in the town's churchyard, where he took refuge when the mob pursued him. And thus the grave closed over a great anatomist.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## MEDICAL MINISTERS.

Rev. Professor Patrick Forbes, M.D.—Rev. Dr John Thomson, Minister of Torry—  
Rev. Dr William Leith of the South Church—Rev. Dr John Patoun.

IN King's College was Dr Forbes, a talented professor, who taught chemistry, and who in his way was as remarkable as Andrew Moir, and a man of peculiar talent and character. Dr Forbes represented a vigour which the most enthusiastic young student of medicine could scarcely hope to equal, and was enough in himself to raise the character of teaching in King's College above dull mediocrity. A son of the manse, he had ample opportunity of knowing the advantage that the study of medicine was to a young minister, and he took a medical degree, intending to practise as a doctor among his congregation. Brought up in different circumstances from those which cramped the genius of Andrew Moir, he well represented the fire with which the stern north-east of Scotland filled even those of her sons who had the fortune to belong to a hereditarily educated class, and required a strong incentive to labour. Professor Forbes was a descendant by a younger branch of Lord Forbes's family from the learned Episcopalian Bishop Patrick Forbes in Old Aberdeen, whose portrait at King's College, painted three hundred years ago, is yet characteristic of his family. From a youth he showed learning; and it was said that his father, on being congratulated by a friend on his success at



college, said, with more than a fond parent's pride, and with naïve egotism, "My son Patrick is as superior to me as I am to you, sir." Trained alike for the Church and medicine, Patrick Forbes might have shone in both. When a young man he was appointed minister of Boharm in Aberdeenshire in 1800, and district vaccinator when amid raging smallpox the new preventive was tried throughout Scotland. He had an addition built to his manse for the mixing and distributing of his drugs, and around him encamped periodically multitudes of people from Speyside and Glenlivet, their wives and children with them in covered carts, come to be vaccinated by the minister.

In 1817 he became Professor of Humanity in King's College, and added to the teaching of Latin that of natural history and of chemistry. A lover of original research, he knew no rest, and often worked from five in the morning till past midnight, and may be said to have represented three professors in one. Chemistry was the delight of his heart. He had studied it in early days in London, and he subjoined to it the outline study of electricity, which presented a great future to the scientist. Nothing daunted his ardour, and he plunged into herculean tasks. A stern disciplinarian also, he ill brooked opposition, so his university class exhibited a rare study of character as well as learning.

The professor testified his appreciation of the Medical Society by attending it often, and reading papers and communications there when it came within his power. Leaving his country church, he received the second charge of the parish ministry in Old Machar Cathedral at Old Aberdeen, where he delighted large congregations with earnest clever sermons at a time when the cathedral, before renovation, had its glories obscured by a mass of whitewash. In the pulpit his eloquence made him a great favourite. It was said that an old woman flattered his assistant by the remark that she liked best when *he* preached.

"And why, my good woman?" said the gratified assistant.

"Because I aye get a gude seat," she replied.

Dr Forbes entered into a new phase when he was appointed Professor of Humanity in King's College, and teacher of the chemistry class, as yet unattached to the chair of medicine. The class was voluntary, was kept up by his own indomitable industry, and was attended amongst others by manufacturers in cotton, wool, and linen, who took a university course, and by the more distinguished students in medicine, arts, and divinity. Chemistry was made exceedingly interesting, and the marvels of a new science shown to an admiring audience. Chemistry was on the eve of great discoveries, and Dalton's theory was expounded to the young students of medicine, who looked on with breathless interest. Unselfish in spirit, not many would have said as he did with gentle reproach, as an excuse for over-labour in the field he loved, "There is so much to do," and would have foregone to go where fame awaited, for the sake of labouring in lifelong obscurity and in comparative poverty in Old Aberdeen. His indifference to general opinion was as great as his genius for teaching. In vain commonplace people smiled at the grand old professor who impressed the idlest of his students with an enthusiasm not his own, and were amused at his going, as they said, "before the times." Dr Forbes believed in the powers of steam when no one else did, and people shrugged their shoulders and made merry when he said the world would one day travel by its power over land and sea. Many ideas thought quixotic when he promulgated them became matters of history not long after, and the science of chemistry very soon produced the dazzling results he foretold.

Through his relationship with Dr Beattie the poet, whose sister-in-law he married, and who had the *entrée* to the intellectual London aristocracy of the day, Dr Forbes obtained good introductions, went up to London in his holidays, and had personal interviews with King George IV., whose grand air and great physical beauty impressed the old-town doctor with a sort of hero-worship.

Dr Forbes's visits to London served to gild with a little glory his narrow provincial life.

Amusing stories were told of the professor in class, and of his determination of purpose, which could ill brook contradiction. Experiments were made where the most delicate handling and manipulation were required, and were conducted often with defective apparatus. The college porter Davy Cromar's "blundering idiocy" was often in forcible language referred to by the professor as the reason why experiments did not turn out so well as he expected.

As time went on the chemistry class included the teaching of mineralogy, geology, and magnetism. Dr Forbes spent his leisure, when he had any, in attending medical students and personal friends without making any charge, and in the University was constantly at work with some new branch of popular science. One day a mile of wire encircled his class-room round and round, and he discoursed to his students on the power of electricity.

"Gentlemen," he said, "in thirty years it will put a girdle round the world, and words will flash from land to land in twenty minutes."

"Na, na," ejaculated a wondering rustic among the audience; "I'll tak' a lot from you, doctor, but I winna tak' that."

As Professor of Humanity, he was a remarkably good Latin teacher, and was long remembered by the name of "Prosody," having been the first who taught Latin Prosody in Aberdeen.

Dr Forbes's chemistry class was so generally interesting, that one of his young daughters attended it regularly for a session along with the gowned students, and shared with them that vivid interest in new scientific discovery common to intelligent young minds. So the years passed away in King's College marked by the intense character of the keen, clever, irascible, but devoted teacher. It is said that the wise preceptor is forgotten, and the foolish often remembered; but the brightest of college memories is that which clings

around the man of character and ability, who fires his students with an enthusiasm above the commonplace.

In appearance Dr Forbes was a man of middle height, independent bearing, and gentlemanly presence. In accomplishments he was very versatile. He included at one time in his university lectures "A Sketch of the Principles of Agriculture," which he afterwards sent to the 'Aberdeen Constitutional' newspaper. In this he grasped the subject of "the physical state of the soil," and represented the necessity of drainage and manures, artificial and natural. The much-vexed subject of landlords and tenants came under his notice in the way of peroration to his discourse.

As the energetic professor laboured on from year to year under the shade of the old University, which was unworthy of his breadth of culture, while he added to chemistry one by one the elements of other sciences requisite for the young medical student, the lads whom he befriended by his unselfish zeal went into the world armed with his learning and fortified by his teaching.

We shall see afterwards how the new makers of university education in Aberdeen rewarded the man of learning who had given his all to his pupils, and may now remark on the good fortune of King's College students who, while Marischal College was rapidly progressing, possessed two such men as Andrew Moir and Patrick Forbes to keep up her reputation in her old age.

Of other medical ministers the Medical Society held several. Some of these studied for the Church, and then turned to medicine; others, otherwise gifted, studied medicine with a view to help their parishioners when they should have a church.

The Rev. John Thomson, minister of Footdee, who became honorary member of the Medical Society in 1811, was a remarkable local man, still remembered with interest. He was a medical missionary by Torry and the Bay of Nigg, with the stony moorland on one side of him and busy Aberdeen on the other. The sea lay before him, and around him nestled the warm-hearted, impulsive,

pious fisher-folk, of Norse descent, a people by themselves, and who loved their minister. Dr Thomson was a vigorous man, of great industry in his labours, priestly and medical, and was thought by some to have as much wisdom in worldly matters as in those of heaven. He preached in a little barn-like church, and addressed his sermons to the fishers, who sat attentive to his words in a gallery to his right. He advised them to be temperate in all things, and gave them what would now be held dangerous counsel, telling them to slacken their thirst only in taverns. Thus they would keep their family life free from brawls, and be sober in presence of their wives and children. He was remembered by the writer of ‘Aberdeen and its Folk’ as a little man wearing a scratch wig curiously cocked over his brow. Formal and precise, he had strange gestures during his prayers. One of these, a well-known attitude, showed the minister with head thrown back, fixing his eye on the church ceiling above him, to which point he addressed half his sentence, coming down suddenly with head lowered till his eyes rested on the foot of the pulpit, when he finished his words with solemnity, his arms down to the elbow held close to his sides, hands directed upwards, and the palms turned out. This was compared by the irreverent to a hen holding up her head after drinking. Dr Thomson’s small salary as minister was tripled by his medical fees. When any one in his parish wanted him, he asked, “Do you want me to doctor your body or your soul?” Though very hospitable, he was called parsimonious by those who forgot that his stipend was only £30 a-year. In his later years he gave up medicine, and had a new church built him, in the days when Aberdeen was not yet divided as afterwards, and his own was a chapel of ease. In the new building he had a vested interest in pew-rents, and had only as many pews put in at first as he thought needful. His economy shone most of all in his gravestone, which he had in his lifetime arranged with vacant spaces for the dates of the death of himself, wife, and two daughters, so that there should be no further expense

incurred. His quaint precentor, Archie Gordon, described as "a wee auld man," "a wyver to trade," who with peculiar jerks and a quavering voice sang a tune which he called "Kwondissension," has long ago been forgotten. Not so Dr Thomson's broad-spirited assistant and successor, the Rev. Professor Kidd of Marischal College. Thus rises to remembrance the medical minister of Torry, kindly and homely, loving his spiritual duties as much as his medical ones, which were more remunerative, reigning over the fishers of Torry, who worshipped him, and thinking, saying, and doing what he chose, doing a great deal of good, and leaving, as a man of character and worth, though only the poor pastor of a humble and alien congregation, a place that never could be filled.

The Rev. Dr William Leith, surgeon, became a member of the Medical Society in 1826, and for some time was its secretary. His early death in 1832 called forth an obituary notice from his companion and friend Dr Alexander Kilgour, which appeared in the 'Aberdeen Magazine.' Dr Leith, whose family was long established in Aberdeen, was educated at Mr Bower's school and at the Aberdeen Grammar School, and received the degree of M.A. at Marischal College. As a medical student he studied under his relation Dr Patrick Blaikie, and got his surgeon's diploma in Edinburgh, becoming a physician that he might be useful to country parishioners if he had a call to a rural district. As a well-looking handsome youth, robust and stout in appearance, he was remembered when appointed minister of the South Parish in Aberdeen. He put his whole heart into his work, and never looked on his medical studies as a resource for leisure, but as part of the gospel of goodwill towards men from heaven it was his duty to declare. Dr Kilgour was of opinion that if he had been by profession a doctor only, he would have risen to eminence. As a minister of the Established Church of Scotland, his liberal education helped to make his sermons doubly useful to his congregation. When unsuccessful as a candidate for the Trinity chapel of ease, he gave



the money he received as competitor away in charity. He was in comparatively wealthy circumstances, and went abroad for a while for his health. As a preacher, he was remarkable for the happy practical application of his sermons to everyday life ; and it is said that the freshness, strength, and originality of his style, and the affectionate kindness of his natural disposition, made him universally admired, while his homely graceful oratory in the pulpit, his blameless life, and his unselfish nature, endeared him to his friends. His salary as a preacher he gave wholly to the poor, and the grief of his young companions at his death of lingering consumption was great.

The Rev. Dr John Patoun of Aberdeen was made honorary member of the Society in 1805. He offered, "as a small tribute of gratitude for the honour conferred upon him," to give the medical students of the junior class of the Society a course of lectures on the Theory and Practice of Midwifery gratis. He stipulated that they must be students who had been already a year and a half at the University, as otherwise they would not be able to benefit by his instruction. His letter is written in a tone which intimates a superior knowledge of his subject, which he does not seem to think himself at all singular in teaching, and is dated from his lecture-hall in Broad Street, Aberdeen.

Along with the Rev. Dr Patoun, the Rev. Dr John Gordon of Cabrach, Rev. Dr Forsyth of Belhelvie, parish vaccinator and the ingenious inventor of the cap percussion-lock, Rev. Dr Clarke, M.D., formerly of Jamaica, and Rev. Dr Shoolbred, M.D., of Calcutta, were invited to become members.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## THE JUBILEE OF THE ABERDEEN MEDICAL SOCIETY, 1838.

After the great war—The dinner in Anderson's New Inn—The jubilee dinner in the Medical Hall—The poet of the Medical Society—Aberdeen surgeons in war—Honorary members of the Academy of France.

THE Medical Society of Aberdeen was now not only the "respectable association" its sanguine patrons once foretold it might one day be, but was influential, respected, and in good condition. It had many friends in town, and had among its many centres of interest the shop of Mr Brown, its bookseller, in the Upper Kirkgate, which presented an attraction to literary and medical Aberdonians.

In 1838 it held its fifty-year jubilee. Begun amid the horrors of Revolution, it had lived to see the end of Revolution. Medicine had won the Anatomy Acts, the country the Reform Bill, and the fair young sovereign Victoria had been crowned a few months before amid universal joy, foretelling that a good queen makes a great nation. This year the London and Birmingham Railway was opened, people were lost in admiration over the wonders of mechanical science, and a steamer plied for the first time between Bristol and New York. The electric telegraph was dawning on the eyes of Europe. Postage rates were still high, but Rowland Hill was meditating on the penny postage. A few years before and Scotland was like a country in the middle ages. Queen Victoria's reign from its outset was a reign of progress.

The town and county of Aberdeen had undergone a remarkable change during fifty years. Country doctors had not the same difficulty in coming into town as in the old days, when, if people could not go on horseback, they must accommodate themselves, if they were so fortunate as to be able to do so, with a cart or a one-horse shay. In 1770 the first stage-coach plied between Aberdeen and Edinburgh: it was called the Fly, and took two days to the journey, stopping a night on the way. There was only one stage-coach to London once a-month, which was twelve or sixteen days upon the road. There were two post-chaises in Aberdeen in 1790, and now in 1838, as a local antiquary remarked with pride, "there were two coach-manufactories"! Aberdeen was extending, still isolated but happy in friendly intercourse between men of town and county. Rattling stage-coaches brought in the country visitor eager and willing to enjoy himself, looking with astonishment on the long expanse of Union Street, and following with admiration the solitary private carriage in which sat the Duke of Gordon.

There was plenty of intercourse among medical brethren. Medical papers had started up in Aberdeen—"The Lancet" and 'The Aberdeen Medical Journal' were specimens of this sort of literature—a peculiar feature of medical and university life in the north. The Medical Society had a public dinner a few years before the jubilee, as if to test its social powers. On the 15th December 1834 was held in Anderson's New Inn a commemoration dinner, to celebrate its foundation that day forty-five years ago. Anderson's New Inn was in the Castlegate, to the east of the Town-House and Tolbooth, on the site of the North of Scotland Bank at the corner of Lodge Walk. It was built in 1737 for the Aberdeen Freemasons, and was still kept by an Anderson. It was there that Dr Samuel Johnson and Boswell, who, as a staunch Aberdonian, had brought the great man to see his native town, slept, and it was there that Dr Johnson supped on Scottish broth and cared not how soon he supped it again, at the same time remarking barefooted servant-

lasses scampering about the house. The Castlegate was still the centre of commerce and gossip, the heart of the town, remarkable for its fashionable promenade, "the plainstanes," round the city Cross. The town-hall and remaining fine houses of the nobility with their fore-stairs gave it an air of dignity. The son of the principal chemist in Aberdeen, a future member of the Medical Society, remembered some years later the special interest which centred round the gallows in the Castlegate, and the "hangings," that grim diversion of a bygone time, which as a child he was taken to see from his father's windows. Amid the smoky atmosphere and sanded floors of the New Inn the Medical Society held its symposium where the "Wise Club" had held theirs. Around it in the Castlegate went on the merry sale of "vivers," the old-fashioned haunTERS of the country fair plied their trades, and the quack-doctor recounted his cures and sold his nostrums beside "Gibbery John" and Betty Osler's wheel of fortune. The Castlegate was sufficiently professional through the chemist's shop, which stood there conspicuously. There was also Robbie Troup, the Conservative grocer, in a blue coat and brass buttons, and a perruque, who in his window, along with treacle and train-oil, advertised "a single gill of wine to the afflicted, price 6d."

At the Medical Society's dinner Mr Cromar, the President, was in the chair. On his right sat Dr James Moir; on his left, Assistant-Surgeon M'Grigor of the 42d Highlanders, who represented his relative, Sir James M'Grigor, and the gallant "Forty-twa." Dr James Torrie, now honorary member of the Society, occupied the other end of the table. Among those present were Mr Gerard of Midstrath, Drs Joseph Williamson, Andrew Moir, and Robert Rattray. "The dinner," says the '*Aberdeen Medical Journal*,' "was most excellent and substantial, and did very great credit to the landlord, Mr Anderson." On the cloth being removed toasts were given: the King; Sir James M'Grigor, Director-General of the Army Medical Department, one of the original

founders, and the constant patron, of the Society ; also Dr James Moir and other founders of the Society. Dr Moir, returning thanks, said there were but four founders of the Society alive—himself, Sir James M'Grigor, Dr Grant of Forres, and Dr Colin Allan. The chair having toasted the Medical Society of Aberdeen, remark was made of the depressed state of the junior class of the Medical Society. Much discussion followed, many present considering the falling off of the younger members due to "a system of grinding by a certain lecturer." Such remarks being considered in bad taste, the discussion was stopped. Mr Cromar, a very favourite member on account of his *bonhomie* and social spirit, had his health drank. He represented himself as intending to strain every nerve to reform both classes of the Medical Society. He thought every encouragement should be given to students of medicine. He intended to offer a course of lectures on surgery, and hoped other members of the Society would give courses on other "branches." A bumper was now given by Dr James Moir, the physician, to Andrew Moir, anatomist, "who had done more for the Medical School of Aberdeen, through good report and bad report, than any one connected with it." Mr Andrew Moir rose to return thanks, and said he was overpowered by the unexpected and undeserved way in which his health had been drank. He was sorry that he had been able to do so little for the Aberdeen Medical School, and he recalled the well-known love of medical Aberdonians scattered all over the earth for their Society. As for himself, he said he was ever ready to do what little he could do, and was always "more ready to act than to speak." The other toasts were Mr Robert Rattray, curator of the museum ; and Mr William Fraser, the Society's librarian,—two young men afterwards to be known, the former as resident physician of the Royal Infirmary of Aberdeen, and the latter as a medical doctor in Aberdeen, who always, till his latest breath, took a warm interest in the Society's welfare, retaining his post as librarian for many years. The health of Dr James Moir was drank, the representative

of the aristocracy of medicine in Aberdeen ; and was followed by that of Dr James Jamieson, brother of Dr Jamieson of Peterhead, physician in Aberdeen, descended from the worthy town's family of Auldjo, whose sons in Edinburgh, James Auldjo Jamieson, W.S., Crown-Agent for Scotland, and George Auldjo Jamieson, chartered accountant, justify the saying that the Aberdonian succeeds as well in law as in medicine. Dr Jamieson replied for the private lecturers, described as the mainstay of medicine, and troubled by the opposition of university professors. Dr Torry returned thanks for the accoucheurs of Aberdeen, and said that as they were well known to be disturbed at night they might be excused a nap in the daytime, but he hoped he would never become "a sleeping member of the Society." The dinner broke up without the health of Queen Adelaide having been drank, and some said this was because Dr Charles Skene had been overheard in the Athenæum calling the present Ministry "a thimble-rigging Administration."

While the 'Aberdeen Journal' chronicled the dinner in favourable wise, great fun was made in the 'Aberdeen Medical Journal' of a rival dinner of "the University Medical School" which took place at the same time in "Affleck's," the Old Lemon-Tree Hotel. Dr Alexander Fraser, Lecturer on Midwifery in Marischal College, was caricatured as giving an angry speech on the subject of the small emolument which he received. Dr "Sandy's" well-known penuriousness made the jest acceptable. The young lecturer on anatomy in Marischal College, Dr Pirrie, was represented as saying that he was quite *unanimous* in the opinion of his learned friend the lecturer on midwifery. When that gallant officer called on him at the commencement of the session, it was his opinion that "university folk should support ane anither." The Anatomy Bill just passed was a very severe cut upon him, "for before it passed into a law there were a number of unfriendless individuals in this town, and now there were none." Dr Skene complained of the rascally conduct of those "cowardly scoundrels," the editors of the



‘Aberdeen Medical Magazine.’ Dr “Sandy” Fraser endorsed this statement with the words, “Nae man in a’ Aberdeen has suffered sae muckle as I hae deen frae scoondrels in poetry and scoondrels in prose.” This skit was unfortunately followed by a good deal of rude personal remarks in the local magazines.

The doctors of the Aberdeen Medical Society, with Dr Joseph Williamson as secretary, determined to have a very pleasant meeting on the evening of the 18th of December 1838, when they celebrated the fifty years’ jubilee. Estimates were taken for the jubilee dinner, and the cheapest—that of Mr Affleck—was accepted. He arranged to charge 4s. for each cover, and to supply dinner for sixty-three persons in the Society’s own Hall. Mr Affleck promised *a good dinner*, and kept his word. Six bottles of champagne were drank at 9s. a bottle, two dozen of claret at 9d., one of port and one of sherry at 5s. each, one dozen of porter at 6d. Fifty-seven tickets were sold for the dinner at 8s. each, everything being included but fire and light. £1, 5s. was paid to glee-singers for singing during dinner, also supplied by Mr Affleck, who undertook to provide music “to the satisfaction of the committee”! One bottle of sherry was to serve three gentlemen, and drams, malt liquor, and sugar for negus were amply provided. A memorandum preserved shows the secretary, Dr Alexander Kilgour, to have given himself a great deal of trouble in arranging the entertainment. The dinner was modelled upon one given by the Society of Aberdeen Advocates in their hall a few weeks before.

A packet of letters, carefully folded and placed in envelopes, sealed with red or white wax, show acceptations and politely-worded refusals of invitations to the jubilee dinner. Sir Alexander Bannerman, manufacturer, member of Parliament for Aberdeen, cousin of the Baronet of Elsick, and known universally as “Sandy Bannermann,” was one of the local magnates who accepted the invitation. Sir Alexander, who had a good deal of trouble subsequently in presenting petitions to Parliament, signed

by a number of medical men, and framing Bills for the furtherance of the union of Marischal and King's Colleges, was a clever accomplished man. In person he was spare and erect, remarkable for a handsome figure and frank expression of face. He was a good deal of a wag, and celebrated for his practical jokes. On one occasion he gave a letter of introduction to a credulous acquaintance going to Glasgow, addressed "to Bailie Nicol Jarvie, Saltmarket," accepted in good faith. His wife, the stepdaughter of Dr Guthrie of London, was that early sweetheart of Thomas Carlyle, known to some in his writings as "Blumine," of whom he spoke contemptuously as having married "some rich Aberdeen nobody." Sir Alexander was not rich, neither was he a nobody.

Provost Milne of Aberdeen accepted the Medical Society's invitation. He was a man of plain speech and broad Aberdonian accent, highly respected. His hospitable house in the Gallowgate was well known, and also the negro servant who, according to old-fashioned custom, was his *major-domo*.

The dinner was arranged on three tables, formed like a horse-shoe, the chair being taken by Dr James Moir, in the great room of the Medical Hall. Dr Alexander Kilgour was croupier. There sat down to dinner Dr John Charles Ogilvie, Dr Henderson of Caskieben, Dr John Cadenhead of the Dispensary, Dr Keith, Dr Campbell, Dr James Jamieson, Dr Francis Ogston (afterwards Professor of Medical Jurisprudence in Aberdeen), Dr Cameron, Dr David Kerr, Dr Laing, Dr Joseph Williamson, Dr Rattray (afterwards of the Infirmary), Dr Reid of Ellon, Dr Harvey (afterwards Professor of *Materia Medica*, Aberdeen, son of a founder of the Society), Dr James Will, Dr Templeton, Dr Andrew Moir (teacher of anatomy), Dr Paterson, Dr Forsyth, Dr Dickie (afterwards Professor of Botany), Dr Nichol (afterwards Professor of Natural History), Dr Primrose, Dr M'Kinnon, Dr Balfour, Dr Fiddes, Dr M'Laren, Dr Matthew, Dr Robert Dyce, Dr Robert Smith, Dr Spence, Dr Geddes, Dr Morrison, Dr Rainny, Dr J. M.

Campbell, Dr Benjamin Williamson, Dr Alexander Fraser, Dr William Fraser, Dr Torrie, Dr Sim, Dr Maitland, Dr Winchester, Dr Irvine, Dr Whyte, Dr Buckthorn, Dr Thomson, Drs Leslie and Ligertwood of Inverurie; Dr Adams of Banchory, Dr Gavin of Strichen, Dr Pirrie of Fyvie, Dr Robertson of Blalach, and Dr Strachan of Mormand House.

The lawyer of the Medical Society, Mr David Hutcheon, was represented by his junior partner, Mr Francis Edmond. Mr Hutcheon, whose genial-looking likeness now hangs in the Medical Hall, and who attended for many years faithfully to the business affairs of the Society, conducted, as one of the old secretaries observed, "in a lucid manner," was the son of the minister of Fetteresso. As a boy he had been lamed for life by the roof of the school-house falling in upon him during a storm. His sister, a lady of some "character," was married to Professor Paul of King's College. Mr Hutcheon, who had the chief law-business in Aberdeen, was one of the last who continued to wear the old dress of knee-breeches and silk stockings. Young Mr Francis Edmond was complimented in a racy speech by Dr "Sandy" Fraser on his legal services rendered to the Society, and was promised as reward a public funeral at his decease, which all the members should attend. There was great acclamation and clinking of glasses at this speech and all the speeches. The guests enjoyed themselves greatly, no doubt, but some of their speeches have not yet been copied out, a blank page for them still remaining in the Society's secretary's book!

A song was sung after dinner, to the tune of "The Good Old Country Gentleman, all of the Olden Time," written by the singer, Dr Robert Smith, a son of the manse, and the poet of the Society. The opening verses began in a racy jaunty manner thus:—

" I'll sing you a new song, made by a modern pate,  
'Bout a learned Society of rather ancient date;  
The members of it (though gentlemen) must toil howe'er so late,  
And leave their cosy 'ain firesides' to wait on small and great,—  
They're the sons of Æsculapius, though all of the modern time.

Their spacious Hall is planted round, as everybody knows,  
 With members who do nothing else but blister, bleed, and dose,  
 And wage a constant war with Death, 'bout arms, legs, and toes,  
 And feel the pulses of their friends, and also of their foes,—  
 They're the sons of Æsculapius, though all of the modern time.

When sickness comes to rich or poor, though in the dead of night,  
 Away a maid runs, half awake, to wake some sleeping wight ;  
 No matter though his busy brain contemplates visions bright,  
 She knocks and rings, and rings and knocks, and bawls with all her  
 might,

For the son of Æsculapius, that he may be in time."

A dramatic description follows, showing how on a snowy night, after a vain hunt for lucifers, the doctor had to open his window, after "breaking his broken shin," in order to hear Molly Maid-servant, amid rattling hailstones dropping on his naked toes, ask whether she shall give her mistress a little greybeard full of hot water to her feet, as she felt something like a chill. Having plumped into bed again and gone to sleep with thanksgiving, to dream of an estate and castle, the reward of the industrious doctor who always was up to time, "the wife" cries, "The bell again!" "Confound the bell!" ejaculates the doctor, who rises to save the life of the only son of a widow by bleeding him. And now behold the reward of the medical man who is always at his post night and day, watching for anything that shall turn up: the widow cannot pay, but calls down blessings on the doctor's head. Dr Smith made a grim joke to the effect that if folks would only dose themselves at night with a certain "vegetable pill," it could do no worse than kill them before morning. The writer of the verses was nevertheless by no means indifferent to the grateful prayers of the poor and healed, for his verses close with—

" 'A thousand thanks,' the youth exclaims, 'I now am free from pain!'

'A thousand thanks,' the mother cries, 'from tears I can't refrain ;

I'm grateful, sir—I'm very poor—but prayers shall not be vain

For heaven's best blessings on your head because you've come in time.'"

So closed the hilarious meeting of fifty years ago: one glass was

broken for luck, charged 5d. in the bill, and the Society entered, with many well-wishers, on modern days.

There were many far away who would fain have been with the Medical Society at its jubilee, but who were separated far by sea and continent as sea and continent cannot separate now. Many of the young Aberdeen doctors abroad, busy in useful careers, were never again to see friends of their youth in Bon-Accord. Life-histories full of strange fact called romance might have been evolved could the army or naval surgeon from the tumult of battle, from colony and foreign land, have sent word to his old comrades how he sped, but the message would have even then required almost the "year and a day" of the old Scottish ballads for its journey. Some members of the Society were passing through strange phases abroad, one becoming in a State of South America a Republican king. Some of these long-spent lives a few swift words may yet snatch from oblivion.

In 1833 there joined the Society José Montealegre of Costa Rica, a young student of Spanish South American descent, and his younger brother Mariano. These two young men their companions chronicled as "two pleasant, modest fellows," with apparently nothing remarkable about them. Some years later an old member of the earlier days of the Aberdeen Medical Society, now Dr Johnston of Fordoun, read in a newspaper that Dr José Montealegre had been, during a revolution in one of the States of Southern America, appointed President of the Provisional Government. Looking back through the long vista of years, his old friend remembered once more the meetings of the junior members in the library of the Medical Hall in King Street, and ruminated on the chance that made a past president of the second class and its Bajeants into a king *pro tempore*, and at the strange freaks that destiny plays.

Of the many who died early and were never heard of, of those who fell 'mid the storm of battle tending the wounded, of this or that young medical officer who dropped aside amid retreat, the



prosperous little city of Bon-Accord heard little. The one spare weekly sheet of the 'Aberdeen Journal' had to compress the history of Europe into its meagre columns, and that intelligent creation of newer days, the journalist who interviews everybody, and is always everywhere on the spot, held no chameleon existence then. The Medical Society has, however, some record to show of time of war in these later days.

There was trouble at Cabul when the reign of Queen Victoria began, and there rises the remembrance of the blowing up of the gates of Ghuznee, of the fearful Khyber Pass, and the battle of Jellalabad. How many have, ere now, forgotten the unfortunate home policy which resulted in the murder of Burnes and Macnaghten. In the hearts of those who loved the soldier and the surgeon, hearts which in these fifty years have mostly ceased to live and suffer, long lingered the recollection of the losses in the Khyber Pass. One of the beautiful Miss Dingwalls, of the Aberdeen Post-office, who were called "the angels," was married to the brave officer who blew up the Ghuznee gates. Triumph for Britain ended here, though hearts beat high with hope of victory. From Aberdeen went three young surgeons with the army hacked to pieces in the fatal pass. Dr William Duff, of the Medical Society, cousin of Dr John Murray, was one of these unfortunate young men, spectators of the ill-advised submission of the British army to Akbar Khan,—was one of those who passed through part of the awful journey through mountain-passes, where the Afghans started from behind rocks to wound and stab, and their perfidious chief appeared every now and then, gloating over the slaughter of the retreating army. Of 16,000 men only one, Dr Brydone, survived to enter Jellalabad. Dr William Duff's sister was inconsolable for his loss, and bewailed him long sincerely. His portrait—that of a sunburnt, active-looking young man in full regimentals—hangs in a relation's house.

The Medical Society had among its honorary members some literary people of note, among others Dr Helenus Scott, and among its



distinguished honorary members the following representatives from the Academy of France, secured by Sir James M'Grigor when with the Allied armies. These names serve to show the admiration of the provincial physician for the great men of another country with which it had been shortly before at war.

Baron Desgenettes, chief physician to the French army in Egypt, and author of 'The Medical History of the Army in the East,' was in Egypt when Sir James M'Grigor, as surgeon to the British army, was there surrounded by his group of Aberdeenshire assistants.

Baron Larrey was chief of the medical department of Napoleon's army, and represented much the same office there that Sir James M'Grigor had in the Allied army. He was remarkable as establishing movable ambulances in the van of the French army, when the British, until Sir James M'Grigor introduced them, had none. Baron Larrey received his title on the battlefield of Wagram, and was called by his great master "the most virtuous man he had ever known."

Baron Corvisart was physician extraordinary to Napoleon. He was so valued by his master that he enjoyed the most intimate relations with him. Corvisart was at hand, report said, to revive the Empress Josephine when overcome at her deposition, and to his medical care she was confided when she retired to Malmaison. The fall of Napoleon was for many years an irretrievable loss to Corvisart, who, shortly before his death, was taken into the favour of the reigning house.

Baron Laennec, the inventor of mediate auscultation, or the stethoscope, is the most interesting, from a British standpoint, of the members of the French Academy elected by the Medical Society. He is said to have been always remarkable for his friendly relations with Britain. He studied medicine in Paris under Corvisart, and, amid his labours, was struck with consumption, the disease which his invention hoped to alleviate. His great work on diseases of the chest has been carefully translated by an Aberdonian physician, Dr

John Forbes, who dedicated, under his editorship, the translation to a fellow-countryman, Sir James Clark, M.D., who took a very lively interest in the Medical Society of Aberdeen.

Baron Cuvier, the great naturalist, was a man dear to the heart of the anatomist, and akin to him in gift, being the great comparative anatomist of the lower animals. He held rigid adherence to fact, feeling his way among the live mechanisms of nature, and giving forth his discoveries as he found them. The Medical School of Aberdeen, always thoroughly matter of fact and critical itself, discovered in Cuvier a man whose work was honestly admirable.

Jean Baptiste Biot was a distinguished mathematician, and, with the philosopher Arago, was appointed to inquire into the affinity of bodies for light, and the refractive power of gases. With Arago he measured a degree of the meridian in Spain. One wonders why Biot, purely an optician and natural philosopher, was made an honorary member of the Medical Society of Aberdeen. Like most of the honorary members of the Society, he paid a visit to Aberdeen. An arc of the meridian, from the south of England to the north of Scotland, had been measured. The French Board of Longitude wished to join to it the arc measured in Spain by Biot, and in order to make the work complete, it was necessary to visit Shetland. Biot landed at Aberdeen, where he received great hospitality, and then passed on to Shetland.

Such were the distinguished foreigners who accepted the hand of brotherhood from the Medical Society in the north after days of war and turmoil, and who exercised considerable influence over the young members.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## COUNTRY SURGEONS.

Dr Adams of Banchory and Dr Cran of Tarland.

To the surgeon of Aberdeenshire, still living remote in the country, the Medical Society and the New Hall were of great advantage. The lives of two characteristic and diverse clever country doctors of the time are worth recording. The first of these is well known beyond the reach of local fame, and both equally belong to days that are no more.

Dr Adams was a good surgeon and a learned man. Such gifts as the Milne Bequest were producing students of classical scholarship from the Universities of Aberdeen, one of whom, known to the world as a great Greek scholar, was a hard-working village surgeon, recalling the Dr Gideon Gray of Sir Walter Scott's 'Surgeon's Daughter.' Dr Francis Adams, whose father was a builder, was born in 1796, and practised in Banchory-Ternan, the beauty and warmth of which is that of far-famed southern health resorts. His bust, representing the strong features and sagacious expression of the Aberdeenshire surgeon, is in the senatus room of King's College. Francis Adams took the London degree of the College of Surgeons, and began practice in Banchory, where he became possessor of a finely situated piece of ground on which he built a house. He and a friend were, indeed, the makers of this pretty spot, which, in their later

days, they had the pleasure of seeing a thriving village. Dr Adams's wife died early and left him with a family to bring up. A good domestic picture might be made of the laborious Banchory surgeon in his moments of leisure, instructing his boys and girls, teaching the son to be a scientific man and the daughter to be a good house-keeper and happy mother of a family. One of his daughters recollects him in these words: "It was in the home circle we can speak most of our dear father, for there he was everything that a loving parent could be. Although so busy in his profession and at his literary work, he always found time to superintend my brothers with their Latin and Greek, and encourage us all to have tastes for improving studies. When we look back it is marvellous to think how much time he spent amongst us, getting us to commit to memory pieces he considered the finest in the English language, both in prose and verse. He encouraged my brothers to have a taste for natural history, and explained any wild plant he found in his rounds." This simple picture of a happy home shows the hale and vigorous form of Dr Adams—for he was more of the burly countryman than the pale bookworm—guiding his motherless flock, and, while he devoted himself to his favourite study, never forgetting to turn it to the advantage and training of his young people, and maintaining, at the same time, a thrifty and a comfortable household.

His learning could not have been acquired without labour. He was a scholar from his boyish days, and a writer of books. At college he translated the "Hero and Leander" of Musæus, and turned it into what a reviewer called "neat and modest English verse," almost wresting the Blackwell prize in Marischal College from a rival who was said to have not a tithe of his scholarship. He was versatile in his studies, and loved the poet as well as the sage. At the celebration of Burns's centenary he made an enthusiastic speech. In spite of late nights and early mornings, Dr Adams pursued his learning with constant zeal, furnished articles of critical value to publishers and editors, and corresponded with literary men, two of

whom made pilgrimages to Banchory to see him. One of them, Dr John Brown of Edinburgh, greatly appreciated Dr Adams's translation of the works of Hippocrates for the Sydenham Society, and may be said to have dedicated to him his pleasantly gossiping 'Horæ Subsecivæ.' John Hill Burton, also, in his 'Book Hunter,' eulogised the country surgeon who devoted himself to "plain living and high thinking," and whom he found among his books in the richly wooded valley by Deeside. In his eyes he was a profound Greek scholar, accustomed to read the old authors on medicine and surgery, "too little respected by his profession." Among his lonely drives and hurried calls the surgeon and scholar found solace in the classics; but the physician who translates Greek and Latin for his diversion is now as thoroughly vanished as the crofter farmer in Banffshire whom the minister of the parish found, fifty years ago, poring over Virgil's "Georgics" in the original, for light reading in the long winter evenings.

Dr Adams's great work was the translation of Paulus Æginetas, the Greek physician, whose teaching embodied all the earlier history of medicine. This translation was dedicated to Dr Abercrombie of Edinburgh and Dr Guthrie of London. In his preface he says: "I trust that I have been able to present the reader with a work from which he may, at one view, become familiar with the prevailing opinions of the profession upon all the most important points of medical practice during a period of more than fifteen centuries." A herculean task, and faithfully discharged. A translation of Artæus followed, requiring research, a visit to the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and to great book collectors, who gave variety to his acquaintance, and introduced him to the *literati* of Britain.

The contrast in Dr Adams of the student burning the midnight oil, and the country surgeon sent for in hot haste at all hours of the day and night, makes his character all the more interesting. A writer says, with jaunty sarcasm: "We well remember finding this great scholar at his careless jentaculum, diverting himself with

doing an Ode of Horace into Greek verse ; being then, and we dare say still, at the call of any shepherd's 'crying wife' up in the solitudes of Clochnaben. In any other country such a man would not have been permitted to remain long in such a position. Scotia is assuredly 'leonum arida nutrix.' Our lions are very drily nursed." "It is a noticeable fact," says the critic, "and something to be proud and ashamed of, that the most learned physician in Britain, and probably in Europe, is at this moment a country surgeon in a small village on Deeside."

The 'Arundines Divæ ; or, Poetical Translations on a New Principle, by a Scotch Physician,' which he dedicated to the Premier, Lord Aberdeen, give a good idea of the leisure spent by the country surgeon. The little book contains translations of Horace's "Odes," Gray's "Elegy" translated into Latin, and "The Burial of Sir John Moore" in Greek. Writing in his preface from what Dr Adams calls "the sequestered vale of life," he gives a view in the following words somewhat different from present ideas of a classical education : "I believe the highest authorities on national education are now agreed that the estrangement from *literæ humaniores* has had an unfortunate tendency on medicine, not only by lowering the standard of a liberal art to the level of a mercenary craft, but also by depriving its members of a moral and intellectual culture, highly necessary for invigorating the mind and enabling it to separate truth from error." He continues to say that hearing the classical teaching of the English universities vaunted as far superior to that of Northern Scotland, he "felt an ambition to show that the muses of Greece and Rome vouchsafe still, as in Arthur Johnstone's day, an occasional visit to the banks of the Dee and its sister stream, as well as to those of the Isis and the Cam."

Dr Adams, as a scholar or a doctor, never left a moment idle. All know the forced marches of the country surgeon, the patient wait in dreary farmhouses or in the cottar's but and ben, and have heard of the country practitioner who stayed up a whole night a long dis-



tance from home assisting at the birth of a labourer's babe, and who got a breakfast of scones and buttermilk as his fee. Dr Adams had always a book which he brought out of his pocket whenever he had to wait at odd times. Though not a possessor of rare editions and valuable bindings, he had plenty of books in his own house. In later years he had a war of rhyming wit with an English nobleman. The subject was a Latin epigram on the Scottish vernacular saying, "Ding down Tantallon; mak' a Brig to the Bass." Natural history was a favourite study with him. In surgery as well as medicine he was distinguished, and none operated more coolly, boldly, and successfully than he, though often in a rough-and-ready way. "A good workman never quarrels with his tools," says the proverb. Neither did Dr Adams. There is a story told of a broken arm in a lonely place being successfully set with the aid of a porridge-spurtle. He was an industrious member of the Aberdeen Medical Society, and read many a paper in the Medical Hall, regretting greatly when he was obliged to write to the members to tell them that failing health and "remote distance from Aberdeen" forced him to resign his presidentship. When the Deeside Railway was opened the aspect of Banchory changed, and it was no longer distant and secluded.

Dr Adams was held in high respect by his medical brethren, and received the title of LL.D. from the University of Glasgow. In politics he was a Whig, at a time when party spirit ran high and Liberal politics did not mean worldly advantage. He keenly enjoyed arguments and discussions and dearly loved an "argle bargle," his friends taking pleasure in setting him on to favourite subjects. He never regretted, and had no need to regret, that larger sphere by some sighed after. When the Professorship of Greek in Marischal College was vacant through the death of Dr Stuart, Dr Adams, though pressed to do so, declined to be a candidate. He died at Banchory of bronchitis, at sixty-five years of age, in 1861, and a fine monument of polished red granite was placed in the garden of his

residence at Belfield by the people of Banchory, in memory of their great scholar, who, by the practice of his profession, had won "honour and friendship not to be forgotten." An inscription in Latin by Dr Adams's old friend and fellow-student of Greek, now Sir William Geddes, Principal of Aberdeen College, is thus rendered: "In memory of Francis Adams, M.D., LL.D., of all physicians whom Scotland has produced most familiar with the treasures of literature and with the resources of science. Long in this retired vale, far from Court or University, a true votary to Apollo, he devoted himself faithfully to medicine and the muses." The inscription closes with the graceful dedication, "*Carissimi capiti amici posuere.*" The granite obelisk stands amid roses which bloom round it when summer comes, by the home of Dr Adams's son-in-law, Dr M'Hardy, who succeeded him as physician in Banchory, a worthy remembrance of the laborious professional man who amid his toils found a pleasant and profitable intellectual study a source of pleasure which gave constant summer to the heart.

Of the many country surgeons of Aberdeenshire who were, like Dr Adams, men of practical ability, strong, hard-working, self-sacrificing, but who lived only for the many toils and few pleasures of an arduous medical practice, was Dr Cran of Tarland. A member of the Medical Society, he did not neglect to come to its meetings when he could, though at home in his remote region he had a life hard and difficult as life could be even in Granite-land—land of stern nature and stern sons.

Dr Alexander Cran was born on the 16th of November 1803 in Rhynie, at the farm of Templand, where his father was tenant. He was educated at the parish school and the Aberdeen Grammar School, and obtained by public competition one of the first bursaries at Marischal College, where he became M.A. in 1824. He was a good English and Latin scholar, and Latin he continued to read, and take pleasure in, even in his old age. He studied a year at the Divinity Hall, but, giving up the idea of being a minister, turned

to medicine alone, though he continued to take a deep interest in theology all his life, and had a more than ordinary knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, which he read devoutly. Dr Cran was apprenticed for some time to Dr Cruikshanks of Forgue, and went a voyage as surgeon in his youth with a whaler to Greenland. After some stay in Aberdeen, during which he attended the Medical Society, Dr Cran went to London, where he graduated as surgeon in 1826. In the autumn following he began medical practice in Tarland over a district of twenty miles. The difficulties of a country surgeon's life in this primitive part of the country were remarkable. Dr Cran's visiting was all done on foot or on horseback, and he never kept a gig. He often forded the Don and the Dee at the risk of his life, and had many narrow escapes in blinding drift and deep snow. He was the medical man mentioned by Sir Thomas Dick Lauder in his book about the great Morayshire floods of 1829 as crossing the river Noughty on horseback on the morning after the spate with a rope tied round his waist, held by a companion.

In 1836 Dr Cran married Margaret Reid, daughter of James Reid, farmer, Templeton, Kildrummy, by whom he had six sons and four daughters. Dr Cran and his wife were strong both physically and mentally, vigorous and capable, and with, by God's grace, long happy lives before them, but such as no one would care to enter on now : people would certainly think themselves doomed to destruction if forced into such circumstances as they endured. To Wester Clova farm by the ruins of Kildrummy with its seven towers, built by Edward of England in the stony heart of Scotland above the old Picts' houses, Dr and Mrs Cran retired in old age. In person the doctor was a stalwart handsome man, whose age was as noble as his youth. To one of his daughters the author is indebted for many interesting particulars in the history of this typical country surgeon, whose life presented as many risks as that of the most adventurous missionary among savages. Dr Cran had

to go long distances to his patients, who lived far apart from each other; in many parts of his district there were no roads and no bridges. He was often away for days and nights together in mid-winter, his wife and family meanwhile being in great anxiety about him. Mrs Cran, besides bringing up her children to be strong enduring men and women, helped her husband at home as only a good and robust wife could. Every economy was used to save for the young ones, and the idea of a conveyance even of the humblest kind was foregone as a needless extravagance where there was so large a family to bring up. Dr Cran was distant from other practitioners, and had to perform the most delicate operations alone under the most trying circumstances.

In pursuit of his practice he had many adventures. In his earlier days Aberdeenshire was infested by highway robbers, and the doctor was often waylaid. In a lonely part of the road near Tarland on a dark night a man rushed out of a wood and seized his horse's bridle, crying, "Your money or your life!" Dr Cran had the presence of mind to give him such a blow on his fingers with his whip that he loosened his grasp. One evening, passing a gipsy encampment where a great fire was burning, a "stoutrief" or stalwart thief played the part of brigand; but on his seizing the doctor's valuable horse it reared itself free from his grasp and galloped off. This horse, well known throughout the country, became an object of envy, and several attempts were made to steal it. One morning his stable was empty; the doctor's steed was gone, saddle and bridle and all. Some days after the horse was found grazing in a field near Kincardine O'Neil. The hill where the gipsies always encamped had an evil reputation for being haunted, and causing folk to lose their way on it. On a night of choking "blindrift," going home on foot, Dr Cran called in at a shepherd's hut on the hill to ask the way, and wandering about for several hours, attracted by a glimmering light, found himself back at the same place again. The shepherd, guiding him to the top of

the hill after vainly persuading him to remain all night, judiciously advised him to keep always going down hill, and he would soon find his way home. Dr Cran's life was one of incessant toil. For whole nights in succession he was out of bed, and away long distances above Ballater. He had just got into bed after two nights spent thus when he was called away at midnight to the far end of the Forest of Glentannar, among the Grampians, to see a man whose leg had been broken by a falling tree. The patient lay in a small hut in a wild inaccessible spot at the foot of an overhanging cliff, which looked as if it might fall at any moment and crush both patient and doctor. Returning home after setting the broken limb, quite worn out, he lay exhausted on the floor of his parlour and fell fast asleep. On one very stormy night, with deep snow on the ground, he was called to a house a few miles distant. He had to walk, as his horse could not have gone through the snow, and he had great difficulty in coming home again, for at every step the snow was up to his knees, and the wreaths and drifts at the roadside were high enough to bury him. When home was reached at last, he sank down on a chair speechless ; his clothes were stiff with snow and wet with perspiration—a few yards more and he would have fallen outside his own door, never to rise again. Mrs Cran, who had spent an anxious night, and was seriously alarmed, had waited up for him, and restored him to comfort and warmth with the tenderest solicitude. Many a time was her anxiety great, and her fear, not without reason, that she might never see him again. Another night he lost his way, and sank with his horse in a bog. Freeing himself with the greatest difficulty, he sent some one back to take out his horse.

Sometimes amusing incidents occurred, as when one night a loud knocking was heard at Dr Cran's back-door. The servant opened a window and called, "Who's there?"

A voice answered, "It's me ! I'm seeking the doctor to Baubie ; but dinna hurry the gentleman—he's a lang road afore him."

The doctor hurried on his clothes and accompanied the owner of the voice, asking, "Is there anybody with your wife?"

"Oh, na," was the answer, "not when I left; but the wives is coming in a' directions—ower mony o' them. I'm no' seeking them; they'll harry [spoil] the house and eat a' my jam."

The doctor having gone six miles, and having brought into the world by next morning an addition to Baubie's family, the day broke amid the wildest storm.

"Noo, doctor, ye're baith tired and sleepy," said Baubie; "just come and tak' a lie doon."

"No, thank you," answered the doctor; "I'll go to my own bed at Ferrar," a farm by the Dee a mile off, where there was a spare bed kept for the doctor's use whenever he might be in the neighbourhood known as "the doctor's bed."

Dr Cran survived forty-four years of practice in Tarland, summer and winter, through storm, snow, and sunshine, and did not retire till he was nearly seventy years of age, when, as already said, he went to the farm of Wester Clova, Kildrummy, where he and his wife lived together into hale hearty old age. He still kept up his interest in the progress of medicine, and every new medical discovery was as interesting to him as it was in the days of his vigorous youth. He was a man of high moral tone and temperate life, a kindly and good Samaritan, on whose head was showered many a blessing from the sick poor as well as the sick rich. He had pride and pleasure in his tenor of eldership, fifty-five years long, in the Established Church of Scotland, and his blameless life was a great example.

Dr George Cran, Banchory-Ternan, is a son of Dr Cran, as was also the late Dr Robert Cran of Ballater. The life of this patriarch among Aberdeenshire country surgeons serves to show that whatever be the labours of the country surgeon now, they are little in comparison with the difficulties of those who lived and toiled fifty years ago.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A GREAT PHYSICIAN : DR KILGOUR.

Dr Kilgour's early days in the Medical Society—His life and work—Cholera scares  
—Typhoid outbreaks—Sanitary matters in Aberdeen.

ABERDEEN was prospering, its population increasing, its public buildings growing, and the rural town of old fast becoming unrecognisable, though building and sanitation by no means would have satisfied present ideas. It was already becoming easier for a man of ability to make a reputation at home in a provincial city than in former days. Among those of the medical profession who now reached distinction in Aberdeen, some belonged to the Town families, and a few without influence took reputation by storm. Of these last, one, a prominent member of the Medical Society, fortunately reached the height of a more than local fame by that consummate common-sense, described as the *mens medica*, of a great physician. Dr Alexander Kilgour, who was born in the early years of the century, was a man of the people, whose rise and success in life was due to his own almost unaided efforts. His life as a youth may be said to have been spent in the Medical Society, from which he derived considerable solid instruction, besides not a little literary culture, and the art of ready public speech. His name is constantly mentioned for some time in the Society's records as its secretary, and he wrote more medical papers than any other member of his time,

being one of the most vigorous students of medicine of his day. In 1835 an extraordinary meeting of the Medical Society was held regarding a communication from the College of Surgeons, London, on the subject of "the frequent impositions practised on it by students from Aberdeen,"—a grave charge which accused two cities, with two universities of their own, of a design to grant degrees on false pretences! The Medical Society considered itself insulted, and was upheld by Dr Kilgour and the majority of the members. Dr Kilgour took the leading part in every public business which came before the Medical Society, and generally was its originator. Whenever he had a particularly interesting "specimen," he presented it to the museum, and was indefatigable in writing addresses on the subjects of "Calloid cancers," "Cases of abscess in the back," "Typhus," "Apoplexy," and "Inflammation of the larynx." He read on one occasion a paper on "The Physiology of Hunger," and by brilliant argument endeavoured to overturn the gastric-juice theory. Always busily working at some new project, Dr Kilgour resolved to have a committee formed of the medical officers of the Infirmary and Dispensary in favour of a favourite scheme of his which much required to be put into practice, a registration of deaths for the city of Aberdeen.

As a young man Dr Kilgour, whose interests were liberal, frequented the society of young literary men in Aberdeen, some of whom afterwards became noted. In the hospitable house of Mr Lewis Smith, printer and publisher in Broad Street, who had a great admiration of his young friends' talents, there were pleasant early suppers, at which Alexander Kilgour and his companions, and, among others, Joseph Robertson and John Hill Burton, heartily enjoyed themselves, together forming a group diverse in class but one in sentiment. At these unconventional merry-makings, where a glass of toddy accompanied fragrant Findon haddocks and gigantic crab-claws, in Aberdonian parlance "partans' taes," there was much interchange of talk and war of wit, which

made the charm of the evening, and a sort of social education in itself. These young men, born too late for the dangerous spirit of the French Revolution, admired Chartism, cherished Cobbett, deified O'Connell and Irish liberty, and were stanch Whigs. In after years some of them modified their opinions, and Dr Kilgour, who, when young and poor, began his political life by haranguing as a Radical from a mail-cart on the Aberdeen Links, ended his wealthy days a high and dry old Conservative. But his young enthusiasm was with the labouring classes.

Dr Kilgour began practice at the age of twenty-three, and had difficulties to contend with for many years, conquering in the end by indefatigable industry. His drug-shop in the Gallowgate, above which he lived, and which was the scene of his early labours, was the favourite resort of public-spirited people interested in town politics or the greater affairs of the nation. Dr Kilgour became early imbued with a social and political enthusiasm which served him well in popularity. Every public question, as it came on the scene, received his partisanship forcibly expressed, and his opinion always very happily caught the popular feeling of the day, so that he soon became a leader of society, as well as the possessor of a great growing medical practice. In manner he was plain, disdained common forms of tact by which others wooed favour, and gained rather than lost by his bluntness. His manner and practice pleased, and he represented very well the old spirit of the Gregorys and other great north-country physicians.

Nor was his pen idle. From time to time he would hit at this and that ugly peculiarity of social custom with good effect. Mr Lewis Smith, who collected the papers of the gifted young men who contributed to 'The Aberdeen Magazine' under his auspices, wrote of Dr Kilgour that "his prominent characteristic in writing, as otherwise, was shrewd and practical mother-wit." He mentions also with admiration his "reliable judgment and irresistible *vir*." Among his youthful contributions to the magazine was a masterly

article on "The Ballot," racy and readable. The writer, young and poor, rails at the rich as the young and poor best can. He represents the non-ballot theory with scorn, as losing for the wealthy plebeian invitations to the great political dinners of aristocratic men, for the grocer the squire's custom, for the squire's daughter a card to the Lord-Lieutenant's ball. From the tone of this paper Conservatism ran high in Aberdeen in 1831, but with wondrous sagacity Dr Kilgour always hit on the last new fad in reform, and made a grand reputation out of it. 'Lectures on the Ordinary Agents of Life' by him, published in Edinburgh by Adam Black, contained some interesting articles on popular fallacies, just at a time when sanitary matters began first to be considered at all. He made strictures therein on how medical men treat the great factor "atmosphere," amid disease, in a way which the reviewer thought severe. "It is singular," said Dr Kilgour, "how different have been the opinions of medical men with regard to the influence of the qualities of the atmosphere, especially during disease. One cares nothing at all about it; he trusts that the Lord will temper it, and the patient gets it as it comes. Another looks upon it with no feeling of kindness, and excludes it with the greatest possible care." Dr Kilgour was amusing on the subject of declamation, which, he said, was "necessary for the health of the lady of a house, who should be earnest in scolding the servants." The reading of a curtain lecture he considered "only an innocent occupation the careful wife prefers to gadding about during the day." He combated a very bad fashion of fifty years ago, that of having the public rooms in a house large and the bedrooms as small and "poky" as possible. "A third part of the twenty-four hours, at least," said Dr Kilgour, "we spend motionless, and exhaling the rankest and most fetid part of our cutaneous and pulmonary secretions in a small and confined bedroom, in order that we may shiver and starve in large dining or drawing rooms during the rest of the day that we remain in the house!" Having

been for some time a commissioner of police, the doctor was an authority on health. The following peroration, as to the girl who should be chosen for a healthful and happy wife, is graphic : “ Will you take this deceptive creature, with her pale cheeks and fetid breath and distorted body—the victim of her mother and fashion—or her who comes bounding down the hillside to your arms with her ringlets streaming in the wind, her face with the freshness and glow of health, her body in the luxuriance and freedom of unchecked and uncontrolled nature, and her kiss sweeter than

‘ Sabæan odours from the spicy shore  
Of Araby the blest ’ ? ”

In his bluff and easy style Dr Kilgour strove to waken up the townsfolk in time of epidemic to the risks they ran through ignorance of the laws of health. His sanitary measures, and his extraordinary energy and enthusiasm in all matters of public health, led him to be a prevailing influence against cholera, smallpox, and typhoid fever, the deadly scourges of his day. There were several cholera panics in Aberdeen. One of the last times that it was reported to be in London, people in the provinces heard with horror that the capital was certified as unhealthy by the Lord Mayor. The cases of cholera grew to twenty-eight. Public excitement throughout the country was raised to a furore when a young and beautiful girl, dressed to go to church one Sunday morning, was suddenly seized by the epidemic, and died the same night. Near Edinburgh a lady died in a country-house of cholera, and though all her bedroom furniture was burned immediately after, such fears were roused in Aberdeen that stringent measures were taken to prevent its coming north.

In 1831, Dr Torrie being president, there was a meeting to consider the probability of cholera visiting Aberdeen. A Board of Health was formed in London, consisting of Sir James M'Grigor, Sir William Pym, Sir Byam Martin, and Mr Warren, a surgeon of literary fame, the author of the celebrated novel ‘ Ten Thousand a-Year ’ and of ‘ The Diary of a Late Physician. ’ The

Government came to the aid of the Board, and framed rules to guide it, as Granville tells in his 'Memoirs,' which were not successful. The doctors were accused by the ignorant public of committing barbarisms worthy of the interior of Africa, of quarrelling about the nature of the disease, and perverting and concealing facts when not suiting their theories. "It being a season of general confusion," say the 'Memoirs,' "everybody ventilated their grievances at once, and the Board of Health was covered with letters which it could not answer." Harrowing details of cholera, partly true, partly rumour, meanwhile came north, and Aberdeen being fever-haunted periodically through crowding, narrow streets, and the herring season, there was great likelihood of the epidemic breaking out there. The Medical Society considered what steps should be taken in the event of it arriving, but refused the use of the Hall when sought as a cholera hospital by the central medical board. When the dreaded visitor at last made its appearance its ravages were not so appalling as was expected. There are people still living who remember the panic of these dreadful days, and how, after all the care taken to keep the cholera from coming north, a lady who opened a box of clothes that came from Edinburgh fell ill and died of it.

When the cholera came to Aberdeen in 1832, Mr Campbell, superintending surgeon, gave interesting particulars: 260 people were attacked, and there were 105 deaths; 50 cases occurred at the fishing-village of Torry, which contained fifty-six houses and 480 inhabitants, the houses being in two squares. Almost all the other cases were at the east end of Aberdeen. Draining and sewage were taken into consideration. The town was well paved, but Dr Kilgour and Dr Galen stated that, save in a few of the new and principal streets, there were no sewers, and only twenty-eight in the whole town. Aberdeen was closely built, and contained sixty narrow lanes, and one hundred and sixty-eight courts or closes with narrow entrances leading into courtyards



where stood in great dilapidation what had been handsome houses, now inhabited by the most wretched people. The Aberdeen harbour was in a shocking state: drains terminated in it, and the basin was covered with a fetid mud, above which bubbles of foul gas gave forth an intolerable stench. As for the Denburn, the steep banks of which are now an ornament to the town, it was described as "a mill-burn, passing through what will one day be the centre of Aberdeen." Open above, and built in with stones, it was laid out in cascades. The picture of the freshly verdant Denburn bleach-green, of barefooted girls scattering snowy linen on the grass, of waterfalls and Chinese-looking bridges, is hopelessly blurred by a description of forty-five drains or common sewers emptying into the burn, against which public nuisance the cholera board remonstrated. Dr "Sandy" Fraser spoke of the windows of the labouring poor being often broken, which happily ensured ventilation and the contravention of the Scottish axiom, "the clartier the cosier." Dr Kilgour, Dr Keith, Mr Wood, Dr Dyce, Dr Galen, and Dr Templeton gave corroborative evidence. The Medical Society issued about this time a series of orders for the forcible cleansing of poor people, and the performance of domestic duties by working men's wives, who were to keep their houses clean. Among minor scourges, "the influenza" fifty years ago visited the north of Scotland heavily. Dr Kilgour commenced as secretary to make a collection among his fellow-members of the Medical Society for the sick poor of Aberdeen, and increased it by the balance of a "Medical Dinner Fund." It was advised to put the physicians in connection with the Poor Law Commissioners; but this idea not being looked upon with favour, was given up. A set of rules for the washing of furniture and clothes for the benefit of working men's wives was written out. The secretary's minutes do not tell whether the working men's wives obeyed the mandate, or if the town's state of health was at all improved by the new regulations. The pulling down of wretched streets and stinking closes was no

suggested, probably because it was impossible to get rid of them at the time.

In 1840 Dr Kilgour and Dr Galen of Aberdeen, secretaries to the Committee of the Magistrates and Town Council for inquiring into the sanitary condition of the poor of Aberdeen, wrote conjointly an interesting report showing the state of one of the principal towns in Scotland fifty years ago. Three epidemics of fever had visited Aberdeen during the previous twenty-three years. The first lasted three years, from 1817 to 1819. *The Fever*, which was not specified, and had not a name though a considerable habitation, was typhoid, and there was no record kept of the number of people attacked. There were so many that the Aberdeen Infirmary, which had then only two fever wards, admitting eleven to each, was insufficient for their accommodation, and two houses were opened as fever hospitals. There was an epidemic in 1831-32. Two fever wards were added to the Infirmary, and there were fifty-two fever beds. In the town's Dispensary, too, during this year, one thousand and ninety-nine sick of fever were admitted, of whom forty-two died. The third epidemic lasted from 1837 to 1840, when the report was written. An attempt was made to find what trades suffered most from the fever ravages. The Dispensary registers gave a perfect account of these, but the Infirmary registers kept no note of the occupations of patients. A list was established during the last outbreak showing that day-labourers, factory-workers, domestic servants, children, and degraded women gave the highest numbers. Smallpox also, from time to time, was a scourge in Aberdeen, where the Medical Society, along with Dr Kilgour and the other physicians, discussed earnestly on the matter. Affairs other than medical had a strong interest for Dr Kilgour, and the Reform Bill and the union of King's and Marischal Colleges were objects dear to his heart, which also kept his name in everybody's mouth.

Dr Kilgour was senior physician to the Aberdeen Infirmary for

many years, and held no medical professorship. Old students tell of his admiration of Laennec's stethoscope, which, like the old-fashioned great cylinder formerly in use, was his constant companion, and was wielded in class like a marshal's baton. He was the founder of the Infirmary pathological museum, which owed the finest of its early specimens to him; and he often spent Sunday afternoon very profitably there studying the wonders of science, revealing infinite wisdom.<sup>1</sup>

In appearance Dr Kilgour was stout and heavily built, a good type of the able northern Scot. He was blunt and kindly in his manner, full of push and vigour, enthusiastic in all he undertook, of versatile abilities and socially inclined, and had so large a circle of friends and admirers, and such wide interests, that he could scarcely be considered a local celebrity. An old pupil of his, Dr Matthews Duncan, has lovingly described him as "one of the greatest of physicians and ablest of men." Dr Kilgour's success in life as a town's physician led to the best consulting practice in the north of Scotland, which depended greatly on his genial disposition and his thorough interest in his patient's well-doing, in all of which he was more the homely man than the fine gentleman. It was said by a wag that no one felt he could die without first consulting Dr Kilgour. With his medical brethren he was very popular, being always most deferential to their opinion in consultation. He is remembered in Marischal College chiefly as the giver of a bursary in memory of Dr Duncan Liddell. The impending union of the colleges was vigorously pushed forward by him, his personal interest being in King's College, where he was appointed medical teacher.

Dr Kilgour was advised to go to Edinburgh when there was a break there in the line of great doctors through the death of Dr John Scott; but in spite of the wish of Sir James Simpson,

<sup>1</sup> A marble medallion of Dr Kilgour, "clinical lecturer," by Mr J. Hutchison, R.S.A., has just been presented to the Aberdeen Infirmary by his widow and son.

Dr John Brown, and other friends, he refused to go. Dr John Brown was Dr Kilgour's lifelong hearty admirer, calling him "the Modern Sydenham," and bestowing on him a small pen-and-ink sketch of himself by Dr Brown's own hand. Under the characteristic head was written "Sydenham," and this little sketch "the Modern Sydenham" had hung up in his study at Loirston on his estate near Aberdeen, by the picturesque grass-grown crags, of stern and romantic beauty, overhanging the blue North Sea. He much enjoyed his retreat there by the beautiful little Bay of Cove, the picturesque rocky shore, and the ever-changing, beautiful, melancholy sea. He was of strong constitution, and would bathe in the coldest weather in winter as well as summer, as was the custom in his day. Sir Joseph Lister attended Dr Kilgour's deathbed at Loirston, when there passed away in 1874, at upwards of seventy years, in the estimation of those of his own profession in London, "a great man." The same gift which ensures a medical man with wide surroundings the first honours of Britain, can confer on him as much at home, with a longer and more personal memory in the hearts of others than might have been his if he had not been condemned to provincial life and had been pitted instead against others equally adapted for the highest success in a great city.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## A GROUP OF ABERDEEN DOCTORS.

Dr Robert Dyce—Dr Benjamin Williamson—Dr Joseph Williamson—Dr Steele  
—Dr William Henderson of Caskieben—Dr John Cadenhead—The Eye In-  
stitution.

IN grouping the later physicians of Aberdeen, some difficulty in selection is felt. Household names in our midst cannot be passed over in silence, but lapse of time is required before a leading man becomes picturesquely set in the frame of past history. A glance back only may be given to these well-known local men. Among them was Dr Robert Dyce, an important member of the Medical Society. The son of old Dr William Dyce, who with all his excellences was so reticent and unbending, he was of pleasant and easy gentlemanly manner, and a general favourite. He had one of the principal medical practices in Aberdeen, lived for long in Union Terrace, and was professor of midwifery. It is noticeable of father and son that, though at the head of their profession, they did not contribute to contemporary medical literature.

Dr Benjamin Williamson, a very skilful operator, was surgeon to the Royal Infirmary, and had a great medical practice in Aberdeen. Dr Williamson lived in Marischal Street until, the town stretching westwards, he took a house in Union Street. His wife, a sister of Major Craigie, had a large family, was an active lady, and a thorough housekeeper. The first to rise in the morning of her

large household, the last to go to bed at night, she was worthy to be ranked with the wise woman in the Proverbs of Solomon, and was a model doctor's wife.

Of Dr Joseph Williamson, an unselfish and devoted physician of the same name as Dr Benjamin Williamson, a grateful recollection should remain in the city in which he laboured. An excellent portrait of Dr Joseph Williamson by Giles is in the possession of his sister. He was for many years secretary to the Medical Society, and his careful and valuable minutes are to be found in a large tome in the Medical Hall, and speak for themselves that he had its interests at heart. He unfortunately died of heart-disease in middle life, but bore his complaint with great resignation. It is told of him that on the last day he was out he visited a poor woman with a baby, who offered him a sovereign as all she could give for his professional attendance on her. He refused the fee, which with a spirit of independent pride was re-offered, and the doctor bent over the child's cradle and put the money under its pillow. What were the feelings of the mother when next morning, on hearing that the good doctor was dead, she found the gold piece where he had laid it! Welcome the gossip of a provincial town which tells such stories as this. Dr Joseph Williamson was not appointed a physician in the Aberdeen Infirmary, though a man of medical skill and worthy connection; but of his exclusion from what he might have claimed as a right he did not complain, any more than he did of the disease under which he so distressingly laboured, and of the symptoms of which he spoke as if it belonged to some one else.

Aberdeen was happy in another physician of whom a beautiful story was told. Dr Steele, who became ordinary member in 1840, was a man whom his patients loved for his skill and cautious care. His early professional years were a struggle with limited means, but he developed a great midwifery practice, and in his latter days built a handsome house in Bon-Accord Square, now the home of the late



Professor Brazier's family. A carriage Dr Steele did not have till late in life : worn out before his time, he died before sixty of a complication of diseases, shortly after entering his new house. He is said to have been gruff but kindly, very impatient of trifles, and devoted to his patients when seriously ill. Dr Steele died unmarried, like Dr Joseph Williamson, and left his library to the Aberdeen Medical Society. It is told that, when preparing his worldly affairs on his deathbed, he burned his medical account-book, desiring, as he said, that none should be troubled when he was gone. Few acts are of more tender and beautiful kindness than this ; and this little story itself ought to be enough to rescue Dr Steele's name from oblivion in the city where he was loved and valued by many.

Dr William Henderson of Caskieben had a considerable medical practice, and a sincere affection for the Aberdeen Medical School, and shared, along with Andrew Moir, the merit of successfully prolonging the struggle of extra-mural or private lectureships until the Universities of King's and Marischal Colleges were united. He was teacher or Professor of *Materia Medica* in Marischal College, and to the observant eyes of clever young north-country students, who always held oddities as well as excellences before their eyes, was a professor whose knowledge and culture, gained by foreign travel, made him, together with his eccentric and dried-up appearance, what a celebrated pupil called "an old story-telling good old man." Studying in bypaths of art and literature not being conducive to the success of a provincial practitioner, the same sort of character was bestowed by his patients on the old doctor who lived in the Schoolhill. He would have been a good family doctor if he had not been what was termed "a clever dreamer," whose heart was in past days ; but although peculiar in his views of philanthropy, he was exceedingly kindly, and made the best of country gentlemen when he succeeded to the estate of Caskieben on the death of his brother. He had already lost the most of his practice by his habit of reading books and papers in the sick-room. A man of intellectual tastes, he

had not the conversational and literary genius of Dr John Brown of Edinburgh, of whom a lady whom he had attended for years said naïvely, "It is not his advice that does me so much good as his conversation and the sight of him."

Dr John Cadenhead, physician and oculist, who became junior member of the Medical Society in 1814, and honorary member in 1821, was chiefly known in his connection with the eye dispensary, and was the son of William Cadenhead of the Windmill Brae. He was married to Miss Jessie Duguid, of the house of Duguid of Newlands, by Aberdeen, a small property, now no more, a relic of the past, but very recently well recollected as a yellow house, with old-fashioned appearance and surrounding trees, down by Broomhill, in which lived to a long age two characteristic maiden ladies. Dr Cadenhead died without family, and his widow left at his desire to the Aberdeen Medical Society £1000, vested in trust of the Lord Provost of Aberdeen. The interest of the bequest is divided annually between two widows of medical men in Aberdeen belonging to the Medical Society left with a child under eighteen years of age, and whose income does not exceed a hundred pounds a-year. A portrait of Dr Cadenhead is published among old "Aberdeen Worthies." He was much interested in natural history, and when Thomas Edwards brought his collection to Aberdeen in 1846, he and Professor Macgillivray of Marischal College were almost the only people who took the slightest notice of the Banff naturalist. Mr Smiles, in his *Life of Edwards*, says that "Dr Macgillivray informed him nobody in Aberdeen took an interest in his subject, because he had come a few hundred years too soon." Dr Cadenhead, in not more cheering language, scolded him for not having influence in the Town Council or among some respectable body, without which no one could get on in Aberdeen. Having questioned Edwards with great pertinacity, the warm-hearted doctor, each time he called to see the exhibition, which he looked upon as an amazing one for a working man to gather together alone, presented the poor

naturalist very kindly with a half-crown or five-shillings piece instead of the penny he charged. Dr Cadenhead evidently appreciated the power of local influence, so amusingly hit off by Sir Robert Christison, M.D., of Edinburgh, in his *Life*, where he tells of himself place-hunting in early days, and being asked by an elector, "Are ye a jined member o' ony body?"

The 'Aberdeen Lancet,' an audacious little magazine, the organ of the medical student in 1831, commenced its short life with a notice of a newly-formed eye institution under the care of Dr Cadenhead. The 'Lancet' called itself in its preface the production of "a society of young gentlemen, residing in Aberdeen," adding that, "by coolness, self-possession, and steadiness, they hoped, metaphorically, to perform the operation of bleeding, when necessary, without pricking a nerve or producing an aneurism." The preface continued to say: "As Aberdeen is now rising as a medical school, possessing an hospital, a number of dispensaries, and an *eye institution*, there can be no lack of cases where the use of the 'Lancet' may be indispensable. And as some of the university lecturers are extremely lethargic, and others have been observed of late to assume a very plethoric appearance, there can be no doubt that much benefit may be derived from occasional bleedings of the Colleges." This witty and personal 'Lancet' did not long survive to arouse the slumbering professoriate.

The Dispensaries in the year 1822 were supported by voluntary subscriptions. Critics sententiously remarked that they differed from most other institutions in this circumstance, that the more labour the physicians bestowed on them, the less remuneration they received! Dr William Henderson gave strong reasons in a pamphlet for the union of these benevolences. Dr William Dyce was then physician of the dispensary in Marischal Street. Dr "Sandy" Fraser represented it in the Schoolhill; Dr Campbell in the Nether Kirkgate; Drs Moir and Leslie in the Marine Dispensary, James Street; and Dr Cadenhead in Gilcomston.

These slight notices of physicians who find their representatives, no doubt, in every city, lead to the thought of the good old family doctor, the friend of home life, the kindly, wise counsellor from the cradle to the grave. The family physician in town or country, let him be fashionable or humble, specially or generally gifted, has not yet become a personage of the past. Dr John Brown,—“Rab,” as his friends in kindly loving way called him,—himself a family physician, has spoken with fervour in his writings of “the family doctor, the familiar, kindly, welcome face which has presided through generations at births and deaths,” whose character stamps the impress of his time on ages to come.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## MEDICINE IN KING'S COLLEGE.

The Chair of Chemistry—The last of the Gregorys—The new Professors—Later distinguished medical graduates—The Vennel.

TIME drew near for the union of the Colleges, but it was necessary in the meantime to make some wholesome change in the Old Town, where medicine, save extra-mural, was mute. Dr Bannerman, the "mediciner," was quietly engaged in doing nothing, and, dignified and obese in his elder years, had a select medical practice, but was a cipher to his students. An effort was made to replace medicine on the old footing it had in King's College in the days of the great Gregorys. The Lectureship of Chemistry, which belonged to the Humanity Class, and the Chair of Medicine, were finally merged. Professor Bain, in some interesting papers on "The History of Chemical Teaching in Aberdeen," has given valuable particulars on the subject, from which it seems that remembrance of gifted Gregorys and the versatile Professor Forbes suggested medical chairs, which sometimes found their way into Marischal College instead of King's. The death of Dr Bannerman in 1839 was the signal for a change in the Old Town medical professorship, where chemistry, thanks to Dr Forbes, was well taught. His teaching was not an innovation, for Principal Jack since 1816 had taught chemistry along with natural philosophy, while Professor Ogilvie taught natural history. Half of the fees—£1, 11s. 6d.—

was ordered by the Senatus to be paid to Dr Forbes by the bursars. The chemistry class had in its best days from sixty to eighty students, and was intended for art students, was obligatory in medicine, and was recognised by the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh, attendance on it being considered equal to a six months' course. Dr Forbes taught chemistry till 1841, when a vote of thanks accorded him by the Senatus told him that his work was over. The new Professor of Medicine in King's College was Dr William Gregory, the last of the Gregorys, and son of the illustrious Dr James Gregory of Edinburgh, welcomed back to King's College in honour of his ancestors. Dr Gregory's salary was very small, and his manse opposite King's College gate was now a dilapidated-looking old house, standing amid a grove of dark trees. To increase Dr Gregory's income, Dr Forbes was asked to give up his chemistry class, and accept a sum of money instead. The class was given up without a word of complaint, but no recompense was ever received.

When chemistry passed into Dr Gregory's hands, the Senatus, with a strong medical curriculum in view, converted the old chair of medicine in King's College into a chemistry chair, and the duties of the mediciner were said to be "restricted to the teaching of chemistry." This was scarcely explanatory: the mediciner having latterly taught nothing, said some, could scarcely have his teaching restricted. The chemistry class was held in King's College by Professor William Gregory till, in 1844, he was made Professor of Chemistry and Chemical Pharmacy in Edinburgh University. Among other novelties in chemistry, he discovered a new way of preparing muriate of morphia. Dr Gregory, who was a talented man, and nearly related to Dr Alison of Edinburgh, and his brother, Sir Archibald Alison, the historian, had the characteristics of the Gregory family. Sir Robert Christison spoke of him with unreverential affection as being an unwieldy, heavy-looking man, with "the shambling Gregorian legs" of his family. He was much of an invalid, and latterly very lame, but a master of chemical experiment. Dr



Gregory lectured admirably in a quiet, easy way ; and his text-book of Chemistry, written while he was at college, was very popular with the students. A man of culture also, he was a founder of the Aberdeen Philosophical Society, and its first secretary. A great admirer of Baron Liebig, Dr Gregory translated his 'Animal Chemistry,' and performed the Baron's experiments in his class. Young medical and arts students he encouraged and assisted in the kindest way, even when their principles—those of Freethinkers, in these days called sceptics—were opposed to his own. The personal recollections of one of these young men, who became remarkable in after days, is almost the only remembrance of the good old professor who dabbled in many arts. Mystic science had its charms for the professor. Mesmerism and spiritualism he delighted in ; and his mediciner's manse was remarkable for the charming musical parties which he and his lady gave sometimes—a rare thing in these days. Sounds like the fine Masses of Mozart heard to come from the manse on Sunday evenings, were naturally mistaken by the rigid Presbyterian for dance music. Such was one of the last friends of the Medical Society of Aberdeen in its old state. The Old Town medical wags sometimes made practical jokes over Dr Gregory's celebrated discovery of morphia, and his experiments in class on Reichenbach's magnetic flames ; but the old Professor continued making himself happy in his own way, till in 1844 he was called to Edinburgh, and Professor Fyfe, son of Dr Fyfe, Professor of Chemistry there, reigned in his stead. From Dr Fyfe's arrival dates what was called "the revival of medicine" in King's College. With Dr Fyfe came Dr Redfern, now professor in Belfast, to teach anatomy, who, along with the late Dr Robert Kerr, physician in Aberdeen, and nephew of Dr George Kerr, one of the founders of the Medical Society, made the movement of medical progress which gave King's College its last great prestige.

The mind turns back while still King's College was "the University of Aberdeen," looking down upon the Marischalian Academy

in the New Town, to days when the students practised dancing with each other of evenings in the quadrangle, and thought as much then of an orange as of a glass of modern champagne. Such times were growing practically over now. No longer students boarded in the college, and titled mothers and favourite tutors were regaled with wine and comfits at the University's expense, and graduates strutted in lace frills and ruffles, swords and red capes, and powdered wigs; while others were "poor scholars" who revenged themselves by snowballing the rich ones. The grand Jacobite days of the Old Town, too, had paled, but still the college was of the old world, and the old-world figure of Principal Jack illuminates its sunset view.

Principal Jack of King's College, appointed in 1815, came to the meetings of the Medical Society occasionally. As a little old gentleman, quite blind, but with beautiful white hair, wearing a black velvet skull-cap, and of a most reverend look, he used to be seen in the college chapel leaning on his daughter's arm. His house was close to the college belfry, where the Professor of Divinity's manse is now; and some young students, who in their older days became distinguished, used to tell how it amused them at an idle moment to mount the belfry and drop pennies at intervals from its crown to his feet, and enjoy the Principal's amazement, as he wandered in his garden, as to where the clinking coins came from. The Principal was chiefly remembered in his later years as blind and venerable, in his character of priest and patriarch a fit successor of pious monks and canons of ancient days. Once a band of marauding gipsies infested the Old Town, and a jest-loving brother professor, Dr Hercules Scott, remarked on the good sense of the thieves, who chose the rich man's platter and the poor man's dinner,—Principal Jack being relieved of a silver dish, while the gipsies ran off with a goose from his farmyard.

University life in Old Aberdeen at this difficult time was very peaceful and happy: adversity appeared to draw together those to

whom Fortune was unkind. Dr Redfern, young and a stranger, and a very popular lecturer, received the greatest kindness not only from his colleagues, but from his rivals of Marischal College, to whom the success of a King's College man was naturally galling. Each vied with the other in courtesy, hospitality, and offices of kindness; and the hatred between the Colleges was hidden with every care. The parental affection of Principal Jack and Professor Macpherson, and indeed of the whole professoriate in Old Aberdeen, was shown by personally visiting students in their lodgings, and inviting them in an easy friendly way to their houses. The Old Town was just like one large family, where each one tried to make the other happy; but there were still some strange tales told of King's College. It was affirmed that some of the Highland students when they came to the University were dreadful barbarians, and that one of the professors addressed his class in bad Latin. Of this lecturer amusing stories were told afterwards by distinguished physicians, who enjoyed to tell tales of their student days. They loved to relate how lads who jumped over the benches, or "factions," between class hours, were called to order with "Tu puer wi' the reid heid, qui loupavit ower the faction, solvé doon a saxpence." A restless student was apostrophised with "Visne sedem tenere, ye lang-leggit loon!" Such tales find their way into Maclean's amusing novel, and the greater 'Alec Forbes' of George Macdonald. Times went on merrily enough in Old Aberdeen as far as professors' young families of budding doctors, and divines were concerned, and they and their young sisters were enlivened by evening gaieties at the professors' houses, and by reading clubs. It was said that four years of King's College made a well-bred gentleman out of the rudest of the students by means of a little cultured society, and even professors' nicknames were not unkindly. *Apropos* of these, two small professors' sons coming home one day, satchel in hand, were heard to say to each other in innocent wonder, "Why do they call your father Prosody?" The reply, in true north-country

style, evolved itself into another question, "Why do they call yours Habbie?"

In spite of all the efforts of learning and enthusiasm, medical and otherwise, it was felt that King's College was imperfect. Still the old story was told of degrees being purchasable for a small sum, like modern German Ph.D.'s. Ludicrous descriptions were given by students of the ceremony of the presentation of these degrees. Insulting comments were made; and one gentleman, who inquired whether he could buy a degree for his horse, was represented in a comic sketch as solemnly told by the Senatus that they had no precedent for granting a degree to a horse in King's College, but that the thing might be done, as it had been often given to "an ass." This, of course, was a Marischal College story. In 1840 King's College issued rules to be observed in granting medical degrees. Candidates must be twenty-one years of age! and were ordered to pay £23, 5s. 6d., which was returned if the degree could not be conferred. It cannot be denied that King's College, nevertheless, sent out even in its last days many excellent physicians, who took high places. Among Dr Redfern's students were Sir Arthur Mitchell, now Commissioner of Lunacy for Scotland, and the late Dr Forbes Watson, who worked in the anatomical rooms with such devotion that he was found on one occasion fast asleep over the body he was dissecting. Dr Forbes Watson became a distinguished professor of medicine in India, and had charge of the India Company's museum in London. Dr Colvin Smith, son of the Rev. Mr Smith of Old Machar, and Dr Irvine of Old Aberdeen, were students of King's College. To their names may be added those of Dr Archibald Irvine of Glasgow, son of the Rev. Mr Irvine of Peterhead, who worked with Dr Redfern night and day over experiments on the nervous system. The success of King's College in sending out good students was largely due to the efforts of Dr Kilgour and Dr Andrew Moir, who put themselves heart and soul into their work. All the enthusiasm of Dr Kilgour, however, was not destined to

save the individuality of the old place, and Dr Moir was only a few years before his death appointed anatomist, being succeeded by Dr Redfern.

The place known as "The Vennel," by Loch Street, contained the practical medical school of King's College. If Marischal College had a curriculum which enabled her medical students successfully to pass through examinations and launch successfully into the practical world of the day, King's College was the site of medical science. In the school in the Vennel, whither gravitated the scientific spirits of the Medical Society, besides Andrew Moir, his successor Dr Redfern, Dr David Kerr, and beyond all Dr Kilgour, anatomy, pathology, and medicine were preserved until the Universities of Aberdeen became one. Marischal College was represented in the Vennel by Dr Allen Thomson and Dr Lizars; but while it cannot be said that the Vennel school came entirely from King's College, its anatomical work certainly did. The Vennel ran from the old Loch and Drum's Lane to the Gallowgate, and many a medical Aberdonian in far-off lands has recollected this ugly nook amid the fast growing centre of a city with more affection than "spicy isles" or "India's coral strand."

The greater part of the students of King's College became country ministers, schoolmasters, tutors, and doctors, and the medical minister was going out of fashion. The medical student, meanwhile, travelled far and wide, remembering with affection the old Medical Society and the Medical Hall. Year after year King's College struggled on, taught by poorly paid but able and devoted lecturers, and competing bravely with endowed lectureships in Marischal College, till the professors of the Old Town began to feel their ancient University totter above them. And now where the torch of learning had been lit in rude and barbarous days to be a light in the north of Scotland and had struggled through ages, there was to be only a relic of the past.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## THE UNION OF KING'S AND MARISCHAL COLLEGES.

The Medical Society and the Union—Later Marischal College professors and lecturers—Dr Wilson the oriental traveller, Dr Henderson of Caskieben, and Mr Thomson of Banchory, patrons of Marischal College—Fortunate medical professors.

THE union of the Colleges, so long deferred, was slowly but surely coming, though not in a way that was to be satisfactory to those who had been labouring most disinterestedly in the cause.

We must turn now from the town doctor, happy amid his *clientèle* of patients—loved and revered, let us hope, by them—from the man of action whose chief ambition was to be physician or surgeon in the Infirmary, from the country doctor in whose mouth was life and death, to the specialist, lecturer, or professor to whom the long-wished-for fusion of the Colleges meant victory or defeat, an income or nothing. The whole town and county, especially the medical men, had strong views on the subject, and were deeply interested in the union of the Colleges. The Medical Society meanwhile continued steadily pursuing its own way, feeling safe from encroachment of either University, and looking upon Marischal College simply as an honest custodian. There had been many years ago an attempt to make lectureships interchangeable between the two Colleges. The idea was entered into with spirit, and seemed feasible, until the old smouldering jealousy and hatred



between the old College and the new broke out, and amicable relations ceased. A note in the "Fasti" of Marischal College tells that in 1818 the two Universities combined to appoint medical lecturers alternately. By this arrangement Dr Alexander Ewing of King's College taught physiology, and was followed by Professor Knight of Marischal College, who taught botany. The joint arrangement went on till 1839, when the Colleges quarrelled, and the professors charged each other with violating the treaty of 1818. Marischal College then appointed Dr William Henderson lecturer on *materia medica*, Dr Alexander Harvey on physiology, and Dr Francis Ogston on medical jurisprudence, Dr William M'Kinnon on comparative anatomy, Dr James Jamieson on midwifery, and in 1840 the distinguished Mr John Shier on botany. With this thorough equipment on the part of her rival, evil days came to King's College; and when the revival of the study of medicine reached her, and she in her turn had medical lecturers, there was trouble between the Colleges.

An extraordinary meeting was held on the 14th of December 1854 by the Medical Society, to take under consideration the question of the union of King's and Marischal Colleges: Dr Rainy was president. The Medical Society decided to approve a measure which should increase the number of classes taught, and give a due increase of graduates and alumni to the governing body of the united University. A copy of the resolution was sent to Lord Aberdeen—

"The travelled Thane, Athenian Aberdeen."

Premier and fourth Earl, the most cultured statesman of his time, and a stately noble of the old school, Lord Aberdeen had held a great part amid the wars and diplomacy of the days of Napoleon Bonaparte; but during his Premiership was the Crimean war, the mistakes in which were charged to his policy, and he became undeservedly unpopular. In 1827 "the Premier" was made Chancellor of King's

College. A petition was drawn up which all the medical practitioners in Aberdeen were asked to sign, and the secretary of the Medical Society engaged to write to George Lord Haddo and get petitions sent up to the House of Commons from the inhabitants of Aberdeen. Dr Laing of Golden Square presided at a second meeting, and Drs William Keith and Morrison sent off petitions to remove the grievances of naval assistant surgeons.

The great room of the Medical Hall was requested for the meetings of the newly instituted Aberdeen Philosophical Society about this time. The request was refused, and the members of the Medical Society still keep their beautiful Hall for their own use and for the accommodation of their portraits, library, museum, and other objects of value.

The union of the Colleges can only here be looked on but slightly. Great sacrifices were made in the name of medicine at this momentous time, and medical chairs held the most important part in the new University curriculum. The jealousy of the sister Universities, only one mile from each other, which succeeded the deep-rooted hatred of a hundred years ago, was still active. King's College was still styled "the University of Aberdeen," while its younger sister was "the Marischalian School," and the Old Town students affected to be careful in keeping up the distinct tradition of their old red gowns for fear they might be mistaken for belonging to "the Broad Street Academy." The students of both Universities had meetings, amusingly described in Maclean's 'Life at a Northern University,' where speeches were made to prove from which of the two Colleges the largest number of great men had sprung, and a King's College student mentioned Dugald Dalgety as having been the most remarkable graduate of the educational establishment in the New Town. Dr Andrew Moir had some time previously suggested letting or selling King's College. A central site having been proposed for the Old Town University, £15 each was given towards the new scheme by Dr Moir, Dr

Kilgour, and Dr David Kerr ; Dr Templeton and Professor Dickie gave £10, and Dr "Sandy" Fraser £5. The plan collapsed.

Turning from the old College, with chapel, library, and belfry perfect in ancient associations, and full of aids to lives of learned leisure, the glance turns to vigorous young Marischal College just before the "fusion," and to its learned Dons, some of them the product of the Medical Society at home, which stretched her branches far across the seas. In Marischal College were professors and lecturers who kept it in good working order, and some of whom proved firm friends to their rivals in the Old Town at a time when personal feeling readily jarred. Although King's College denied to Marischal College the right to grant any other degrees than those in the Arts faculty, Marischal College gave degrees in all the faculties without any charter except that held from its founder, the Earl Marischal, in Arts. There were, to be sure, strange stories of how degrees were given in Marischal College ; how a dusty red cloth rag was waved about the head of the graduate, and some Latin jangle of words pronounced by a professor over his head, and how a piece of paper was at the same time presented, on which a clever penman had written a Latin diploma, for which £10 was charged.

As regarded medical chairs, chemistry, a vexed question in Old Aberdeen, was settled in Marischal College, when in 1793 the lands of Polmuir, by Aberdeen, where the Duthie Park is now, were left for the endowment of a chair of chemistry. Dr French was first appointed lecturer of chemistry in Marischal College, with the salary of £33. At his death Dr Thomas Clark succeeded him as Professor of Chemistry.

Among the clever young medical lecturers of Marischal College for whom professorial chairs were not found after the union, was Dr George Morgan, lecturer on surgery, a great resurrectionist, and friend and assistant of Andrew Moir, who among other works wrote an address on 'The Nature and Cultivation of the Medical Profes-

sion,' delivered at the school in the Flour-Mill Brae, beside Dr Moir's anatomical theatre. The lecture shows a contrast to medical literature now in vogue, and the style may be thought high-flown, though the sentiments expressed were excellent. "The road to eminence," wrote Dr Morgan, "is steep and rugged, and has unfortunately caused many to seek for mean and dishonourable methods of self-advancement. Be satisfied that such are not lasting, and that the man who has been just to his profession is alone in possession of true greatness." Dr Morgan left Aberdeen to settle as a medical practitioner in London. Some years later he sailed to the Mauritius, and died there in comparatively early life in consequence of an accident.

The last professors of Marischal College numbered some excellent names still well known among us, which show that there was no lack of good talent and disposition among the professoriate, whom the medical students of the time looked on with respect and liking. Among them may be mentioned Dr Macgillivray, lecturer on botany and natural history, frequently spoken of in the minute-books of the Medical Society as visitor and honorary member. His life was a monument of continuous toil in a cold ungenial climate, and he wrote on many subjects, exhaustively and well, but his great life-work was 'The History of British Birds,' which he completed shortly before his premature and lamented death. His later days were spent at Torquay, where, putting touches to his last book, he compared himself to a wounded bird which seeks rest from the pitiless fowler in some quiet retreat. "So," he quaintly adds, "I, assailed by disease, betake myself to a sheltered nook, where, unannoyed by the piercing blasts of the north, I have been led to hope that my life may be protracted beyond the most dangerous season of the year."

'The Natural History of Deeside and Braemar,' by Professor Macgillivray, was printed and published by her Majesty's command, and at her own expense, and was edited by Dr Edwin Lankester.

A copy was presented to Aberdeen University by Prince Albert. The late Professor Nichol of Aberdeen, Dr Macgillivray's successor, superintended the mineralogical notices in this valuable book ; Professor Dickie of Aberdeen, the lists of plants mentioned in it ; and Dr Adams added "Notes from the Natural History of Banchory."

Professor Knight, of Natural Philosophy reputation in Marischal College, was a warm supporter of the Medical Society. His dry sententious wit, given with a flavour of humour, makes stories of him fall off at second-hand. Old pupils tell of his "smile of lurking irony," and his brightly intelligent watchful air. This very intelligent professor, whose character was as remarkable as his attainments, had a voice of peculiar weakness, joined to an extraordinary muscular power. When the professor passed away, his funeral was attended by the members of the Aberdeen Medical Society in procession.

It is difficult to refrain from the mention of the gifted Clerk Maxwell, who succeeded Professor Knight, than whom, we are assured, "few names are more distinguished in the annals of modern science." Clerk Maxwell, who left Aberdeen for an English professorship, was a born scientist. His lectures are said to have been as brilliant as his books, and his students loved his frank manners, his kindness, wit, and genius. He was also a poetic rhymmer of distinction, and among other things wrote some memorable verses on a distinguished president's address, the last lines of which acquaint us with the professor's scorn of materialism and

"The British Association—like Leviathan worshipped by Hobbes,  
The incarnation of wisdom built by our witless nobs,  
Which will carry on endless discussions when I, and probably you,  
Have melted in infinite azure—in English, till all is blue."

Dr John Cruikshank, Professor of Mathematics in Marischal College, was distinguished for his extraordinary power over a large unruly class of students, who held him in great respect. An old

pupil writing of him in a Scottish-American journal says: "In common with all his pupils, I retain a profound respect and love for him. I think he was the best teacher I ever saw—clear, methodical, and never using a word too many, while each word fell as a sunbeam."

Marischal College was not only rich in good professors, but in wealthy patrons, among her later sons, who went abroad and came back, loading with offerings the University which had made them what they were. Among these patrons were three medical doctors, honorary members of the Medical Society, representative men of their day, worthy of the flourishing School which represented progress in the north of Scotland. One of these was Dr Robert Wilson of the East India Civil Service, a great traveller and profound archæologist. He was private secretary to Francis, Marquis of Hastings, Governor of Malta, and was assisted by the Marquis and the Ladies Hastings in gathering his interesting museum, which he presented to Marischal College. Dr Wilson's gift to the College consisted of a travelling scholarship as well as an archæological museum. He stipulated that his collection should never be removed to King's College or out of New Aberdeen, and in giving his list of valuables said with affection of his curios—"My own gatherings, gleaned in my several weary wanderings, will, I hope, be duly cared for." His bequest contains singular particulars. He desired that his plate, bed and table linen, dining-room and bedroom furniture, and kitchen utensils be sold by his executors, and the proceeds form part of his executory estate, and that his executors should employ the whole residue of his estate to found a travelling scholarship in Marischal College. A graduate in medicine of Aberdeen University, not more than twenty-eight years of age, was to be appointed to explore Asia and Africa. The graduate, or "itinerant fellow," was ordered to take sketching or photographic materials with him, scientific instruments, and extracts from Dr Wilson's journals. He was to start three months after



nomination, and to keep a diary, a copy of which was to be afterwards deposited in Dr Wilson's museum in Marischal College. The first route to be explored was "the march of the Macedonian conqueror from his crossing of the Granicus to Babylon, on to the battlefield of Cunaxa, where Xenophon's retreat of the ten thousand Greeks began ; also the eastern branch of the Tigris, which Dr Wilson was the first European to explore. In two other journeys the student was to visit the ruins of Babylon and Carthage." As Dr Wilson's travelling expenses never exceeded a napoleon, or 16s., a-day, he appointed that sum to be paid every "itinerant fellow" for two years, in which time the longest of the four routes should be accomplished. £8000 sterling was available for the scholarship.

Dr Wilson's museum consists of a mahogany cabinet containing 357 imperial and republic Roman coins, intaglios from Nineveh, cylinders from Babylon, and a box of ancient Greek gold, silver, and copper coins, arranged by the Ladies Hastings, with a little history attached to the more remarkable of them. He trusted that these coins would form the nucleus of a numismatic museum for Marischal College, to be supplemented when funds became available by his executors, and asked and obtained for his collection an empty chamber to the left of the college library, "until a more suitable place should be provided." Dr Wilson's curiosities are generally characteristic of a love of everything old, and some of them are valuable. In a bookcase are crowded his books, which few care to look at : above stand three fine marble statuettes of Venus. Opposite stands a case with magnificent Etruscan vases. Still in their brown-paper wrappings lie the traveller's beloved finds, as much hidden as they have ever been : an olive branch from the Mount of Olives, an amphora for mummy entrails, ancient surgical instruments found in Thebes, and hundreds of curios. In a prominent position stands a large portrait of Dr Wilson, painted at Rome, representing him seated, Turk fashion, in a Turkish dress.

The keen, lively Scottish face of the travelling doctor makes disguise difficult.

Musing on Dr Wilson's incongruous collection, the stranger is inclined to ask, What is wealth, what are bequests, that people should leave them to universities that care not a doit for them? It is to be hoped, when Marischal College acquires its expected great extension, better provision will be made for the bequest. The gems of this singular collection are some rare ancient intaglios and a famous antique ring of strange and interesting history. The drawing-room furniture, part of the bequest, is now in the room appointed for it, which might, with a few light touches, be transformed into a comfortable and handsome appearance, such as his own apartment had when the old traveller, returning from his wanderings, loved to look upon his household gods.

Dr Wilson having seen his valuables lodged under his own eyes in the room in Marischal College, made a not unwise codicil to his will, requiring one series of journeys in the East alone from one "itinerant fellow." Mr Ramsay, now Professor of Humanity in Aberdeen, was selected for the purpose. Dr Wilson's available capital was thereafter to be spent upon the proper maintenance and supplementing of his museum or studio, in accordance with which the very pretty coloured casts of statuettes found in ancient tombs in Asia Minor in the library of Marischal College have been placed there.

In the story of Dr Wilson's legacy is seen to advantage the frugal and industrious far-travelled eccentric physician desirous to leave of his best to assist young men bent on archæological research, with himself a passion.

Dr Alexander Henderson of Caskieben was another patron of Marischal College; his father before him had been so also. We read that John Henderson left £2000 sterling (West India stock), to be divided into ten bursaries for medical students, provided he had no heirs at law who should interfere with the arrangement. If

Marischal College encroached on the contract, this fund was to go to Edinburgh University; and the West India stock increasing, he added to the value of the bursaries. His son, Dr Henderson of Caskieben, gave up all claim to the money. In 1857 Dr Alexander Henderson drew up a deed commencing thus: "Considering that great part of the errors and imperfections of medical science proceed from ignorance or neglect of the rules of right reasoning, that discredit has been brought on the medical profession by the fallacies, inconsistencies, and rash inferences which pervade and vitiate the evidence given by physicians and surgeons in commissions of inquiry and in courts of justice, and that a course of instruction in medical logic ought to form an essential branch of medical education; considering further that medical logic and medical jurisprudence might be advantageously conjoined, . . . hereby gives, grants, and mortifies to the principal and professors of Marischal College and University of Aberdeen the sum of £1000, for establishing and endowing a professorship of medical logic and jurisprudence." Dr Francis Ogston, a prominent member in his youth of the Medical Society, was appointed to this professorship, and her Majesty Queen Victoria was pleased of her "princely grace and royal favour" to give the endowment sanction. By a codicil to his deed of settlement, Dr Henderson bequeathed to Marischal College his collection of books at Caskieben and in his house in Curzon Street, London, also his pictures, drawings, marble vases, bronzes, and medals to the museum of his *alma-mater*. These Dr Henderson modestly declared not to be of high value, but useful as assisting to form among his fellow-townsmen a taste for the fine arts. That the college might be at no expense in the matter, £300 was gifted to bring the collection to Aberdeen, which was said to include some fine pictures. Dr Henderson's library of three thousand volumes went to King's College.

Fortune had given Dr Henderson ample means, of which he was not wasteful, and which had been carefully gathered in the grand days of West Indian Service. Professor Ramsay has written an interesting

introduction to the Catalogue of his Etruscan vases and other valuables in Marischal College. One of Dr Henderson's chief interests was the cultivation of wines. His book, 'A History of Ancient and Modern Wines,' is an acknowledged authority on the subject. Not caring to have an arduous medical practice, he lived as a gentleman of leisure in very good London society. In early days he studied medicine at the universities of Leipzig and Göttingen, but his taste leaned chiefly towards literature and art. At Dr Henderson's hospitable parties his interest in wine-growing showed itself, there being sometimes as many as thirty-two kinds of fine wine procurable at his dinner-table. He was of quiet retiring disposition, but had some determined prejudices, one of which was against the Emperor Napoleon III., and nothing would induce him to visit France during his reign. Dr Henderson died suddenly of apoplexy in Curzon Street in 1863. He was unmarried, and the estate passed to his brother, Dr William Henderson, of Aberdeen. He is described as having been a fine type of the intellectual country gentleman and cultured man of leisure.

Alexander Thomson of Banchory was an honorary member of the Medical Society who cast some lustre over it by his patronage and his life. He came of a good family, being descended from a grand-daughter of John Knox and Andrew Skene, and later from an Aberdeen lawyer, who bought the estate of Nether Banchory. Mr Thomson, who was somewhat of a philosopher, considered it his duty not to leave too large a fortune to his children, having "considered the circumstances of his friends and relations, and that those who made any figure in the world were left poor by their parents, and that where ample fortunes were left the eldest son and successors squandered the estates in profuse idle living." Alexander Thomson subscribed in 1826 £50 to the rebuilding of Marischal College, and his mother, a daughter of Professor Hamilton of Marischal College, contributed also a very handsome subscription. He became known as a

generous and wealthy landowner, preferring a country life to that of an Aberdeen advocate retired from law, in which, like his forebears, he had been engaged. If his ancestor, who believed young men who made a figure in the world were always left poor by their parents, did not succeed in having his family represented by a poverty-stricken genius or a hard successful man of the world, the last of the Thomsons had a happier fate than either. Secure in his beautiful estate, he led a good and pious life, troubled neither with the love of hoarding nor that of reckless expenditure. In 1840 a new mansion-house was built at Banchory, and the great Dr Chalmers preached to an enthusiastic multitude from the green-sward upon its grounds. When his long childless life was drawing to a close, brightened by the affection of a devoted wife, Mr Thomson passed away, one of those travelled, cultured, and wealthy good old country gentlemen, whom the habit of the times still permitted to live, a power for social benefit, upon his own estate, and whose presence there was a blessing to many.

Such were some of the professors and patrons whom medical students remembered before the *fusion*. Petitioning of Parliament, disputes, jealousies, complaints of the inertness of members for town and county, attacks upon the characters of her Majesty's Ministers, and especially on that of Sir Robert Peel, formerly Prime Minister, continued in a lively way for several years before the union. Sir Robert had even his stock of patience as a public man exhausted by the pressure brought to bear upon him from Aberdeen doctors at home and abroad to hasten on the wished-for union. In one of his letters to the secretary of the Aberdeen Medical Society he observed that people seemed to think it was his interest to prevent the bill passing, whereas any efforts he might make with the best intentions in its favour would not further it one iota. There was much amusing talk in the House of Commons about the bill, and one speaker remarked that Aberdeen was a great place, and like England had two universities.



On the 15th of September 1860, Marischal College ceased to be an independent corporation and merged with King's College, forming "the University of Aberdeen,"—"forasmuch," says the Act of Parliament which made them one, "as it is expedient for the advancement of religion and learning to make provision for the better government and discipline of the Universities in Scotland." King's College, which for so many years had persistently held her own with her young vigorous sister, gained some advantages at the union. As far as medicine went, the Old Town college had unfortunately no place preserved for her in New Aberdeen. Andrew Moir, the anatomist, died before an Anatomical Chair in his native town existed, and Drs Fyfe and Redfern and other lecturers had to look elsewhere for recognition of their services. Many Marischal College lecturers—among them Drs William Pirrie, John Macrobin, and Francis Ogston—received substantial rewards in the shape of professorships in "the University of Aberdeen," Dr Pirrie becoming Professor of Surgery, Dr Macrobin of Practice of Medicine, and Dr Ogston of Medical Jurisprudence. Thus were the colleges of the Old and New Town at last united, the affair being as serious in Aberdeen as the union of Scotland and England had previously been to the whole nation. The end was the same: wrongs and jealousies both rankled for a while, but time soon made them to be forgotten, and a general satisfaction ensued. The buildings of King's College, which were in a very poor state, eventually presented their present handsome condition, the ivy-grown tower being still a relic of the past. Marischal College, the wretched barn-like place which bore the grand old motto, "Say they! what say they? let them say," had been replaced by the present palatial building within the quadrangle, shining in grey glistening granite, and rising before it the great obelisk in red Peterhead granite which commemorates Sir James M'Grigor's triumphs, and recalls the early days of the Medical Society of Aberdeen.



## CHAPTER XXX.

## DR PIRRIE AND MEN OF HIS DAY.

Dr Pirrie—Dr Keith—Dr William Williamson—Dr Rattray—Dr Robert Beveridge—Dr Irvine of Tarves—Dr Lyon of Peterculter—Inverurie doctors—The Medical Society and Infirmary physicians—The British Association in Aberdeen.

As we approach modern times, a glance only can be given to the characteristic figures of popular physicians, and those whose excellency was possibly undervalued. Two distinguished medical men are well remembered by thousands of their fellow-citizens, and both were in their day great local practitioners.

The names of Dr William Pirrie and Dr William Keith are household words in our midst, but they are so recently gone, and were so well known to every member of the Medical Society, that it would be in bad taste to enter into any criticism of them. Dr Pirrie and Dr Keith were both old members of the Medical Society. Dr Pirrie left it very soon, having determined to quit Aberdeen; but he changed his mind, and became an able physician and surgeon throughout the north of Scotland, and successor to the famous Dr Kilgour. He was also Professor of Surgery in the University of Aberdeen, honorary physician to the Infirmary for many years, and the last of the medical practitioners of what was rapidly becoming a great city who may be said to have possessed the paramount medical and surgical practice of town and county, besides being a

University professor with a good salary. He was a self-made man, of robust activity, unwearied industry, and strong physique, which would have assured him success anywhere, and was said to have leaped into great reputation through his successful treatment of a boy's throat, and to have amassed a fortune it has been in the power of few provincial medical men to make. Dr Pirrie's stately person contrasted well with the more ornate appearance of Dr Keith, a remarkable surgical operator and brilliant medical man, whose bright enthusiasm was as successful in bringing him public favour as was Dr Pirrie's more solid power. Dr Keith, who was long connected with the Medical Society, like other young men of ability took a leading part in essay and debate. He held a discussion with Sir James Simpson of Edinburgh about acupressure as against ligature, and conjointly with Dr William Pirrie wrote a 'Treatise on Acupressure,' full of graphic descriptions and plates. Dr Keith was highly successful in cases of stone in Aberdeen Infirmary : of thirty-eight early cases he mentions having treated two with lithotomy and sixteen with lithotrity. He also believed that the confidence of Aberdeen physicians was firmly established in favour of acupressure. In later years Dr Pirrie and Dr Keith were essentially rivals, and their students were never so delighted as when they could get one of them to pass a remark not wholly flattering on the other ; as when one lecturing on "The Means to be Employed in Performing an Important Operation" to his students observed, "Some prefer to use the thumb ; but, gentlemen, everybody has not a thumb like the horn of a Highland bull." To older inhabitants of Aberdeen it does not seem very long since Dr Keith was seen with smiling handsome face passing down Union Street, his favourite flower in his button-hole, and Dr Pirrie was bowing in his celebrated carriage and pair. In their influence, that of town and county, they did not, however, link themselves with the old Medical Society so much as a past generation of physicians.

Dr John Christie had a very large general medical practice in

Aberdeen, and is remembered as their family physician with affection by many. Like Dr Steele, he was an honest and able practitioner, generous and kindly, and a bitter enemy to quackism and all shams, which he denounced heartily.

Dr William Williamson, son of Dr Benjamin Williamson, a man of excellent ability and industry in his profession, unfortunately died in the prime of life of typhus fever, caught in the Aberdeen Infirmary when he was physician during the great outbreak of fever in the town, about thirty years ago. At this time died also young Dr Carr of Aberdeen, and Dr James Philip, nephew of Dr Colin Allan, founder of the Aberdeen Medical Society, who had a laborious practice in Mount Hoolie at the head of the Gallowgate, in a poor and populous part of Aberdeen. The panic spread by this deadly outbreak of fever was great, and dear ones at home and the suffering sick missed the doctor on his rounds, who, sacrificing his life to his professional duty, left a widow and family with bare subsistence. Dr William Williamson's death, being that of a young unmarried man of promise and ability, was singularly lamented by all. A gentleman whose family he attended, and who regretted his untimely end, on hearing his connection with the Infirmary extolled, said, "What is it in comparison with a man's life? Infirmary work occupies the two best hours of a physician's day, and through these two hours my doctor lost his life."

It may not be out of place to devote a few words to the Infirmary of Aberdeen through mention of Dr Robert Rattray, resident physician there, a diligent member of the Medical Society, who joined it as a lad of seventeen in 1829. He graduated in medicine at King's College, and was for a time senior assistant to Professor Patrick Forbes in the chemistry class. On the occasion of his going to visit Edinburgh, Dr Forbes gave him an introduction to Dr Abercrombie, and the wealthy successful old doctor accorded a kind welcome to his young fellow-townsmen. Dr Forbes also gave him an introduction to Professor Faraday. The recollection of the

great men met with in his *wander-jahre* filled Dr Rattray with a genuine admiration for the best in science and art during his long provincial life. Walking the wards of Guy's Hospital in London with his friend Dr George Anderson of the Medical Society, Dr Rattray saw with admiration the great operator, Sir Astley Cooper. He wished to go to India, but gave up the idea to gratify his widowed mother, and went instead into partnership with an uncle in a little chemist's shop on the Woolman Hill of Aberdeen, opposite the Infirmary gate. There, before the gaze of university students, full of the boy's love for chemical discoveries, experiments of an original nature took place which rivalled the exploits of old alchemists and wizards. The young chemist's shop was haunted by medical students, who, when not engaged in trying to blow themselves up with strange chemicals, performed private theatricals, and considered how they could paint themselves a fine black in order to act Othello. He was appointed apothecary to the Aberdeen Infirmary, and for many years was also the Infirmary dentist, and wielded for the purpose of extracting teeth a horrid-looking instrument in vogue then, shaped like an old key. He was employed to teach *materia medica* to the Infirmary students, who were extremely unruly, and received lunch daily from the "big house," consisting of a bowl of milk and a penny loaf, with which the idle and wasteful bespattered the walls of the shop. Dr Rattray lectured for some time on *materia medica* in Marischal College before Dr Harvey, son of Dr Harvey of Braco, a prominent member of the Society, was made professor. The shop on the Woolman Hill, continued by Dr Rattray's brother, was a celebrated resort for the youth of the time, and there was not an Aberdonian of Robert Rattray's standing who did not remember it with affectionate interest. The professors wended their way thither also, and notably Dr Kidd, who went to it every day for a "fizzin' drink," for which the shop was famous. Dr Rattray was one of Andrew Moir's most devoted assistants, sharing with him the odium of the "burking-house." Such

are the recollections of a respected member of the Medical Society but recently passed away from among us in ripe old age. Many recollect the polished courteous air of the retired old-fashioned gentleman, for many years physician to the Aberdeen Infirmary, a post which well suited his serene and quiet life.

It would be unseemly to close these recollections without speaking of Dr Robert Beveridge of Aberdeen, one of the most faithful friends the Medical Society ever had. Dr Beveridge was a man of high and acute abilities, physician to the Aberdeen hospital, a medical practitioner, and acknowledged to have scientific ability of the highest order. For many years he was honorary secretary and treasurer of the Medical Society, and his small, exquisitely written pages in the secretary's minute-book show the exact and perfect nature of his work. For thirty years he was one of the most prominent and active of the members, a reminder of the old enthusiastic days of Sir James M'Grigor. Dr Beveridge was a man of uncommon ability, capable not only of being a high-class medical man, but of filling a distinguished university post as a professor. Fate selected the former life for him. Dr Beveridge died suddenly early in the year 1887, at upwards of seventy years of age. It was found on his death that he had not been unmindful of the Medical Society, and that he had left it a handsome legacy. Without difficulty we recall the shrinking figure, keen blue eyes, long fair hair, shy appearance, and brilliant conversation of the learned old physician, of whom his successor in the secretaryship of the Society, remembering his disinterested love of public affairs, said that "like an Athenian of old he had a many-sided genius."

Dr William Fraser, a respected physician in Aberdeen, for many years the faithful custodian of the Society's books, merits kindly recollection. In moments of leisure he wrote a paper on "Medical Etiquette," which left nothing to be desired in the way of the young physician understanding the proper thing for him to do at every step of professional life among his fellows. The pamphlets

which he wrote from time to time were full of a grave courtesy of language and an enthusiastic sympathy in all that is good. Shortly before his death in old age in 1888, Dr Fraser gave to the Medical Society his last and most elaborate essay on "The Psychic Etiology and the Treatment of Disease," full of learned research.

To these names may be added that of Dr Torrie, medical lecturer in King's College, and a physician energetic and laborious, who had a large medical practice. In his early days he was a lively and busy member of the Medical Society, and was the donor of a handsome bursary for art students in Aberdeen University.

As time went on the number of country doctors increased in every little country town, and greater facilities for travelling in and out of Aberdeen made them frequent visitors at the Medical Hall in King Street.

Two old doctors have passed away during later years, devoted members from their youth upwards of the Student Association of their early days, lamented at their death by a wide circle of friends. Dr John Irvine of Tarves was one of those landmarks which connect time past with time present. He joined the Society in 1826 along with his college friend, Dr Michie Anderson, and going up to London for his degree, was examined by Dr John Abernethy and Sir Astley Cooper. Settling in Tarves, he became the leading physician in Buchan, and was not only able and skilful in his profession, but a man of varied conversation, extremely sociable, a welcome guest at every house, and very kind-hearted. He was also a great reader, especially of history, a member of the Old Spalding Club, remarkable for his literary culture, and was for some time the medical attendant of the premier Earl of Aberdeen at Haddo House, for whom, along with the Emperor Napoleon, he cherished a profound hero-worship. He lived the latter part of his life in semi-retirement, and used to say jestingly that old doctors were like old horses. In his case he was respected and employed to the close of a long active career, and had not to complain of ingratitude



or neglect, enjoying a happy, cherished, and valued life. At his death an interesting newspaper notice gave some quaint particulars of this prince amongst north-country physicians but recently passed away.

Dr William Lyon of Peterculter graduated in medicine in 1829, and for sixty years lived in Peterculter, the centre of a busy district and a wide practice. All who knew Dr Lyon in his older days remember a pleasant and urbane old gentleman well suited to adorn good society. He was for many years medical attendant at Drum Castle, at the ancient home of the Irvines. Acceptable at the festal board, and a faithful family friend, Dr Lyon had as hard a struggle as country doctor ever had with nature stern and wild. At seventy-five he was hale and hearty, and had not taken, he told his friends, a dose of medicine for thirty years. Meeting one day an old friend of about his own age, the Rev. Dr Mearns of Kinneff, the two old gentlemen congratulated themselves on their vigorous old age, Dr Lyon remarking that he did not think folk nowadays were made of the same stuff as they used to be. The old doctor, his gig, his large umbrella, and his whip were a matter of earliest vivid remembrance to the older people of his district. On his jubilee as a practitioner of fifty years, along with a handsome present, he received an enthusiastic eulogy, in which these lines were quoted:—

“ By dreary road and barren moor,  
The doctor rode from door to door ;  
In scorching heat, in bitter cold,  
The honoured guest of young and old,  
His hours in cheerful labour flew,  
No envy nor ambition knew.”

As a member of the Medical Society, Dr Lyon was known as the reader of interesting papers. On one occasion he detailed in graphic language his old anatomical experiences under the title of “ My Resurrection Days.” Dr Lyon, long a widower, left behind a large family of sons and daughters: two of his sons have now medical

practices in England, and one of his daughters is married to Dr Fowler of Woodside, near Aberdeen.

As time went on the country doctor of Aberdeenshire changed, as did his town representative, from the good old style to a new one which had its advantages, as the following slight gossip from Inverurie serves to show :—

In later days there were two good doctors in Inverurie. Of one, Dr Thomson, who died at about 1860, many have kindly recollections. He was a relic of old-fashioned times when the country doctor mingled freely with the aristocracy of a large district, never sent in an account, but often received a handsome honorarium. He took nothing from the poor. The doctor who succeeded him found this way of doing business inadequate in results, and sent in six-month accounts. Dr Thomson's death was brought on by his being accidentally thrown from his gig, his horse having been startled, and he was killed on the spot, to the great grief of all who knew him. The rival practitioner in Dr Thomson's time was called miserly and "old wifish" by some, because he held the not unprofitable doctrine that the poor can pay as well as the rich.

The Medical Society, now known as the Medico-Chirurgical Society, may be accused in some degree as being itself a relic of antiquity. As years went on it carried on its affairs as in old days, and the business at evening meetings in the Medical Hall represented matters medical generally in the town, and opinion was freely expressed by members. It is a considerable lapse of time since the Society gave its opinions openly on the subject of Infirmary physicianships. In 1847 the late Dr Templeton, a member of literary tastes, moved that, "Viewing the Infirmary of Aberdeen as an institution calculated to afford opportunities for obtaining experience by the medical profession in the city, and considering these opportunities have been in practice confined to a small portion of the number, deems it of the highest importance to the public and profession that every means be taken for extending

these to a larger number of the profession than is presently the case." This motion was seconded by Dr George Nicol, physician in Aberdeen, and was unanimously carried. It was decided that the best way to attain this change was by increasing the number of Infirmary physicians, and by having assistant physicians, and a strict limitation of years of service. Dr Redfern proposed that in the interests of the science of pathology there should be a hospital pathologist, and was seconded by Dr Ogilvie. It was unanimously resolved to copy the resolutions and the list of sederunt, and to send them to the managers of the Aberdeen Infirmary. The Society continued diligently botanical researches. A collection of 5000 plants having been presented by Dr Arthur Stuart, through Sir James M'Grigor, to the Medical Society from India, Ceylon, and the Mauritius, Dr Dickie undertook the arrangement of the specimens, and to deliver annually to the junior members lectures, which displayed the ability of the late learned Professor of Botany in Aberdeen University.

In 1859 the British Association met in Aberdeen, and was presided over by Prince Albert, who was entertained by Dr Thomson of Banchory at Banchory House. The Medical Society gave a breakfast to medical members of the British Association, and distinguished men from all parts of the world met at the table in the great room of the Medical Hall, among whom were Dr Neil Arnott and Sir Benjamin Brodie. A series of dinner-parties was given in Old Aberdeen, notably by Dr Daun of the Medical Society, who lived in the chanonry, in what is now called the Principal's house, and who devoted a fine suite of rooms to his guests. At one of these dinner-parties the two distinguished members of the Medical Society above mentioned were present. Dr Neil Arnott, who in his old age had made a great exertion to visit his native town and the old Medical Society once more, was unfortunately seized with cold in the journey back to London, which resulted in chronic deafness. Dr Daun, who was an honorary

member of the Medical Society, and Deputy Inspector-General of Hospitals, was a fine type of the wealthy Anglo-Indian of the old *régime*. Many remember the generous hospitality of himself and his amiable lady. Their interest in the mysteries of spiritualism, now developed into hypnotism, and their devotion as Unitarians to a form of worship then very unpopular, are also recollected. There were some who averred that folks who had their doubts as to the ultimate destination of Unitarians in the scheme of salvation had no scruple in enjoying Dr Daun's dinner-parties. Dr Daun, who was uncle of Dr Robert Jamieson of Peterhead, member of the Society, was a man of earnest belief, who had lived many years in India in absolute solitude, there being no European near him. During these years he became a Unitarian, and was unaware that a Church of that denomination existed until he returned to Scotland.

We shall now see what record the Aberdeen Medical Society gave during the later European wars, into the midst of which, if the staff-surgeon did not take his life in his hand, as in the days of the Revolution, he had at least labour and trouble and danger enough.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

## IN WAR AND PEACE.

The Medical Director-Generalship of the British army in the Crimea—The Aberdeen doctor in the Crimea—In India—In the Franco-Prussian war—The Medical professor and Civil servant abroad—Lost lives.

IN modern warfare, puny in appearance after the great wars of the Revolution, medical graduates from Aberdeen have had their share. Still taking an interest in public matters, the Aberdeen Medical Society was remarkable during the Crimean war for its protest of regard for a public servant who was under a cloud. Blame was cast on Dr Andrew Smith, Director-General of the British Army and Medical Ordnance Department. The Medical Society stood up stoutly for Dr Smith, and the favour of the nation eventually returning to him, he received a baronetcy. Those who read in these days of thousands of tons of wood sent out to build huts for the British army on the heights of Balaklava, of shiploads of warm clothes and food all lost, remember also that the soldiers in the Crimea died by hundreds, and regiments disappeared, starved out through want of provisions. Such a state of matters required a great physician on the spot. Under Sir James M'Grigor in the Peninsula, the Allied Army lost twice as many men by disease as fell in battle ; but in Russia, more than forty years later, the proportion was said to be as nine to two. Those old enough to remember the talk of grown people thirty years ago, remember the complaints

of medicines sent out for the sick that never reached them, and of a general confusion for which nobody thought himself responsible. The master-mind of a Director Medical like Sir James M'Grigor was wanting to arrange and order, and the romantic charm of Florence Nightingale alone lit up the dark scene. The British army was thinned by cholera, and our hospitals were in a disgraceful state. Clothing, transport, feeding, nursing, broke down, and medical stores were found useless in the holds of vessels in Balaklava Bay when they were needed in Scutari. Justin M'Carthy, whose 'History of our own Times' gives a brilliant graphic picture of the whole, says that the medical officers were able zealous men grossly deceived by middlemen or traders, some believed by the Government itself. The British stood in a marsh, their tents were in pools of water, their bed-straw was dripping. Death more than that of battle stalked abroad, and the prevailing idea was that England was "endangered by a breakdown of army organisation." The secretary of the Aberdeen Medical Society, nevertheless, wrote to Dr Smith saying that the members had read with the deepest interest letters addressed by him at the beginning of the Russian war to the War Office on the sanitary regimen of troops. They could not withhold their admiration of his "foresight, judicious management, and acquaintance with the wants of an army. Had your wise and timely suggestions been taken," said the letter, "valuable lives might have been saved, and a great amount of misery in our army in the East been prevented, and we are assured we *speak but the general conviction of the profession.*" Authority was given to Dr Robert Dyce to publish Dr Smith's address and reply, and to insert them in the London papers, the 'Lancet,' and local journals. Dr Smith's reply contained these words: "Both the Department and myself have profited rather than the reverse by the cruel misrepresentation and virulent abuse with which we were almost daily assailed during



months after the battle of the Alma. When I first heard that the medical, surgical, and other supplies which had been furnished for the sick proved insufficient, my immediate feelings were those of alarm and mortification." He went on to say that had he been incapable of managing matters he would have retired, and put another in his place, but that he considered it better to attend to his duties than to speak out against detractors. He earnestly desired Government would examine the subject, but he objected to be condemned first and tried afterwards, and expressed himself as very grateful for kindly efforts to restore him what he had lost, the confidence of his country, and he sincerely thanked the members of the Aberdeen Medical Society who had given him one of the most valued and manly succours he had received, concluding with these earnest words: "Accept my most sincere thanks for sympathy, support, and encouragement. When such are most wanted they are not most readily found."

The Medical Society of Aberdeen had its own part in the Russian war. Dr Knox of Edinburgh boasted that nearly all the British army doctors in the Crimea had gone through his class: it would be curious to know how many physicians from the Scottish north-eastern counties served in Russia. Dr John Cameron, who died in honourable old age recently in Aberdeen, was a naval staff-surgeon during the Russian war, having served also against the Sicilian insurrection of 1849 and in the Black Sea. He was present at the operations in the Sea of Azov and at the battle of Balaklava. In many dangers he escaped almost by miracle with his life from Russia. A hurricane in the Black Sea almost swallowed up the ship he sailed in on one occasion, and for two days and nights it struggled in the deep, the captain not daring to land, fearing equally shot on land and storm by sea. Dr Cameron and his companions had narrow escapes from Cossacks, who shot men down for the sake of their regimental buttons. After having

stood many a time in the trenches ankle-deep in mud night and day without a change of clothes, Dr Cameron returned home with shattered health, one of the countless victims of war.

The family of Murray has produced three generations of able army surgeons, of which the first was Dr John Murray, the contemporary of Sir James M'Grigor. Old Dr Murray died at the head of the medical service in India, which honour his nephew, Dr John Murray, also attained.

The second Dr John Murray, now retired from service, after his studies in Marischal College graduated in Edinburgh in 1830. Having passed the College of Surgeons, he went to Paris, where he studied cholera. On being sent to India he made the treatment of cholera cases his peculiar care, and was responsible to Government for his way of treating them, and his arrangement of moving troops into tents whenever the disease appeared. The tent plan met with great opposition, as regimental officers did not like leaving their comfortable houses, and questioned medical authority in the matter. Dr Murray fought a tough battle in favour of his scheme, and the result was that the mortality from cholera in India rapidly decreased amongst the European troops, until the percentage of deaths fell so low that nearly three hundred lives a-year were saved, and as many rescued from invalidism. Dr Murray advocated two-storeyed cholera-barracks, and after some years had the pleasure of seeing them adopted all over India, under the command of Lord Napier of Magdala. 'Dr John Murray the third, who graduated at Marischal College in 1865, was grand-nephew of the first Dr Murray, nephew of the second, and son of the late Mr Andrew Murray of Allathan, in Aberdeenshire. He became joint lecturer on pathology in the Middlesex Children's Hospital, and came into public notice by attributing the typhoid fever of the Prince of Wales, which greatly alarmed the nation, to defective drainage. Dr Murray was for some years sub-editor to the 'British Medical Journal.' During the Franco-Prussian war he was in Paris, and

wrote some letters of considerable interest in the *Journal* on the second siege of Paris, when the Parisians besieged the Commune after the war, and treated especially of the ambulances and hospitals of Paris in 1870. He gave a graphic account of "deserted streets and boulevards, of the boom of cannon mingling with musketry and the mitrailleuse," and told how the English ambulance in Paris was in the English doctor's house, and held forty beds, and how a large marine shell burst in the midst of it, and another entered the hall through a glass door. He gave a diverting account of the ineffectual precautions made against such unwelcome visitors by mattresses hung before broken doors, and mentioned an old woman who exposed herself to a constant fire by supplying soldiers on duty with wine. It was not unusual, he said, to see people waiting behind walls for shells to explode, and gathering the fragments for sale to old-iron merchants. The most extraordinary proceeding, in his opinion, was the attempt of inexperienced people to extract the charge from unexploded shells at 5 francs the charge, which sometimes ended in their being blown to atoms. "But," said Dr Murray, "we should be surprised at nothing the Frenchman does." A fifth of the wounded in the ambulance were volunteers, and the majority Paris street-boys under nineteen years of age, tempted by the pay of 30 sous a-day to fight under the Commune. The University of Paris was deserted, and in the dissecting-rooms lay the "subjects" untouched. A popular belief existed, said Dr Murray, that the French excelled in surgery; but this was a mistake, as in their hospitals fifteen patients died of gangrene to one in the British ambulances. This promising young surgeon unfortunately died at twenty-nine of hospital sore-throat, deeply regretted by his friends. Dr Murray, who was able in his profession, was also of that sanguine energetic disposition which made him in matters of medical reform a battler without bitterness. His funeral was attended by many hundreds of London doctors.

In young Dr John Murray is seen the too common type of

the clever and industrious young medical practitioner, full of high hope and youthful enthusiasm, falling a victim at the fateful age of between five-and-twenty and thirty to some mortal epidemic. The record of those who have thus passed away on the threshold of a life's success is unfortunately a heavy one, for the physician requires to be robust and capable of a life of laborious toil. During the Franco-Prussian war, four young medical men—Dr Murray, Dr Vans Best, Dr Inglis, and Dr Rodger—went to the Continent as army surgeons. Dr Vans Best, unfortunately since deceased in the prime of life, was in India during the Mutiny as staff-surgeon. He was present at the Viceroy's dinner at Calcutta when war was proclaimed, and was wounded in action. Dr James Rodger of Aberdeen, successor to Dr Beveridge as honorary secretary and treasurer of the Medical Society, had a commission as a medical officer in the German Ambulance, in which the Dowager-Countess of Crawford and Balcarres actively interested herself, and was with the ambulance at Saarbrück after the battle, where he had the charge of a large hospital of two hundred sick, and of the commissariat department. This hospital, in which for some time he worked almost single-handed, and which he established and regulated himself, was looked on as a model Red Cross hospital during the war. The Emperor William presented Dr Rodger with the Iron Cross, "for help in time of war."

With this, the last of the great European wars, the warlike interest of the Medical Society may be said to cease, Aberdeen doctors having maintained on the whole a very good record of help in time of war since its foundation.

Dr Andrew Leith Adams, son of Dr Adams of Banchory, was gazetted to the 66th Foot, and served in the Peshawur under Sir Charles Napier, and in the Crimean war, where through fever and ague he tended the sick at Scutari. Retiring, he became Deputy Surgeon-General. His learned father was at first disappointed in his son's choice of a career, and would fain have had him study the

classics like himself, and perhaps succeed him in what a eulogist of Banchory calls "that secluded village, with its glassy river, and magnificent hills rising in front like another Tempe with its Peneus flowing between Ossa and Olympus." In the study of natural history Dr Adams became distinguished. His 'Wanderings of a Naturalist in India,' and other works, are full of fresh information and interesting descriptions. He made valuable observations on the migrations of birds, yet found time for such subjects of discussion as "The Recruiting Question from Medical and Military Points of View" and "The Physical Requirements of the Soldier." After retiring from medical service, he was appointed Professor of Natural History in the new College of Science in Ireland, and left it for a similar chair in Queen's University. His vigorous character made him a fit example for young men of merit. He was the model of a medical practitioner who joined active service with quiet university life, and yet found time to write delightful books, which treat of natural history not only in the spirit of research, but in a way calculated to please lovers of light literature. Dr Adams died in 1882.

The lives of some meanwhile flowed quietly on, and they made careers for themselves abroad in peaceful professions.

Dr George Paton of Fraserburgh joined the Medical Society a junior member in 1829, and went to India, where his service was highly honourable. He was in the East India Company's service, and became Postmaster of the North-West of India, reaching the highest position the service had to bestow. During thirty years spent in India he never suffered from the climate, retaining his strong north-country physique to the last, and never deviating from the simple moderate life of the frugal Aberdeenshire Scot. He died in his old age in his native town, where he spent the years of his retirement, leaving behind him a fortune of half a million pounds. Dr Paton's history of industrious advancement is the history of hundreds of others in the Medical and Civil Services.

During later years three young talented men, members of the Medical Society, met untimely deaths, which fell distressfully in the bloom of their professional lustre at the critical youthful period of arduous medical careers, leaving bright futures untrod. These, happily removed from all breath of envy or jealous spite, let those who knew and cherished them, and who still fight the battle of life, not forget.

Dr James Simpson from Buchan, after many early difficulties, successfully passed through a brilliant academical course. After studying at the University of Aberdeen, where he excelled all his fellow-students, he became demonstrator to Dr Struthers, Professor of Anatomy in Aberdeen University, and House Surgeon to the Royal Infirmary, gaining the Murray gold medal, founded in honour of Dr John Murray the third, whose short career was not unlike his own. Dr Simpson settled down for a while in Aberdeen, surrounded by the circumstances usual to young medical men of ability in a provincial town, with plenty of hard work. His private classes as Surgeon of the Aberdeen Engineer Volunteers were a great assistance to many University graduates who made futures for themselves. The Indian Medical Service presented to Dr Simpson the best opening to success, and his engagement to a young lady, sister of an old friend now a medical practitioner in Clifton, made him anxious for an early settlement. His competitive examination papers placed him at the top of the list. This great position he fully maintained during three months of a hospital course at Netley. Engaged to be married, it was his intention to go at once out to India with his bride. His marriage was followed within a fortnight by his sudden death in Aberdeen, after great agony, of valvular disease of the heart. A wide circle of friends and well-wishers became aware to their grief and surprise that Dr Simpson's so successful examination had taken place while he was suffering from high fever, consequent upon a boating expedition which he had taken as exercise, during severe sedentary



work, on a very hot day, and which was, unfortunately, followed by a night spent in exposure to damp and cold. With Spartan spirit he controlled the power of consuming fever until he had passed brilliantly. Aware that his temperature was dangerously high and his weakness great during the examination which was to decide his destiny, he used every aid which his medical knowledge could suggest to allay it, but had to be supported by his colleagues while passing his surgical examination. The struggle was over, the success was gained, the young wife had a home ready for her beyond the seas, and the young couple the prospect of wealth and high position at a sacrifice too great. Dr Maclean, Surgeon-General and Professor of Military Medicine at Netley, in the name of the medical profession in that greater world which the fame of the young surgeon reached, lamented his early death, and gave many interesting particulars in letters written to Dr Simpson's medical friends, showing how hard the struggle had been in the midst of which the young surgeon fell victor and vanquished. It was the opinion of his teachers that he was a specimen of the best of Aberdeen students, of strong will well directed, one who despised pleasure and lived laborious days, and who added to his other valuable qualifications for success in life, conduct which commanded the respect of his comrades and superiors. "In Netley," wrote one of them, "he will be long remembered as one of the ablest and most distinguished men that have passed through the Army Medical School. Inscribed on the honour list on the walls of the Royal Victoria Hospital, his name will remain until that noble building itself crumbles into dust." A beautiful monument has been erected by his medical friends and companions to Dr Simpson in Allanvale Cemetery by the Dee, near Aberdeen, where he lies.

Dr Robert Smith was born in 1850 near Kincardine-o'-Neil, where his father had a farm, but was left an orphan at an early age. He passed with honourable distinction in medicine and

surgery at Aberdeen University, and became class assistant to the Professors of Botany and Materia Medica. His many honours and titles during his short life made a long list, and his many pleasant qualities endeared him to all who knew him. He laboured for a time in Aberdeen as anatomical demonstrator to Professor Struthers, and after serving at the Leeds Dispensary, went to London, where he became medical registrar, and afterwards assistant physician in Charing Cross Hospital, and was examiner for medical degrees in Aberdeen University. Of a delicate constitution, the hard work of a London doctor proved too much for him, and having caught cold, he had not strength to fling from him the lung mischief, which quickly overwhelmed him, and eventually laid him in an early grave at his north-country home in 1883, where in a rural churchyard a fine Ionic cross was raised to his memory. In the words of another, "The tender, manly, pure nature of Robert Smith in the minds of his college compeers and his private friends will not readily be forgotten." The bright buoyant spirit which created sunshine around him made him beloved by many, and disliked by none. The grief of his friends was great when they understood that his arduous work in London had not been as yet remunerative, and that like others here recorded his ship had been wrecked in sight of port.

Yet another of these hard-working young Aberdeen doctors fell a sacrifice to overtaxed powers. Dr Fife Jamieson, son of the Rev. Dr Jamieson of Old Machar Cathedral, Old Aberdeen, was a specially active member of the Medical calling, constantly mingling with the men of his profession, and, like his friends Dr Smith and Dr Simpson, demonstrator for some time to the Professor of Anatomy in Aberdeen. He died very suddenly, to the overwhelming grief of his family, of a complaint brought on by overwork bearing upon too delicate strength. In 1882 was founded by subscription a bursary in Aberdeen University in memory of Fife Jamieson, M.A., M.B., C.M., and a gold medal

is given every year to the student of anatomy who distinguishes himself most in a special competitive examination.

Recalling the lives of these young, gifted, and unfortunate medical men, who all at the same age left hopes unfulfilled and grief behind them, there seems no doubt the medical profession is one greatly taxing the powers, and one of the most arduous careers that a man can have. When we read of the struggles of country physicians in past days amid a wild and half-civilised country, and see around us highway and railroad smoothing rough ways, we may still hope to see the day which shall make it unnecessary for men to toil beyond their strength in any calling. With such remark this chapter may draw to a close, and with a thought of wonder at the different fates Heaven gives to men equally gifted, and of how some have "crushed hopes crowned in death."

## CHAPTER XXXII.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A ROYAL PHYSICIAN: DR  
MATTHEWS DUNCAN.

At Aberdeen Grammar School and Marischal College—In Edinburgh—In London.

ABERDEEN doctors continue to be well represented in London and abroad as time goes on, and are generally characteristic of their race and place of birth. One of the last of those who have made a great figure in the medical world was Dr Matthews Duncan, who formed one more connecting link in the long line of Royal Scottish Physicians in London, which has streamed on since the days of King James I. A sketch of this valued practitioner's life may not be uninteresting to the ambitious young medical man of ability, whether he come from Aberdeen or not. Like the history of all who reach high place, Dr Duncan's life was one of constant busy labour. He was born in Aberdeen in 1826, and was the son of William Duncan, commission and shipping agent, and one of a very large family. His father was a Congregationalist, and he was christened by the characteristic Rev. Dr Thomson, minister of Torry. His early recollections were of a delightful rambling house and grounds at Broadford, where kindly grandparents allowed the large family of children to make themselves at home. Young Duncan went to Mr Weston's academy for boys and

girls ; passing on to the Grammar School on the Schoolhill, under Dr Melvin, a celebrated dominie with a genius for his calling, stern and conscientious, whom the boys nicknamed Trux, or Grim, noticing from the expression of his mouth their teacher's humour for the day, and remarking to each other, sometimes in fearful whispers, "Tak' care, man, the mou's on the day." Under Dr Melvin was a master of some note, Dr Dunn. Each master of the school in turn brought forward the boys, the two highest classes being taught by the rector. As was the fashion at the time, Matthews Duncan went to Mr Strath's classes in Drum Lane, where he learned writing and arithmetic. He also attended "the dancing"—thought to have a refining influence on boys, and which they enjoyed very much. At an early age he went to Marischal College, where he worked well, and even then found time to build those imaginary castles in the air which sometimes haunt people born to greatness, or lure them on to it. At Marischal College he met with Drs George and Thomas Keith, later of Edinburgh, and especially profited by Professor Macgillivray's lectures on natural history. In summer he studied at Banchory, because there were no summer classes for first year's students then in Aberdeen, and with his companions joined in long excursions : for five days they went on an expedition to Lochnagar, and were taken by the country-folk for strolling players. After his studies in Marischal College he went into a chemist's shop for a while to thoroughly understand the nature of drugs, and in the Aberdeen Infirmary was clinical clerk to Dr Kilgour, for whom he formed a lifelong friendship and esteem. Dr Duncan was a connection by marriage of Dr Pirrie, Professor of Surgery in Aberdeen. While at college he met with Dr Robert Beveridge of Aberdeen, and the two, with some companions, made a juvenile society called "The Academy" for the study of English literature, in which the Aberdeen Grammar School and universities gave no instruction. Thinking of his future career, the idea of being a

staff-surgeon was never thought of. After a visit to Edinburgh and Paris, Dr Matthews Duncan returned to Aberdeen to take his medical degree, and began practice in Edinburgh, along with his friend, Dr George Keith, both becoming private assistants of the great fashionable midwifery physician, Sir James Simpson, at the small salary of £1 a-week, which was afterwards increased. Dr Duncan soon gained the confidence and respect of his patients, and eventually their liking, though he always retained in practice his cold, firm, Aberdeenshire manner. His time with Sir James Simpson, during which he made his reputation, was one of great stress of labour : as he afterwards said, "he had to toil and sweat for another as he never had to do in after-life for his family or himself." During his first year in Edinburgh practice he made £500, and when he was five-and-twenty had £1000 a-year. His modest brougham was soon succeeded by a carriage-and-pair ; but his fees, which he carefully tabulated, were moderate. For four years he was assistant to Sir James Simpson, and played some part in the world-renowned introduction of chloroform, on the night of its discovery having chosen, of three drugs for experiment, one known as chloride of formyle, from Professor Gregory's laboratory, which he placed at dinner in the finger-glasses. This drug proved the veritable chloroform, and after inhaling it, the lucky physicians fell under the table, testifying to its efficacy. Dr Simpson and Dr Duncan seem to have been in matters of medicine antagonistic characters, and the young Aberdonian gave up his assistantship, having also to forego the Professorship of Midwifery in Edinburgh after Dr Simpson's death. He went up to London, a place much more suitable for the scope of his talents than Edinburgh, where he had friends who helped his advancement, and where he developed a great midwifery consulting practice.

His chief social faculty lay in being able successfully to gauge the talents of others as well as his own. He may be said to have died



just when approaching the highest honours which could have been bestowed on him at the head of the medical profession in Britain. His friend, Dr John Brown of Edinburgh, wrote of him as "a man of genuine capacity and worth, strong-brained, right-minded, true-hearted, with that deep abiding sense of the sacredness of truth in everything,—in observation, inference, and statement, not less than in word and deed—in science not less than in life,—without which genius, learning, and eloquence, be they ever so great, must be mischievous." Dr Matthews Duncan's sister has written, for private publication, a valuable and interesting sketch of the life of her brother. In everything relating to his native city and county, like all Aberdonians afar, he was deeply interested, and in his last illness longed to see once more the banks of the Dee by Aberdeen. The author of this book feels that she owes not a little to the encouragement given her in her work by a long letter received from him shortly before his death, in which there was a wealth of information about people and scenes in the "Bon-Accord" of his youth. Letters from him that were not medical were of the rarest, and yet he could take the trouble, amid the labours of London, to write pages about his native town.

In London honour succeeded honour, until, having reached the summit of his ambition,—having done, as he said, all that he had ever intended to do,—he died in the prime of a physician's life, worn out by the sheer hard work of a great consultant's practice, at little past sixty years of age, when abroad for his health in the summer of 1890, leaving a large family behind him. His life was a monument of most untiring industry, while his motto in duty, in the truth of which he firmly believed, was "To well-directed labour nothing is denied." It was said of him that "his style was characteristic, strong, and rugged, like the appearance of the man himself. His presence and talk were like the bleak honesty of his

native moors." Dr Duncan was a powerfully built man, of middle height, with an expression grave and manly, as the excellent obituary notice of him in the 'Lancet' said. He led a blameless and happy private life in his family, to whom he was devoted, had no clubs, many friends, few great friends, but to such what a great friend he was! With such a record passed away the physician whose mourning widow was comforted by the sympathy of her Majesty Queen Victoria, who regretted the loss his country and Europe had suffered by his death.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE CENTENARY DINNER OF THE ABERDEEN MEDICO-  
CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY.

“The crocodile”—Pictures in the Medical Hall—Aberdeen doctors of to-day.

THE Medico-Chirurgical Society of Aberdeen had now reached its hundredth birthday. During the changes of these hundred years it had kept up all the old associations of past history, and its fine Medical Hall still enshrines all that the Society values. The library is comfortably arranged in the handsome chamber where the old junior class held its meetings. Beyond is the museum, where still linger some of the many valuable anatomical specimens which once were there, most of which seem to have gradually gone to Marischal College. In the museum hangs the great framed list of all who subscribed for the building of the Hall, an interesting memorial. There also is to be seen “the crocodile,” one of the alligators sent by Dr Alexander, of Prince of Wales Island, which, like the Medical Hall itself, resolutely keeps its place despite a daring attempt having been made to take it to Marischal College. The crocodile was a great favourite of the Aberdeen doctors, but it required a good anatomist to articulate it. It was a tradition among the members that the crocodile having been once lent out, came back so badly put together that a zealous member spent three hours in putting the skeleton into order again. An amusing occurrence took place with

regard to the crocodile. One of the members, Dr Struthers, when Professor of Anatomy in Aberdeen University, made arrangements for getting possession of the crocodile, and offered to give ten guineas to the widows' fund of the Society in exchange for it. The majority of the members objected to this, stating the value of the crocodile to be £50, and that it "has been of much use to the members of the Society in their professional studies and inquiries." They declared also that the giving away of the crocodile was "a breach of the fundamental rules of the Medical Society, and particularly so as regarded the disposal of the crocodile, which had been presented to and received by the Society in trust for the use of its whole members, then and future." The question actually went to court, and a petition was presented before Sheriff Brown ordering Dr Struthers as defender to show in seven days reason why the "prayer" should not be granted. The Professor of Anatomy did not appear in court, and the crocodile was triumphantly rescued.

From time to time the Medical Hall was the scene of public receptions, as when in 1885, on the occasion of the visit of the British Association to Aberdeen, a breakfast was given, attended by stranger physicians of distinction. The great room of the Medical Hall is well worth seeing, as it is full of interesting historical portraits. The old-fashioned carpet and window-curtains in the spacious place recall the time when the Director-General of the Allied Forces in Spain helped the furnishings out of his own pocket. At the head of the long table stands the President's chair, and behind is the pleasant picture of Sir James M'Grigor, by Geddes. Opposite is the full-length likeness of Dr William Dyce, a painting of value, by his brother. The eye looks round upon the kindly faces of old-time physicians in ruffles and silk coats, and is attracted by the keen gaze of ancient Dr Harvey, the great English doctor, in his steeple-crowned hat. There are the presses in which the papers of the Society are held. The pictured faces on the walls look down with lifelike eyes out of the world of the

past—from time that is no more, into the time that is. There is yet space for more of those characteristic figures of old physicians and surgeons, of men who helped to make the history of medicine, and it is to be hoped that from time to time the collection will be increased by gifts from descendants and friends of Aberdeenshire physicians. Better for the good old family portrait to be with old associates and compeers, and held in some honour, than to hang in the obscure corner of a home where it is forgotten.

The Medico-Chirurgical Society celebrated its hundredth year by a dinner on the evening of Saturday, December 15, 1889, at seven o'clock, in the great room beside the portraits of the founders. The room was richly decorated; round the portrait of Sir James M'Grigor was placed a wreath of immortelles, and Christmas roses and holly were arranged in festoons. The table was appointed in imitation of the fifty years' jubilee dinner of the Society in 1838. The dinner-service, the flowers, plate, and candelabra would have presented a great contrast to the plain old-fashioned repast of long ago, and Mr Molleson, the purveyor, made the banquet a most elegant one—arrangements being in the hands of Mr Thomas Morice, the house-officer of the Society. The chair was taken by Dr James W. F. Smith-Shand, Professor of the Practice of Medicine in the University of Aberdeen, President of the Society, supported by Lord Provost Stewart. During dinner, and after, selections of music were given by Mr Wood's band, which agreeably diversified the entertainment. There were present Sheriff Dove Wilson and Sheriff Brown; Dr (afterwards Sir William) Geddes, Principal of Aberdeen University; Mr Esslemont, then member of Parliament for East Aberdeenshire; and Mr Alexander Edmond of Garthdee. The croupiers were Dr George Maitland Edmond, Secretary of the Society, and Dr Robert Garden, Vice-President. Among the office-bearers of the Society present were Dr Angus Fraser, Dr James Rodger, Dr James M'Kenzie Booth, Dr William Herbert Williamson, members of the Society's Council; Dr Alexander Mac-

gregor, Recording Secretary ; Dr George Gordon, Treasurer ; and Dr Thomas Best Gibson, Librarian. There sat down to dinner, in all, fifty-two, including members and guests,—Dr James Marshall ; Dr Henry Jackson ; Dr Charles Macquibban ; Dr John Struthers, Emeritus Professor of Anatomy in the University of Aberdeen, and Dr Robert Reid, present Professor of Anatomy ; Dr Forbes F. Maitland Moir ; Dr William Stephenson, Professor of Midwifery in the University of Aberdeen ; Dr Alexander Forbes Proctor ; Dr John G. Hall ; Dr William Reid and Dr Angus, of the Aberdeen Royal Lunatic Asylum ; Dr George Watt ; Dr James Ferguson Ruxton ; Dr James Davidson Wyness ; Dr John Robertson ; Dr Walter Smith Cheyne ; Dr James M'Kenzie Davidson ; Dr John Theodore Cash, Professor of Materia Medica ; Dr Patrick Blaikie Smith ; Dr William Sinclair ; Dr Gordon Beveridge ; Dr Matthew Hay, Professor of Medical Jurisprudence ; Dr Charles Urquhart ; Dr James Dalgarno ; Dr George Gibb ; Dr George Rose ; Dr John Ligertwood ; Dr Leslie M'Kenzie,—all resident in Aberdeen : Dr Patrick Jamieson, Peterhead ; Dr Mackie, of Inch ; and Dr Robert Wilson, of Old Deer. The guests present were Mr Esslemont, M.P. ; Lord Provost Stewart ; Mr Littlejohn, Sheriff-Clerk of Aberdeenshire ; Mr Cadenhead, Procurator-Fiscal for Aberdeenshire ; Mr Tyler, Gifford Lecturer, and Dr Macalister (Cambridge), Thomson Lecturer in Aberdeen ; Mr Kinghorn, draper ; Mr Nicol, Inverdee, Cults ; Mr Douglas Duncan, advocate ; Mr Murray Garden, advocate ; Mr Whyte, chartered accountant ; Mr Anderson, North of Scotland Bank ; Mr Sinclair of Altens ; Mr J. S. Mowat ; Mr Milne, younger of Kinaldie ; Mr Morrice, agent, Town and County Bank ; Mr Peter Anderson, LL.B. ; Rev. Dr Mitford Mitchell ; Rev. F. W. Christie of St Mary's ; Rev. Mr Danson of St Andrew's ; and Mr John Cumine, advocate. Apologies came from Dr Francis Edmond, LL.D., of Kingswells, Dr James Will, and Dr Jamieson of the Royal Lunatic Asylum—which was much to be regretted, as they



had all been present at the jubilee dinner of the Society fifty years before. Apologies came also from Dr Bruce, Dingwall; Dr Charles Smith; Dr A. Gibbon; Dr J. Corbet; Dr Archibald Reith; Dr David Arthur, Cults; Dr M'William, Professor of Institutes of Medicine; and Dr John M'Combie, London, members of the Society.

After dinner came the toasts of the evening. Mr Esslemont spoke of improvements in medical sanitary science within the last twenty years, referring to a past Convener of the Public Health Committee of the Aberdeen Council, who, when the town was threatened with fever, said, "Gentlemen, do you suppose you can stay the hand of Providence?" The President reminded the members of the Medical Society of the ancient glories of their city, and told how the Scottish kings used to spend their Christmas in Aberdeen, where the average winter temperature was higher than that of many parts of Scotland, or even the south of England. He spoke of the *perfervidum ingenium Scotorum* which strikingly showed itself in Aberdeenshire, and complimented Lord Provost Stewart on occupying the civic chair in "the silver city by the sea," where there was so good an understanding between "town and gown." Lord Provost Stewart, who responded, spoke of his having been nearly made a doctor by his mother's influence, and that of the family physician, Dr Kilgour, and reminded the Society of the relationship by marriage between himself and Dr William Dyce, whose portrait hung in the hall beside them.

The President proposed the toast of the evening, "The Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society," and read some verses in rhyme by an invited guest, Mr Carnie, treasurer of the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, confined to his chamber with a bad cold, the last verse of which ran—

"The Medicos form a great faction;  
Chirurgery—noble, of course;  
And a hundred full years of their action—  
Well, the world might be better or worse.

So I waft you, Sir Chairman, a greeting ;  
 May no 'sends for' your dinner joys mar.  
 Here's success to your centenary meeting,  
 While I treat my free-flowing catarrh."

The President then spoke of his own experiences as one of the latest members of the junior class, and reported that the funds of the Medico-Chirurgical Society were divided into an ordinary fund, a buildings fund, a library fund, and a widows' fund, all showing bank balances in their favour. Dr Patrick Jamieson of Peterhead proposed the President's health, and Dr Smith-Shand rose to return thanks. He considered that the Aberdeen Medical Society had much useful work before it, and concluded by saying that, like Sir James M'Grigor, he would advise every young man to join the Medical Society.

Dr Garden proposed "The Founders of our Society," and spoke of the desirability of restoring the old junior class, that it might inspire with enthusiasm the older members, and revive what Goethe called "the golden tree of life." Dr Macalister, Cambridge, on a visit to Aberdeen, proposed "The University of Aberdeen." Principal Geddes answered. On Sheriff Dove Wilson giving "The Aberdeen Medical School," coupled with the name of Dr Struthers, Dr Struthers responded in a long speech. In allusion to Mr Esslemont having playfully spoken of himself as being a suitable subject for dissection, the Professor replied in a somewhat mixed metaphor to the effect that he had "enough of the milk of human kindness to prevent him anatomising the remains of an old friend." He mentioned the Aberdeen Medical School in the University as numbering four hundred students, and being in a highly prosperous state ; and quoted Dr Monro, the great Edinburgh Professor of Anatomy, who used to say that every medical student was worth £100 to the good of the town : four hundred medical students were worth £20,000 to Aberdeen, and he thought the citizens might devote as much to the improvement of Marischal College.

Dr Rodger gave the toast of "Divinity," which was responded to by the Rev. Mr Danson of St Andrew's Episcopal Church. Dr Stephenson proposed "Law," and Mr Alexander Edmond of Garthdee replied. He mentioned as singular that at the Medical Society's jubilee dinner fifty years ago his father, Dr Francis Edmond, legal adviser of the members, had replied to that same toast, then proposed by Dr Alexander ("Sandy") Fraser. Upon that occasion Dr Fraser had promised his father, in the name of the Society, as a reward for his services, a public funeral. Mr Edmond was sorry that his father, who had outlived all these friends of his past, could not attend the centenary dinner of the Society to-night. The night grew late, the hours verging on Sunday morning, and members jestingly incited each other to pronounce the words "*perfervidum ingenium Scotorum*," whose syllables appeared to have some charm for them.

The toast of "Bon-Accord" having been given from the "Chair," this time-honoured meeting came to a conclusion at midnight of that same day one hundred years ago that twelve young students founded the Aberdeen Medical Society.

Death was soon busy with this merry party, especially during the time of the epidemic of influenza. There are since lost by death four of those who were at the centenary dinner—Dr Smith-Shand, Dr Maitland Moir, Dr Hall, and Dr Urquhart. Dr Corbet, Dr Gibbon, and Dr Hutcheon have passed away, as also Dr Edmond of Kingswells, LL.D., Mr Edmond of Garthdee, and Mr Murray Garden, Advocate. So lately missed, so well known in their good town, it is needless to do more than mention their names.

The Medico-Chirurgical or Medical Society goes on and flourishes. There are upwards of fifty members. The president is elected yearly, and by rotation, age having the priority. The honorary secretary- and treasurer-ship of the Society, which for many years was held by Dr Robert Beveridge, was afterwards

held for many years also by Dr James Rodger, and, after his resignation, was held by Dr George Edmond and Dr Alexander M'Gregor conjointly. Dr Ferdinands succeeded Dr M'Gregor. Dr John Gordon is treasurer, and Dr George Rose, librarian.

Of the members of the Medico-Chirurgical Society a few are life members and non-resident members, and one is a corresponding member. Its honorary members consist of Sir James Paget, Mr Jonathan Hutchinson, Dr David Ferrier, and Dr Thomas Keith, London; Dr Grainger Stewart, Dr Alexander R. Simpson, and Dr P. Heron Watson, Edinburgh; Dr Samuel Davidson, Warble; Dr Charles Smith, Kinnairdy; Dr William Bruce, Dingwall; and Dr Patrick Jamieson, Peterhead. The late Dr Manson of Banff was an honorary member of the Society.

There may be mentioned, as a distinguished Aberdeenshire physician of the day, Sir Andrew Clark, Bart., M.D. Dr Alexander Ogston, Professor of Surgery in Aberdeen, has been appointed surgeon to her Majesty, and Dr James Reid, Physician to her Majesty's household.

A very fair number of remarkable men of the medical profession have come from Aberdeenshire, the past life of which these pages endeavour to show.

What developments medicine in the north of Scotland may yet assume it is hard to say. University doors stand open to all, and difficulties are gone that once were insurmountable. Marischal College will soon be no more as we have known it, but grown in greatness. Let us trust it may continue worthy of its past, old King's College still remain a cherished memory of distant times, and Aberdeenshire continue to display the *perfervidum ingenium Scotorum*, the oldest national characteristic.

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