THE MEDICAL SOCIETIES AND PERIODICALS IN THE EARLY PART OF THE REIGN.

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SOCIETIES AT THE QUEEN'S ACCESSION.

IN 1837 there were but six Societies of any note in London; of these four still remain. The Medical Society of London, founded in 1773, chiefly by the exertions of Dr. Lettsom, had not yet found its way westwards, but was holding its meetings at the house belonging to the Society in Bolt Court, Fleet Street, under the presidency of Mr. Bryant. The Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society, founded in 1805 as an offshoot from the Medical Society, had three years before this date moved from Lincoln's Inn Fields to 53, Berners Street, where it found a home until 1889, when it removed to its present premises, 20, Hanover Square. Dr. Bright filled the presidential chair in 1837. The Westminster Medical Society, founded mainly by Sir C. Mansfield Clarke and Sir Benjamin Brodie in 1809, was for many years one of the foremost societies in London; it was connected with the Great Windmill Street School of Medicine, and its numbers were largely increased by the fact that every student at the school became a member of the Society. Later on, after the dissolution of the school, the membership of the Society greatly fell off, and in 1850 it was amalgamated with the Medical Society. Mr. Richard Quain was president at the time of the Queen's accession. The Hunterian Society, which is still flourishing, was founded in 1819; in 1837 the home of the Society was at 4, Blomfield Street, where it remained until 1866; these premises being then required by a railway company, the Society moved to the London Institution, where it still finds a home. The Harveian Society was founded in 1831 for the benefit of practitioners in the western part of London, and was originally called the Western London Medical Society. Its meetings in 1837 were held at the Marylebone Literary and Scientific Institution in Edward Street, Portman Square, under the presidency of Drs. Clendenning and Edgar Barker.

The South London Medical Society was founded in 1832 for general practitioners in Southwark and its vicinity. It is interesting to note that Addison's first paper on Disease of the Suprarenal Capsules was read before this Society on March 15th, 1849. The Society had no journal of its own, but a short report of the paper may be found in the *London Medical Gazette*, N.S. viii, 1849, p. 517.

To these societies should, perhaps, be added the Medico-Botanical Society, founded by the eccentric John Frost in 1821. Many of the papers read before this Society were of considerable interest and value. But about the time of the Queen's accession the supervision of papers had become very lax. Earl Stanhope, who was president for many years, would admit any paper of a botanical character. The value of some of these may be judged by one read in June, 1837, by Mr. Whitlaw, the keeper of a herb bath. The title of the paper was *An Account of Mr. Whitlaw's Method of preparing Plants so that their Virtues may be Retained for a Considerable Period*. The main object of the paper was to try and prove that polygala senega was a remedy for all diseases; at the conclusion the author stated that he should be pleased to supply medical men with any quantity on most reasonable terms, or he would receive patients who could afford to pay for what he might order them to take. In the course of the paper Mr. Whitlaw attempted to prove that the influenza epidemic of 1837 was due to the cows having eaten largely of buttercups, which in that season were most abundant.

Of the societies connected with the hospitals, there were in existence in 1837 the Middlesex Hospital Medical School Society (1774); the Abernethian, St. Bartholomew's (1795); St. Thomas's Medical and Physical Society (1820); the Guy's Pupils' Physical Society (1830) (this was an offshoot of the Guy's Physical Society founded in 1771; in its early days the Physical Society was one of the most important of the London societies, and its members were not confined to those persons connected with Guy's Hospital; in 1837, it had lost much of its former influence, and it ceased to exist in 1852); the King's College Medical Society (1833). Since 1837 there

have been added to this list the St. Mary's Hospital Medical School Society (1866), the London Hospital Medical Society (1873), and the Guthrie Society at the Westminster Hospital.

SOCIETIES AT THE PRESENT DAY.

In the present day there are about fifty medical societies in London, omitting all political and philanthropic ones. It may be noticed that in the societies in existence at the Queen's accession, there is not one devoted to the study of any special subject or to the interests of any one class of practitioners. At the present day there are no fewer than twenty London societies formed for the purpose of investigating some particular branch of medicine or surgery, and for bringing together those who specially devote themselves to that special line of practice.

MEDICAL PERIODICALS IN 1837.

It 1837 it would have been no difficult matter for a man in considerable practice to have found time to read all the London professional journals then issued. There were but three weekly journals, the *Lancet*, the *London Medical Gazette*, and the *London Medical and Surgical Journal*. The first of these, started in 1823, is the only professional paper still in existence which was being issued when the Queen came to the throne. The *London Medical Gazette* was founded in 1828, and was the longest lived rival of the *Lancet*, in opposition to which it was avowedly started. It was owned and edited by Dr. Roderick Macleod. In 1837 a new series was started; this lasted until 1851, when the *Gazette* became incorporated with the *Medical Times*, under the title of *Medical Times and Gazette*, and in this form was continued until 1885.

The *London Medical and Surgical Journal* was started in 1828 as a monthly, but in 1832 was converted into a weekly. It was edited by Michael Ryan, of whom Mr. J. F. Clarke says: "He was learned, had most agreeable manners, and was strongly impressed with the importance of appearance in a physician. He dressed in black, wore a white choker, carried a large watch as big as a turnip, to which was appended a massive chain with seals and keys. It is true he did not carry a gold-headed cane, but he had a huge gold snuff box, the contents of which were frequently applied to his olfactory organ." The number of the *London Medical Journal* for January 21st, 1837, is of special interest to our readers, for it contains a long account of the first meeting of the British Medical Association. The meeting was held at Exeter Hall, Mr. George Webster, of Dulwich, presiding, with William Eales as Honorary Secretary. For a short time this journal was very vigorous, but its downfall was brought about by a quarrel between Dr. Ryan, the editor, and Renshaw, the publisher. This took place in August, 1834, during the issue of Volume vi of the new series. The first 96 pages of the two sets are identical; then they begin with different matter. Renshaw's journal, which was edited by John Foote, ceased July 25th, 1835; and Dr. Ryan's lasted until December, 1837. In 1835 a small publication was started with the title of *British Medical Almanac*; it only continued for a few years, and contained very little useful information.

In 1837 the British Medical Association issued only an annual volume of *Transactions*. The publication of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL was commenced in 1841. The history of its development was told by "An Old Member" in the Queen's Commemoration Number, June 19th.

The last of the old quarterlies, known to the older members of the profession as the *British and Foreign Medico-Chirurgical Review*, was in 1837 issued as the *British and Foreign Medical Review*, under the editorship of Forbes and Conolly. In 1847 the *Review* was amalgamated with the *Medico-Chirurgical Review*, another quarterly which, until 1843, was edited by Dr. James Johnson.

It will be noticed that in 1837 there were no journals devoted to special subjects. Guy's was the only hospital issuing a series of *Reports*, vol. i being dated 1836. St. Thomas's issued one volume in this same year, but the regular publication of their *Reports* did not begin until 1870.

The difficulty at the root of journalism—lay as well as medical—was the insuperable objection to publicity which was shared by private individuals as well as by all public bodies. It was only with the greatest difficulty that ab-

stracts of really important papers could be obtained, whilst the discussions at the Societies went unreported, not so much from the want of a good system of stenography—for Pitman invented his system in 1837—as from the danger of personal violence run by the reporter if he was detected in the act of making notes.

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION IN 1837.

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THE condition of the medical profession in 1837 is separated *toto caelo* from its present condition. The social position of its members, the habits of its students, the relationships of its great corporate bodies, even the ideas and the methods of thought have undergone a radical change.

In 1837 the medical profession consisted of scattered units loosely held together by the Apothecaries Act of 1815, and its members were sharply defined into two great groups—a superior grade of physicians, an inferior grade of surgeons, apothecaries, and prescribing druggists.

THE MEDICAL STUDENT.

The difference in the two grades was marked from the very outset of the medical education. Sir James Paget recalls that when he entered at St. Bartholomew's Hospital there were three sets of students—the University men, who were regarded as the sole claimants for the higher medical offices; the hospital apprentices, who were alone deemed eligible for the surgical appointments; and the general body of other students.

The Oxford and Cambridge men were usually of far higher general culture than most of their fellow students. They had all taken a degree in Arts before beginning the study of medicine, and many of them were of higher social position. A few indeed had gained their position by the process then known as "term trotting," which consisted in going up to Cambridge at irregular intervals to keep the minimum number of days in each term required to obtain a degree, but even these had acquired some leaven of the University. The London University was so young that it had not attained any of its present repute, and "Scotch Doctor" was in England rather a term of reproach, though the professional education in Scotland was very far ahead of the English teaching.

The hospital apprentices were those apprenticed to any of the surgeons or assistant surgeons. They had a longer and better hospital teaching than the ordinary students, for their course lasted four years instead of eighteen months. They might be specially taught by their own masters, and they had the first choice for dresserships, and generally were well off, being the sons of fathers who could pay apprenticeship fees of 500, 800, or even 1,000 guineas. Both these classes had some apparent claim to special privileges; but, as usual, too much dependence on supposed rights brought failures; many of them were beaten by those who had nothing but their work to depend upon.

The general body of students were, in comparison with others of the same age and the same level, about as they are now. Perhaps they came to the hospital better prepared than those of the present day. They had been for three or more years apprentices to general practitioners or to surgeons of provincial hospitals; they knew the language in which they were to be taught; they knew more or less of the business of practice; many of them had dissected, many had read well. As among other students there were a few thoroughly vicious fellows who came to a bad end, left the school in disgrace, or were plucked and no more heard of; and some idle fools and some blockheads and untaught who could never learn their duty. These have been caricatured as if they were types of the whole class. It would be as reasonable to sketch the general characteristics of Englishmen from a slight acquaintance with some inmates of a lunatic asylum. The majority of students then, as now, worked well; some were laborious, as with a natural pleasure in the exercise of mental power, or in emulation or in consciousness of duty or of necessity, or with all these motives.

There is a greater contrast in the play than in the work of that time and this. The pleasures and amusements then

were coarser. There was much more drinking, a few were often drunk and many who never were so would boast of drinking more than they thought they needed. Cursing and swearing were common in ordinary talk, frequent for emphasis, and nasty stories were very often told and deemed of the same worth as witty ones—all common foibles and a reflection of the habits of the Society of the time, for as yet no Jowett had arisen to say in his small voice after such an exhibition, "I think, Mr. —, there is more dirt than wit in that story." Impurity of life and conversation were scarcely thought disgraceful or worth concealing. But in all these faults there were great differences among the students; some might boast of them, but many only tolerated them and kept as clear as they could; a few rebuked them, chiefly those who, in the slang of the day, were called Saints or Simeonites after the great Cambridge preacher. At that time there was no boat club or cricket club, there were no regular athletics of any kind, no concerts, no private theatricals. Boxing, fencing, walking, and long excursions into the country with the lecturer on botany then formed the staple exercise of the more rational medical student.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS.

It is extremely difficult to estimate with any degree of accuracy the number of medical students in London at the beginning of Her Majesty's reign. Sir William Lawrence thought that in 1834 the students of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, including those who attended the various lectures, were nearly 300 in the winter time, but of these only between 100 and 200 attended the practice of the hospital. This statement is substantially correct, as it is borne out by independent figures, and the following table enables us to put the schools in the order of their numerical strength. It gives the average number of candidates who presented themselves for examination each year at the Royal College of Surgeons and at the Society of Apothecaries:

School.	College.	Apothecaries.
St Bartholomew's	67	84
Webb Street	57	75
Guy's	38	44
The London University (University College)	39	37
St. Thomas's	32	31
The London	14	20
Aldersgate Street	11	6
Windmill Street	13	1
St. George's	12	1
King's... ..	5	0

MEDICAL TEACHING.

The method of teaching differed very considerably at the beginning of the reign of Queen Victoria from that which is in vogue at the present time. Great importance was attached to the mere attendance upon lectures; in England very little stress was laid upon any form of clinical teaching, though the Edinburgh school had long been remarkable for the excellence of its bedside instruction. The limited time during which the majority of students stayed in London often rendered it necessary for them to attend as many as four lectures a day during the winter session, besides the dissections and the hospital practice. Of the sciences ancillary to medicine anatomy and botany were taught thoroughly well, chemistry moderately well, but the teaching of physiology, like the science itself, was most unsatisfactory. Each course of lectures could be entered to separately, for no general entrance fee was usually paid, there was no marking and very little observance of attendance. Yet many of the lectures were excellently attended. The long intervals between the two examinations, at the College and at the Hall—for apprenticeship and qualification—gave the better men more time to think for themselves, as they were not worried by perpetual classes and school examinations. This interval, however, often proved the ruin of the inferior and moderate men, who wasted long periods of time and then sought to recover lost opportunities by a process of "coaching." In too many cases this degenerated into mere "grinds," where everything was sacrificed to memory and "tips," the passing of the examination being the only object in view. The palmy days of the