

The Scottish Society of the History
of
Medicine
(Founded April, 1948.)

REPORT
OF
PROCEEDINGS
SESSION 1948-49.

The Scottish Society of the History of Medicine.

<i>President</i>	-	-	-	Dr. DOUGLAS GUTHRIE.
<i>Vice-Presidents</i>	-	-		Mr W. J. STUART. Professor G. B. FLEMING (Glasgow)
<i>Hon. Secretary</i>	-	-		Dr. H. P. TAIT.
<i>Hon. Treasurer</i>	-	-		Dr. W. A. ALEXANDER.
<i>Council</i>	-	-	-	Sir HENRY WADE. Dr. W. D. D. SMALL. Brig.-Gen. SUTTON. Professor CAMPBELL (Aberdeen). Dr. JOHN RITCHIE. Dr. HENRY GIBSON (Dundee). Dr. WILKIE MILLAR. Professor CHAS. M'NEIL. Mr A. L. GOODALL (Glasgow). The Senior President, Royal Medical Society.

The Scottish Society of the History of Medicine.

For many years it had been felt that there was a need for a Society in Scotland primarily devoted to the study of the History of Medicine and its allied Sciences. Such a Society came into being on 23rd April 1948, when a well attended and representative gathering of medical men and other interested persons from all over Scotland met in the Hall of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. It was then agreed to constitute the Society and to call it "The Scottish Society of the History of Medicine." A Constitution was drawn up and Office-Bearers for the ensuing year were elected. From this beginning the Society has grown steadily and now has a membership of some hundred persons.

After the business of this Preliminary Meeting had been carried through, the Medical Superintendent of the Royal Infirmary of Dundee, Dr. Henry J. C. Gibson, delivered an address on "The Early History of Dundee Royal Infirmary,"* and illustrated his remarks with some interesting lantern slides.

Dr. Gibson traced the history of this institution from its beginnings as a voluntary Dispensary in 1735, to the building of the new Infirmary in 1855. In its rapid growth, the Royal Infirmary of Dundee soon became one of the chief voluntary hospitals in Scotland, and its patients came not only from the city of Dundee and the surrounding counties of Angus, East Fife and Perthshire, but also from other parts of Scotland. The foundation stone of the first Infirmary was laid on 17th June 1794, and the first patient was admitted on 11th March 1798. There was no official opening ceremony of any kind, the hospital assuming its functions as a home for the sick without any fanfare. The Royal Charter was granted on 8th May 1819 by His Majesty King George III., and it was signed by His Royal Highness George, the Prince Regent.

* Published in extended form, "Dundee Royal Infirmary, 1798-1948," Dundee, 1948.

The Second Meeting.

This Meeting was held in the Hall of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, on Friday, 18th June 1948. Dr. John Ritchie of Edinburgh read a paper on "Quarantine for Plague in Scotland during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries."*

Dr. Ritchie described the early methods of quarantine and disinfection of plague-infected ships and their cargoes adopted in Scotland. Among the measures taken to deal with the crews and passengers of such ships was isolation on the various islands in the Firth of Forth and elsewhere. In 1627, when the ship "Good Fortune" arrived at Leith with a record of sickness and death during the voyage from London, Lawrence Cockeburn, surgeon at Edinburgh, was appointed to inspect the ship. It is more than probable that Cockeburn was the first in Scotland to act in the capacity of port medical officer. He had a further claim to remembrance in that his father-in-law, James Henrysoun, surgeon, was the first "Medical Officer of Health" for the City of Edinburgh.

* Published Edinburgh Medical Journal, 1948, 55,691.

The Third Meeting.

The Third Meeting of the Society was held on Wednesday, 20th October 1948, in the Hall of the Royal Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons, Glasgow. Two papers were delivered at the Meeting, and a most interesting exhibition of some of the treasures of the Royal Faculty was laid out for the Society members. Included in this exhibition were many relics of Lord Lister.

The first paper was delivered by Professor J. D. Mackie of the Chair of Scottish History, University of Glasgow, and he took as his subject, "The History of Glasgow." In his account of the rise of Glasgow, Professor Mackie showed how the city's early history had been dominated by that of the bishopric of the city. In recent times the growth and development of Glasgow had been very rapid and expansion was even now still continuing. The University, founded in 1451, was modelled on French lines, but after the Reformation it was reorganised by Andrew Melville and had since made steady claim to be one of the great seats of learning in the world.

Mr A. L. Goodall, F.R.C.S., Honorary Librarian of the Royal Faculty, described the History of the Faculty.* He referred to its unique position among medical incorporations in that both physicians and surgeons were united in one body. The Royal Faculty was founded in 1599 by a grant from King James VI. of Scotland to Maister Peter Low with the assistance of Mr Robert Hamilton. The Faculty was empowered to examine and licence all practitioners of surgery, and no others were to be allowed to practise in the West of Scotland. This territorial monopoly was held by the Faculty until 1850, in spite of numerous lawsuits culminating in the action against the University of Glasgow which was taken to the House of Lords in 1838. In all these suits the Faculty was confirmed in its right to be the sole licensing body in its area of jurisdiction. Eventually this right was given up voluntarily in 1850. The Faculty supervised the ethical conduct of the profession and also began a long history of gratuitous treatment of poor persons which had only recently ceased. The Royal Faculty celebrates the 350th anniversary of its foundation in 1949.

Published *Glasgow Medical Journal*, 1949, 30, 89.

The Fourth Meeting.

This Meeting was held in the Library of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, on Friday, 25th February 1949, when a paper was read by the Secretary, Dr. H. P. Tait, on "Notes on the History of Paediatrics in Scotland."

Dr. Tait showed that, though real and practical interest in child health was of very recent growth, various attempts had been made from very early times in Scotland to improve the lot of the child, but none of these had proved very successful. For centuries, Scotland had been devastated periodically by famines and epidemics of infectious diseases, but no true index of the mortality from these famines and epidemics was available, indeed, accurate figures were not forthcoming till after 1855 when registration of births, deaths, etc., became compulsory.

Medical care of children was non-existent before the 18th century, but with the improved and scientific attitude to medicine prevailing in that century, the child began to receive more and more attention. Lectures on diseases of women and children began to be organised during the second half of the 18th century, and in 1840, William Campbell, an Edinburgh

accoucher, gave special courses of instruction in diseases of children to medical students attending the extra-academical school of medicine in Edinburgh. Not until 1911 did compulsory training in diseases of children become part of the medical curriculum in Scottish Universities. The first children's hospital to be founded in Scotland was that in Edinburgh in 1860, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Dundee following suit. Dr. Tait concluded by discussing some of the Scottish physicians who had contributed to the study of disease in children.

The Fifth Meeting.

The Fifth Meeting, held on Saturday, 18th June 1949, took the form of a Pilgrimage, led by the President, Dr. Douglas Guthrie, to Lanark, Hamilton and Longcalderwood Farm, places associated with William Smellie, William Cullen and the Hunters. At Lanark, the members and their friends visited the grave and Library of William Smellie and heard an oration on Smellie by Professor Samuel J. Cameron, Professor-Emeritus of Midwifery, University of Glasgow. Thereafter the party proceeded to the site in Hamilton on which the house once stood in which Cullen and William Hunter had practised together before going their respective ways in the worlds of medicine and anatomy and obstetrics. From Hamilton, the "Pilgrims" continued on to the Farm of Longcalderwood, near East Kilbride, where John and William Hunter were born. Tea was served to the party in the grounds of Longcalderwood Farm, and many members were able to recapture some of the spirit which urged these great Scotsmen on in the world of medicine.

Future Policy of the Society.

At the moment, the Society does not feel justified in publishing more than the above brief Annual Report, although at first it was hoped that the papers might form the basis of a regular publication of periodical nature. Unfortunately there is at present no British journal devoted to History of Medicine, and Scotland might well set the example by providing such an organ. The project has not been abandoned, but merely deferred for the present.

In the meantime, meetings will be held, not only in Edinburgh, but at each of the three other university cities, Glasgow, Aberdeen and St. Andrews, so that the Society may justify its aim to be a truly Scottish Society. Furthermore, although the initial papers have dealt with Scottish matters, it is hoped that the entire range of medical history, both in time and place, will be covered, so that the Society may have a wide appeal and be neither exclusively Scottish, nor exclusively medical, but will have a broad cultural basis. Those ideals can be met only by a large increase of membership. The subscription is small, the meetings few, the field is wide and attractive. We embark upon our second year of activity with high hopes, confident of steady increase in our membership and of success in our efforts to advance the knowledge of the History of Medicine.

DOUGLAS GUTHRIE, *President.*

H. P. TAIT, *Secretary.*

The Scottish Society of the History of Medicine.

CONSTITUTION.

1. The Society shall be called "THE SCOTTISH SOCIETY OF THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE," and shall consist of those who desire to promote the study of the History of Medicine.

2. A General Meeting of Members shall be held once a year to receive a report and to elect Office-Bearers.

3. The management of the affairs of the Society shall be vested in the Office-Bearers, who shall include a President, one or more Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and not more than ten other Members to form a Council. The Council shall have power to co-opt other Members who, in their opinion, are fitted to render special service to the Society.

4. All Office-Bearers shall be elected annually. The President shall not hold office for more than three successive years, but shall be eligible to serve again after one year. Not more than eight Members of Council, or two-thirds of the total number, shall be eligible for immediate re-election.

5. The Annual Subscription shall be Ten Shillings, payable to the Treasurer, who will submit a balance-sheet at each Annual Meeting.

6. The Secretary shall keep brief Minutes of the proceedings, shall prepare Agenda, and shall conduct the correspondence of the Society.

7. Meetings shall be held at least twice yearly, and the place of meeting shall be in any of the four University centres, or elsewhere, as the Council may decide.

8. This Constitution may be amended at any General Meeting of the Society on twenty-one days' notice of the proposed amendment being given by the Secretary, such amendment to be included in the Agenda circulated for the Meeting.