The Scottish Society of the History of Medicine

(Founded April, 1948)

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

SESSION 1965-66

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Report of Proceedings

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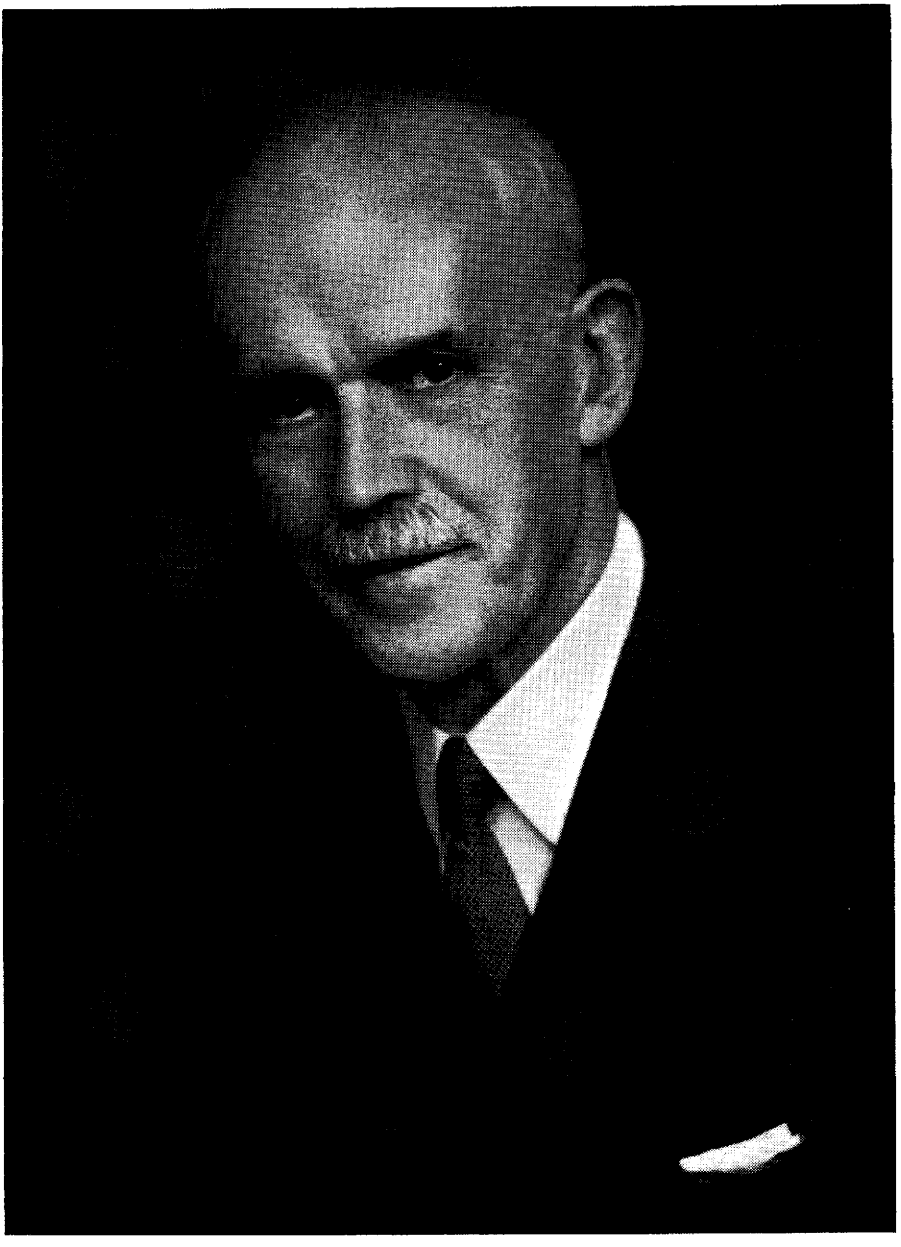

Dr. DOUGLAS GUTHRIE

Founder and Honorary President of the Society.
First President, British Society for the History of Medicine.

The Scottish Society of the History of Medicine

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

1965-66

The Society has again had a profitable session, with interest well maintained. The postponed summer meeting of session 1964-65 was held in September at Inverness and proved a most successful venture, an attendance of thirty-three members and guests amply proving the attractiveness of the venue and subject of discussion. The Annual General Meeting was held in November at Glasgow. The usual February meeting did not take place this year owing to difficulty in arranging a suitable date. The summer meeting, held at Newcastle in June, was well attended.

PERSONAL

Warm congratulations are extended to Dr. Robert M. McGregor of Hawick, a former member of our Council, whose name appeared in the Birthday Honours List published on 11th June, 1966. Dr. McGregor richly deserves the O.B.E. (Civil Division) which is to be conferred on him by Her Majesty.

The links uniting the Medical Schools of Leiden State University and Edinburgh University have always been of the strongest and these have been maintained throughout the past two centuries. In January, 1965, the Faculty of Medicine of Leiden University extended an invitation to teachers from the Faculty of Medicine of Edinburgh University to visit Leiden. This invitation was accepted and in July a party of eighteen visited Boerhaave's Alma Mater. Our Honorary President, Dr. Guthrie was included in the party. It is understood that a return programme will be arranged in Edinburgh in the near future.

During January and February, 1966, Dr. and Mrs Guthrie sailed to South America, where they were warmly received by groups of medical historians in Santiago, Chile, and later in Buenos Aires, Argentina. At each of these capital cities a luncheon party was held in their honour and thus, although at the time the universities were closed for " summer " vacation, it was possible to discuss with a number of the professors and teachers of the faculty of medicine the position of medical history as a university discipline in South America today.

Dr. Guthrie visited the library and museum of the Institute of Medical History which forms part of the University of Santiago. Each contains a wealth of material while the garden of the Institute contains many interesting plants, some of which are still in use as medicaments. Professor Laval and Dr. Costa with their assistants are in charge of the department. At Buenos Aires Professor Molinari is the leading medical historian and a keen interest is shown in the subject there.

On 9th November, 1965, at a commemoration service for Joseph Lister held at the Astley Ainslie Hospital, Edinburgh, Dr. Guthrie gave the address. In an effective and understanding way he briefly sketched the life and work of James Syme, Lister's father-in-law, the " Napoleon of Surgery " (Miles), who lived at Millbank House and on the site of which a pavilion, the Millbank Pavilion of the present Hospital was built. It was in the drawing room of the old Millbank

House that the marriage between Joseph Lister and Agnes Syme took place on 23rd April, 1856. Dr. Guthrie then referred to Lister, tracing his career and describing his difficulties in securing recognition of the antiseptic method, especially in London. In concluding, Dr. Guthrie recalled some lines from W. E. Henley's poem, " In Hospital," for Henley was, of course, once a patient of Lister.

Nor has Dr. Guthrie's pen been idle for during the session under review in addition to his paper given before the Society at the Annual General Meeting in Glasgow and which we print in this Report, he has contributed a centennial tribute to Lister in the Centenary Issue of the *Scottish Medical Journal* (1965, 10, 338-342). He also endowed a Lectureship in the History of Medicine under the joint control of the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons of Edinburgh.

Professor Adam Patrick contributed a note on a consideration of the nature of the English Sweating Sickness in *Medical History* (1965, 9, 272-279).

Dr. W. N. Boog Watson's paper on Patrick Heron Watson read before the Society at its February 1964 meeting was published in *Medical History* (1966, 10, 166-176) under the title, An Edinburgh Surgeon of the Crimean War—Patrick Heron Watson (1832-1907).

Two important volumes have come from the pen of Dr. Armstrong Davison during the session—The Casket Papers (1965) and the Evolution of Anaesthesia (1965)—and are reviewed in the section of the Report dealing with book notices.

Dr. Sydney Selwyn has written papers on Sir James Simpson and hospital cross-infection (*Medical History,* 1965, 10, 241-248) ; Scottish pioneers against hospital cross-infection (*Scottish Medical Journal,* 1966, 11, 21-24) ; and his paper read before the Society in March, 1965, on Sir John Pringle (1707-1782): hospital reformer ; moral philosopher ; and pioneer of antiseptics, appeared in *Medical History* (1966, 10, 266-274).

Dr. H. P. Tait, the senior Honorary Secretary contributed a small booklet on Dr. Elsie Maud Inglis (1864-1917): A great lady doctor (1965).

We learn from the *Medicinhistorisk Arsbok* for 1965 kindly sent to us by the Editor, Dr. Wolfram Kock, that during the year covered by the yearbook, Dr. Egill Snorrason, a co-editor, and old friend both personal and of the Society, had celebrated his fiftieth birthday and been presented with a suitable gift from medical historians in the Scandinavian countries in general and the other co-editors of the yearbook in particular. Dr. Snorrason is a well-known Danish medical historian and active member of the Danish Society for Medical History. We, too, would like to extend our congratulations to Dr. Snorrason on achieving this milestone in his life and wish him many more years of activity in the cause of medical history which he espouses so enthusiastically.

A LECTURESHIP IN THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

The Douglas Guthrie Lectureship in the History of Medicine has been endowed, under the joint control of the two Royal Colleges of Edinburgh to provide for a biennial lecture on some aspect of medical history, to be given alternately in each college.

For the first Lecture, delivered at the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh on 9th December, 1965, a happy choice was made in inviting Dr. Kenneth D. Keele to inaugurate the series. Before a large audience Dr. Keele held his listeners spellbound with a paper on The Uses and Abuses of Medical History. After paying tribute to Dr. Guthrie and what he had done for the cause of medical history in this country, Dr. Keele expressed his conviction that medical history required to be brought out of its isolation in the past into contact with

the present. While medical history is not amenable to direct observation or experiment, no doctor can really practise medicine in a chronological vacuum.

All our present clinical methods are a filtrate of past experience. Our present choice of methods requires a knowledge of past methods, of those which have failed as well as those which have been successful. This applies with full force to the taking of the clinical history. Case-taking is a comparative newcomer in medicine, for, brilliant as the clinical descriptions of the ancient masters such as Hippocrates were, they never included those important negative observations which appear only with systematic history taking. In fact, the clinical history did not take its rightful place till the time of Corvisart, and until Martinet, physician to the Hotel Dieu, wrote the first book in 1826 on systematic history-taking and clinical examination. Sir James Mackenzie constantly emphasised the value of the patient's history, especially from a prognostic viewpoint.

Dr. Keele then considered the evaluation of clinical techniques and traced the use of sound in medical diagnosis from percussion introduced by Auenbrugger to the present-day phonocardiogram, pointing out that like percussion, all other methods of physical examination and special investigation have to compete to survive. History, in fact, has helped us in our evalution of methods of physical examination. In the realm of treatment, the history of digitalis is an outstanding example of progress in knowledge of its use and action, due more to the lifting of the veil of ignorance from oedema, mitral stenosis and other cardiac arrhythmias, than to work on digitalis itself.

Turning to the social uses of medical history, Dr. Keele recalled that Oliver Wendell Holmes advised doctors to widen their horizons especially since the development of specialised knowledge has predisposed to intellectual isolation. In Africa today, there were the ancient folk or domestic medicine, witch-doctor medicine and modern medicine existing side by side. The western trained doctor must understand something of the past stages of medicine there, if he is to apply his modern methods by successfully dovetailing them and integrating them with existing customs and habits. A similar state of affairs exists in modern China where traditional methods are practised side by side with western medicine. Indeed, in acupuncture, ancient Chinese medicine is penetrating into and gaining adherents in the modern western world. Here the power of medicine is blending space and time while modern means of travel enable ancient medicine to reach us and we reach it in less than a day. Urgent therefore is the need for doctors in particular to widen their horizons.

The present day textbook of medicine in Dr. Keele's opinion consisted essentially in a condensation of past knowledge divorced from its shaping. It was in fact a form of reader's digest. Osler and Fulton were two medical writers who enhanced their textbooks by a true historical approach, and by so doing enriched their works and their readers' minds.

A growing disadvantage to the doctor ignorant of the history of his own profession is the rapid increase of knowledge in medical history of the general public, even the schoolboy. Their sources of information were short general histories of medicine usually written by non-medical writers.

Methods of research in medical history are changing too, and by the application of astronomical data, radio-active carbon-14, and other means, more accurate dating can be elicited. Modern medicine has rapidly transformed the whole scene as shown by the history of the antibiotics which is contained within a period of some two decades. Hence the conventional approach of confining medical history to the period before 1900 is fundamentally wrong. It is as if the process of history ended with that period.

Concluding his lecture with a passionate plea for the increased study of the history of medicine by doctors, Dr. Keele expressed the opinion that they would

come to see medical history as a useful cybernetic instrument which could enrich their clinical practice and even their professional " policies of behaviour " to use an expression of Wiener.

It is to be hoped that this lecture will be published in full elsewhere.

MEDICO-HISTORICAL NOTES

A new children's pavilion, built at a cost of £230,000, was opened at the Astley Ainslie Hospital, Edinburgh, on 30th July, 1955. The pavilion, the first of its kind to be built in Scotland, if not in Great Britain, will provide physiotherapy, occupational therapy, education and other facilities for children up to the age of fifteen.

Probably the most important event commemorated during the period covered by this Report was the operation by Joseph Lister on 12th August, 1865, on James Greenlees which resulted in the introduction of antiseptic surgery. On 1st September special stamps were issued for the occasion, a 4d. one designed by Peter Gauld in grey, blue and brown, depicted a carbolic acid spray, and a 1s. stamp designed by Frank Ariss in blue, purple and black, bore a portrait of Lister ; the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh issued special envelopes to carry these stamps. In Glasgow a two-day conference on " Progress since Lister " was held from 28th-29th September at which a distinguished international panel of medical scientists took part, the University conferring at a special graduation ceremony honorary degrees of doctor of laws on twelve distinguished British and foreign medical men. There were also exhibitions of Listeriana in both Glasgow and Edinburgh during the commemorative period. The *Scottish Medical Journal* (September) issued a Lister Centenary number, while the popular magazines, *Scots Magazine* (October) and *Scottish Field* (September) featured interesting accounts of Lister and his discovery. The B.B.C. in its television channel showed a sympathetic documentary, The Gentle Revolution, on 28th September.

On 18th August, 1865, Ludwig Ignaz Semmelweiss died from pyaemia, to the prevention of which in parturient women he had devoted his entire professional life. The centenary passed almost unnoticed in Britain.

The International Federation of Medical Student Associations met in Edinburgh in mid-August, this being the first time the Federation had assembled in Great Britain apart from its inaugural meeting in London in 1951. It was the largest assembly of this nature ever held, over 90 delegates attending the proceedings.

To mark the 250th anniversary of the foundation of the firm of Allen and Hanbury, a small but interesting exhibition was organised by the firm in Adam House, Edinburgh, from 23rd-28th August. The display included a representation of the original Plough Court Pharmacy, London, opened in 1715 by Sylvanus Bevan, the originator of the firm.

The first week of September was the three hundredth anniversary of the striking by bubonic plague of the little Derbyshire village of Eyam. A special service was held there to commemorate the heroism of the villagers who, with their young rector, the Revd. William Mompesson, remained strictly quarantined, entirely voluntarily, and so prevented the further spread of the infection. The full story of the outbreak was told by William Wood (1842) and Creighton in his *History of Epidemics in Britain,* volume 1, also refers at some length to the incident.

On 9th September, Lord Hughes, Joint Parliamentary Under Secretary of State laid the foundation stone of the new teaching hospital and medical school at Ninewells, Dundee. This was the first time that a teaching hospital and medical school has been combined in Scotland and it had resulted only after prolonged

argument and negotiation beginning in 1951 when the original plan was drawn up. The building is scheduled for completion in 1970 and will cost some £14 million. It will have 760 beds.

In early October plans for the rebuilding of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh were approved and work is expected to begin in 1968. The projected new hospital will have some 860 beds in comparison with the present hospital which has 980. The rebuilding will extend over ten years on the same site as the present hospital at a provisional cost of £15 million.

The first medical automation centre in Scotland, situated at 79 Lauriston Place, Edinburgh, was opened on 1st October. The centre, established jointly by the Scottish Home and Health Department and Elliott-Automation Ltd. provides facilities for education, advice and assistance in applying automation techniques to all aspects of the health and medical services. It will extend the work already done on the application of computers to medicine at the Elliott-Automation Medical Centre at University College Hospital, London.

The first Commonwealth Medical Conference was held in Edinburgh from 4th to 13th October. More than 250 delegates from every Commonwealth country attended the Conference which concerned itself mainly with mutual assistance rather than professional or technical aspects of medicine.

On 5th October a medical newsmagazine, *World Medicine,* made its appearance. This well produced, illustrated journal, containing much historical matter, is issued twice monthly and sent free of charge to all general practitioners and consultants in this country. It is published by New Medical Journals Ltd., 12 Dyott Street, London, W.C.1.

It was a source of great satisfaction and pleasure to the Society that our President was invited to open the temporary premises of the Royal Medical Society at 3 Hill Square, Edinburgh, on 27th October. The Society now become tenants of the Royal College of Surgeons who own the premises. Dr. Alexander was presented with a commemorative medallion by the Senior President of the Royal Medical Society to mark the occasion.

One hundred years ago on 4th December, 1865, a second daughter was born to the Rev. and Mrs Frederick Cavell at Swardeston, Norfolk, and was christened Edith Louisa. She later became the celebrated Nurse Edith Cavell who was shot at Brussels on 12th October, 1915. Dr. A. E. Clark Kennedy has written an authoritative biography of this remarkable woman—Edith Cavell, Pioneer and Patriot (1965).

On 17th December a group of pilgrims visited the long lost grave of Dr. Robert Knox, celebrated Scottish anatomist who was deeply involved in the Burke and Hare affair and whose reputation suffered as a consequence. He died in obscurity in London. Professor Eric Mekie, Conservator of the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh found Knox's grave after a prolonged search at Brookwood Cemetery, near Guildford, and the small group of pilgrims placed a tombstone there to commemorate the work of a distinguished anatomist.

There were some notable anniversaries during the period of 1966 covered by this Report. It was three hundred years ago that Marcello Malpighi (1628-94) published at Bonn his *De viscera structura* in which his classical essay on kidney structure was included as well as an account of a disease later associated with the name of Hodgkin. Thomas Hodgkin (1798-1866) gave a full description of lymphadenoma in 1832. He died on 5th April, 1866.

Dr. Thomas John Barnardo (1845-1905) opened his first and most famous home at 18 Stepney Causeway in early 1866. This house today forms part of the headquarters of the Barnardo organisation.

An event of some importance and significance to Scottish medical historians occurred a hundred years ago. In the New Year's Honours List for 1866, the name of Professor James Y. Simpson appeared under the heading of Baronetcies. This was the first baronetcy to be conferred on a doctor practising in Scotland.

In the *Scots Magazine* for January, 1766 a letter appeared describing the examination by a panel of distinguished ministers and others of two pupils of Thomas Braidwood (1715-1806), writing master in Edinburgh. His method of teaching "the deaf and dumb to speak has certainly brought that art to the highest perfection ever yet known." Braidwood opened the first school in Scotland at Edinburgh for teaching the deaf and dumb in 1760. Later he moved (1783) to Hackney where he opened another school. In the same magazine for the following month there is a notice of the publication by John Morgan (1735-89), M.D., of Edinburgh and "Father of medical education in North America" (Middleton) of an address entitled "A discourse upon the institution of medical schools in America, delivered at a public anniversary commencement, held in the college of Philadelphia, May 30 and 31, with a preface containing among other things, the author's apology for attempting the regular mode of practising psychic in Philadelphia."

Sir Arthur Keith (1866-1955), an Aberdeenshire man, was born on 5th February, 1866, and a centenary commemoration was held on 14th February this year at the Royal College of Surgeons of England. Keith will be remembered as a great anatomist, conservator of the College's Hunterian Museum and first master of the Buckston Browne research farm. Among his many writings was his historical work, Menders of the maimed, an account of orthopaedic surgery.

The Wassermann reaction, prototype of serological tests for syphilis, was described by Wassermann, Neisser and Bruck in 1906, and it is of interest to recall that August von Wassermann was born at Bamberg in Bavaria on 21st February, 1866.

Twenty-five years ago, on 12th February, 1941, the first human being was treated with penicillin by Florey and his associates (*Lancet,* 1941, 2, 177-189). The patient, a policeman, aged 43, was a forlorn case of *staphylococcus aureus* infection with a *streptococcus pyogenes* complication. The response to penicillin intravenously and intramuscularly was remarkable. The lesson to be learnt from this first case in which penicillin was used are dramatically described in the paper quoted above.

Also twenty-five years ago, on 24th February, 1941, a formal agreement was reached between the University of Edinburgh and the Polish government in exile in Britain on the establishment of a Polish School of Medicine within the University with its own constitution and staff. An inaugural ceremony was held on 23rd March, 1941. This unique association terminated in 1949 when the School was closed. During the period of its activity 228 students graduated from the School. To mark the anniversary of the foundation of the School the University conferred its Doctor of Laws on Professor Jacub Rostowski, the last Dean of the School.

Dr. A. Allan Bell, one of our members and honorary secretary of the historical section of the Scottish Division of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association, has drawn our attention to an exhibition of items of historical interest shown when the section met at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital, Morningside, on 13th March this year. The collection in the exhibition was rich and valuable and it is hoped that a more permanent exhibition may be set up in the hospital in the future.

Two hundred years ago, on 14th April, 1766, Professor Robert Whytt, the distinguished eighteenth century Scottish physiologist, neurologist and investigator, died at Edinburgh after a long illness. He described Whytt's reflex, the

response of the pupil to light, proving it to be of reflex origin. His book on nervous hypochondriacal and hysterical diseases (1765) was the first important work in English on neurology, while his observations on the dropsy of the brain, published posthumously (1768) gave a full clinical account of tuberculous meningitis in children. He was also interested in urinary calculi, and wrote an essay on the virtues of lime-water and soap in the cure of this disorder (1752). At the time of his death he was President of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh and held the chair of the institutes or theory of medicine (physiology) at the University.

The ninth British Medical Association's Annual Clinical Meeting was held at Worcester from 21st-24th April, 1966, and took the form of a Hastings Centenary meeting in honour of Sir Charles Hastings, founder of the Association, who died on 30th July, 1866. The B.M.A. has produced a booklet, Charles Hastings and Worcester, 1794-1866, to mark the centenary of Hasting's death and this includes a memoir by W. M. McMenemey.

An interesting and instructive exhibition on The child in history was opened at the Wellcome Historical Medical Library on 19th May and will remain open for the succeeding three months. The published catalogue is a valuable guide for those interested in the history of paediatrics.

The Anatomical Society of Great Britain and Ireland held a conversazione at the Senate House of the University of London on 13th July to celebrate the centenary of the appearance of the *Journal of Anatomy*. This journal owed its inception to Professor G. M. Humphry of Cambridge and (Sir) William Turner, then senior demonstrator in anatomy at Edinburgh University, later Professor of that subject there, and finally its Principal and Vice-Chancellor.

In the nursing world the London Nursing Exhibition and Professional Nurses and Midwives Conference celebrated its golden jubilee on 18th October, 1965, when the exhibition was opened at Seymour Hall, London. The inaugural address on Nursing in the Royal Air Force : A survey of 50 years of progress, was delivered by Air Marshal Sir Richard Nelson.

A reception was given by the Central Midwives Board for Scotland on 27th October, 1965, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the passing of the Midwives (Scotland) Act, 1915, under which the Board was constituted. Among those present was a midwife who took the Board's first examination in midwifery in 1916.

To mark the golden jubilee of the Royal College of Nursing, a dinner was held in London on 28th June, while the *Nursing Times*, organ of the College and National Council of Nurses, produced a special jubilee number (24th June, 1966). The College was established in March, 1916, and in 1939 was granted the title " Royal." As the *Nursing Times* of 1st April, 1916, in a leading article said, " There is no longer any doubt as to the future of the College of Nursing or of State registration." State registration, resulting in the formation of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales followed with the Nurses Registration Act, 1919. A similar Nurses (Scotland) Act, 1919, set up the General Nursing Council for Scotland.

BOOK AND OTHER NOTICES

As already mentioned, Dr. Armstrong Davison has written two outstanding books during the period covered by this Report. Both are briefly reviewed here.

The Casket Letters: *A solution to the Mystery of Mary Queen of Scots and the Murder of Lord Darnley* (1965, Vision Press, London). This is a delightfully written book, with reasoned arguments and logical conclusions, a volume indeed such as one might expect from the author who has contributed so often to the Society's proceedings and taken so active a part in its affairs.

Altogether the book is a fitting culmination to twenty-five years study of Mary Stewart. The originals of the so-called Casket Documents have long since been lost, only copies remaining. The book commences with a general introduction in concise fashion with the history of Mary's life. This is followed by three chapters in which the author shows that Mary was in fact very tolerant in matters religious, that Darnley was a treacherous and dishonourable man, and that Bothwell, a man of strong character, and attractive to women, earned Mary's gratitude for the efforts he made on her behalf, gratitude which may have grown into affection. In the ten following chapters a minute and searching examination is made of the Casket Letters, Dr. Davison concluding that Mary was the sole author of three of these and the major part of the fourth letter. He is also able to date these authentic letters with some accuracy, proving thereby that the dates were other than those alleged by Moray and his associates. The remaining letters are ascribed to an unknown French woman, mistress to Bothwell. On these bases, Dr. Davison is able to explain the circumstances of the writing of these " other " letters, admitting however that his explanation is hypothetical but seemingly fitting the facts. There are three appendices, one dealing with the maladies of Mary and her husbands, a modification of the paper Dr. Davison read before the Society in 1956, a second concerning the ruthless and treacherous Sir James Balfour, and a final one giving bibliography and references. The illustrations, fifteen in number, include photographs of the handwriting of Mary. There is a very complete index. The volume itself is excellently produced, and both author and publishers are to be congratulated in offering such a work, not only for scholars and historians, but for the intelligent general reader.

The Evolution of Anaesthesia (1965, Sherratt, Altrincham). This is another fine piece of writing which must enhance the author's reputation as a medical historian. Believing that the history of anaesthesia can only be interpreted correctly by viewing it in the perspective of other human activities, medical, scientific and social ; inventions, discoveries, wars, religious beliefs ; and all the manifestations of art and culture, Dr Davison devotes the first half of the book to an annotated chronology of world events and affairs. Then follow ten chapters on selected subjects in anaesthesia, for example, ether, nitrous oxide, chloroform, endotracheal intubation, refrigeration anaesthesia, local anaesthesia, etc., all of which are dealt with accurately but, alas, all too briefly, for Dr. Davison has the happy faculty of whetting the appetite. Fortunately, in his introduction, he provides his readers with a selection of books and papers for further reading. Three amusing appendices deal with the early, less well understood and mythical history of the discovery of ether, the burning at the stake of Eupham MacCalzean, allegedly for attempting to ease the pain of childbirth by witchcraft but really for several other activities in that field, and finally endotracheal and modern methods employed in the eighteenth century as described in an essay on the resuscitation of the apparently drowned by one, Charles Kite, surgeon of Gravesend. Separate indexes of drugs and techniques, and of proper names complete a book which deserves to be read by anyone with a real interest in medical history.

There are numerous other works of interest of which mention should be made in this brief section. They are, however, but a few of the many books of medico-historical significance published within recent times. It must be emphasised again that the items mentioned here are only those which we have personally perused or to which our attention has been drawn by members of the Society.

It is good to see well-known older volumes being reprinted after having been out of print. Several such reprints have come our way this year. These include : *A History of Epidemics in Britain* (1965) by Charles Creighton, has additional material by D. E. C. Eversley, E. Ashworth Underwood and

L. Overall ; *The Gold-Headed Cane* (1965) by W. Macmichael and W. Munk, is a reprint of the 1884 edition ; *History of Paediatrics* (1965) by G. F. Still, is a reprint of a book published in 1931 ; *History of Pediatrics* (1965) is a reprint of F. H. Garrison's history in volume 1 of Abt's *Pediatrics* (1923) with new material added by Arthur F. Abt (U.S.A.) ; *History of Pathology* (1965) by Esmond R. Long, is an enlarged, corrected, paper-back edition of a book originally published in 1928 (U.S.A.).

Reflections of a General Practitioner (1965) by M. Jacobs is the only autobiography which has been noticed, and is a well-written, somewhat philosophical work containing much of interest to medical historians mentioning as it does Lloyd George's Insurance Act (1911) and the National Health Service Act (1946), both of which were introduced when the author was in practice. Two diaries are of interest medically : *Zambesi Journal and Letters of Dr. John Kirk* (1965) is a two-volume work edited by R. Foskett and deals among other things with Kirk's association with David Livingstone of whom he is sometimes critical though " he and I get on nicely." Kirk, M.D. of Edinburgh, was only 26 when he joined Livingstone's expedition as botanist and medical officer. *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Pekin,* 1719-22 (1965) by John Bell, edited by J. L. Stevenson, is a delightful record of a Scottish physician at the court of Peter the Great and who was attached to a party travelling to the seat of the Manchu ruler, K'ang Hsi. Bell later returned to Scotland on his retirement and resided at the now demolished Antermony House near Kirkintilloch.

Biographies seem to become more numerous each year. *Elizabeth Garrett Anderson* (1965) by J. Manton is a book of worth, chronicling the pioneer efforts of Elizabeth Anderson first to qualify in medicine, later to establish herself as a surgeon in practice, and finally to found the New Hospital for Women and Children in Euston Road (London) and the London School of Medicine for Women of which she was the first Dean ; *William Harvey* (1965) by K. D. Keele, a volume of the Nelson series of biographies of British men of science, contains a vast amount of information in remarkably little space and is most readable ; *Spencer Wells* (1965) by J. A. Shepherd deals with the life and work of the Victorian surgeon whose artery forceps every medical student knows ; *The Little Genius* (1966) by M. Horder is a book of reminiscences rather than a biography of the late Lord Horder by his son.

Two general histories were noted. *Medical Advance, Public Health and Social Evolution* (1965) by C. Wilcocks is a paperback produced especially for senior schoolboys and girls and is, in fact, a very fine little history of medicine. *A History of Medicine* (1965) by Brian Inglis is a beautifully produced volume, profusely illustrated but suffering from some inaccuracies, probably pardonable in a writer who is not medically qualified but who is well known for his books on medical subjects such as *Fringe Medicine* and *Drugs, Doctors and Diseases.*

Histories of special subjects proliferate like mushrooms and only those with a particular appeal can be touched upon. *A History of Immunisation* (1965) by H. J. Parish is an authoritative, much needed work in these days of rapid advances in this field of medicine ; *A History of Parasitology* (1965) by W. D. Foster is, we are told, the first such book in the English language ; *A History of the Acute Abdomen* (1965) by Sir Zachary Cope is another book by one whose writings are a delight to be read ; *The Honorary Staff of Manchester Royal Infirmary, 1830-1948* (1965) by W. Brockbank is a most attractive volume, a companion it is said to Dr. Brockbank's father's book on the honorary staff from 1752-1830 (1904) which, however, we have not been able to see or read ; *The Evolution of Pharmacy in Britain* (1965) edited by Dr. F. N. L. Poynter comprises the collected papers read at the fourth British Congress of the History of Medicine and Pharmacy held at Nottingham in 1963 ; *The Conquest of Tuberculosis* (1965) by Selman A. Waksman gives the story of the discovery and use of streptomycin (U.S.A.).

In the bibliographical field, *A List of the Original Writings of Joseph Lord Lister* (1965) by W. R. Le Fanu is a moderately priced useful reference list; *Selected Papers of John Shaw Billings* (1965) compiled by F. B. Rogers is a centenary tribute to a man who transformed the medical library of the Surgeon-General from a modest collection to its present position as the national library for medical works of the United States. (How Osler would have revelled in these selected papers of his old friend and mentor !). The collected papers of the Nobel Prizewinners' laureation orations in physiology or medicine from 1922 to 1941 have now been published in English translation (1965) and the short biographical sketches of the prizewinners are invaluable.

Dr. W. S. Mitchell has drawn our attention to two items of interest dealing with Newcastle upon Tyne. The first is a *Guide to the Library* (1965), a useful booklet about the University Library. The second is entitled *The Pybus Library of Medical Books* by F. W. Ratcliffe, published in the *Connoisseur*. This last is of special interest in view of the Society's visit this summer to Newcastle to see, examine and hear about this important collection.

Once again our warm thanks are expressed to various individuals and scientific bodies who have sent us reports, catalogues, journals, papers, etc. during the past session. To the Harveian Librarian, Royal College of Physicians of London, a further series of publications dealing with exhibitions held within the College; The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry for its Annual Report, 1965-66; The Editor, *Catalyst*, Industrial Journal of Shell Chemical Company; Dr. R. H. Shryock, Librarian and Chairman, for Report of Committee on Library of the American Philosophical Society; Dr. Genevieve Miller, Editor, for copies of the *Bulletin* of the Cleveland Medical Library and for *Bibliography of the History of Medicine of the United States and Canada*, 1964; Drs. Wolfram Kock and Egill Snorrason for *Medicinhistorisk Arsbok*, 1965; Professor A. Pazzini for *Revista di Storia della Medicina*, official organ of the Italian Society for History of Medicine, and *Pagine di Storia della Medicina*, the bi-monthly bulletin of the Institute of History of Medicine of the University of Rome; Dr. Hakim Mohammad Said for *Hamdard Medical Digest*; Ministry of Health, Cuba, for *Cuadernos de Historia de la Salud Publica*, nos. 30 and 31; The Directors of the Committee on History of Science and Technology of the Polish Academy of Sciences for copies of their *Proceedings*; The Directors of the Library of Medical History of Hungary for copies of their *Communicationes ex Bibliotheca Historiae Medicae Hungarica*; All these publications are accommodated in the Library of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh for safe keeping.

THE FIFTY-FIRST ORDINARY MEETING

The Fifty-first Ordinary Meeting of the Society, the postponed summer meeting of session 1964-65, was held at Craig Dunain Hospital, Inverness, on Saturday, 18th September, 1965, Dr. Alexander in the chair. In the presence of some 33 members and guests, Dr. Alexander referred to the particular pleasure afforded to the Society in being able to meet in such pleasant surroundings in the northern capital of the kingdom. This was due to the kind invitation of Dr. Whittet, physician-superintendent of the hospital, and the Hospital Board of Management.. Dr. Whittet delivered a paper and Mr McGeogh showed a series of beautiful coloured slides of some of the islands and localities mentioned by Dr. Whittet. A full discussion followed the paper. Thereafter the Society were entertained to luncheon by the Hospital Board of Management and so came to an end a particularly happy and instructive occasion.

We print herewith a shortened version of Dr. Whittet's paper on *Gleanings from Hebridean Medical History.*

" The natives are generally ingeneous and quick in comprehension . . . They have generally retentive memories ; They see things at a great distance." MARTIN MARTIN.

These quotations are from Martin Martin's "Description of the Western Isles" (c.1695). Without this work there would have been little record of the household medical remedies of some 300 years ago. Without this work it is doubtful if Johnson and Boswell would have travelled, pen in hand, to the Hebrides. Without this work it is doubtful too if Pennant and perhaps even MacCulloch, would have embarked on not dissimilar missions with their minds already enlivened to things of interest and difference.

My limitations have made for me a necessity of what Lytton Strachey purports to regard as a virtue,—" Ignorance is the first requisite of the historian. Ignorance which simplifies and clarifies, which selects and omits with a placid perfection unattainable by the highest art." But perfection placid or otherwise is not for ordinary mortals.

The Gaelic medical manuscripts apart, Dean Monro's Description of the Western Isles of 1549 is the earliest work in the field. In those turbulent years when Mary Queen of Scots was a child and Henry VIII was interfering with Scottish affairs the Clan warfare and rebellion were said to be rife. Yet Monro's description gives prominence to the peaceful pursuits of Islands more fully stocked, cultivated and inhabited than they are to-day. Medical details, alas, are minimal. Sir Donald Monro, High Dean of the Isles, did refer however to burial customs and to the " Pigmies Ile." " At the north poynt of Lewis there is a little ile, callit the Pigmies ile, with ane little kirk in it of ther awn handey wark " . . . He speaks also of " certain baines and round heads of wonderful little quantity, allegit to be the baines of the said Pigmies ; but I leave this far of it to the ancients of Lewis." These words led MacCulloch (1824) to write, " If he had been Verger instead of Dean he could not have been much more ignorant of the diocese to which he belonged." Monro also wrote this of St. Kilda (Hirta) " The stewart as he himself tauld me, uses to take ane maske of malt ther with a masking fatt . . . they leave nather wirt or draffe unsuppit out ther, quharwith baith men, women and bairns were deid drunken, sua that they could not stand upon ther feet."

Donald Monro was born about the beginning of the 16th Century. He was related to several of the most influential families in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. His family had a tradition of service in the Church.

Martin's work of 1695 contains more than domestic medicine with its reference to the purifying power of wells, the customs of folk medicine, and much else besides. Martin was a Skye man with the natural advantage of the knowledge of land and language. He read before the Royal Society a paper on the Western Isles in 1697. It was after he wrote his book that he studied medicine and graduated at Leyden University. He died in 1719 of tuberculosis. A descendant of his was the youngest D.S.O. in the 1914-18 war. Biographical details are not easy to come by but his book remains unique in charm, original in style and fresh in simplicity and expression. One or two quotations may make this plain. " The inhabitants in general prefer conveniency to ornament both in their houses and apparel, and they rather satisfy than oppress nature in their way of eating and drinking, and not a few among them have a natural beauty which excells any that has been drawn by the finest Apelles." . . . " They seem to be better versed in the book of nature than many that have had greater opportunities of improvement." Of superstition and pagan practices, Martin says, " I would not have the reader to think that these practices are chargeable upon the present inhabitants." " Women " wrote Martin " were anciently denied

the use of writing in the islands to prevent love intrigues. Their parents believed that nature was too skilful in that matter." Concerning the bones on the Island of Pygmies, Martin wrote " this gave ground to a tradition which the natives have of a very low statured people living once here called Lusbirdon, i.e., pigmies."

The next important contributor to the history of Hebridean medicine toured these parts in 1699-1700 yet his works only really came to light by the publishing in 1963 of a book on researches by Dr. James Lorne Campbell of Canna and Professor Derick Thomson of Glasgow University. Edward Lluyd (1660-1709) born at Oswestry was Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. In 1697 he prepared a questionnaire for a survey of all the Celtic Countries including not only folk medicine but the medicine of the times, names of diseases and the anatomical and physiological nomenclature. Campbell and Thomson recognised the stupendous task which he undertook, a task which in many respects is not yet complete. They assign to him the credit of being the initiator of it all saying, " In several ways he was nearly two centuries ahead of his time." These authors also express the view that the meeting of Lluyd and the Rev. John Beaton, Episcopalian minister of Kilninian in Mull—the last learned member of the famous Beaton family—can rightly be regarded as one of the most interesting encounters in Scottish literary history. Lluyd got a full account of the Manuscript in possession of the Beaton family among them the one now in the British Museum, Add. MS.15582. This contains the " Regimen Sanitatis " which was translated and annotated by Dr. Cameron Gillies in 1911. This manuscript was written by David Kearny for a John Beaton in 1563. Lluyd recorded information about the famous Hebridean physicians. " Our physicians were Beatons both in Mull and Islay of whose skill they talk great things. They were expert scholars both in Irish and Latin, and yet had English ne'er a word." This can be compared with the MacLagan Manuscript which tells that the Islay Dr. Beaton and the Mull Dr. Beaton were educated in Spain, knew Greek and Latin but no English.

Pennant, who toured the Hebrides in 1772 recorded—" The inhabitants live to a great age and are liable to very few distempers. Men of 90 work and there is now living a woman of 80 who can ' run down a sheep '."

The great Dr. Johnson, the sage of Bolt Court, was aged 64 when he undertook his tour of the Hebrides in 1773. His main interest, like Pennant's, was of course not medical and Carruthers has said that—" His stout heart beat with a malicious hope that he might detect and demolish the whole fabric of Ossian and MacPherson. There was also in him a lingering touch of Jacobitism (scotched but not killed by his pension), and a dim veneration for the second sight." There was also a book he had read—Martin Martin's.

" A man of the Hebrides," wrote Samuel Johnson, " as soon as he appears in the morning swallows a glass of whisky, yet they are not a drunken race " . . . " The solace which the bagpipe can give they have long enjoyed but among other changes which the last Revolution introduced the use of the bagpipe begins to be forgotten " . . . " The ancient rigour of puritanism is now very much relaxed, though they are not yet equally enlightened." Dr. Johnson paid tribute to the Hebrideans by his generous admission of defeat. " Such is the laxity of Highland conversation that the inquirer is kept in continual suspense, and by a kind of intellectual retrogradation knows less as he hears more." Among the people Dr. Johnson met was Dr. Murdoch MacLeod of Raasay who was with Prince Charles at Culloden. Dr. Johnson was impressed by the doctor's wife, saying he was " glad to see he was so well married because he had an esteem for physicians."

John MacCulloch (1773-1835) born of Scottish parentage was a medical commentator on the Highland scene. He graduated M.D. at Edinburgh University in 1793. After practising for a while at Blackheath he became Geologist

to the Trignometric Survey in 1814 and became President of the Geological Society 1816-17. In 1820 he was elected F.R.S. In the same year he was appointed Physician to Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg. He wrote about the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland in a series of letters to Sir Walter Scott and these were published in 1824. MacCulloch's death in 1835 was due to a carriage accident. His pen seems to have formed words in an incisive and not uncolourful way. " In good earnest I have looked somewhat hardly into the Highland practice of physic, and it is neither very different nor very inefficacious nor very unreasonable. A Highland tibia if it breaks from some mischance is spliced by a smith or a carpenter as effectively as by a surgeon, and generally much better, and if a skull chances to be fractured the owner has the satisfaction of dying or recovering as it may happen without being trephined into an operation by some raw apprentice who wants to try his hand in boring a round hole that he may obtain a sight of the dura mater." Yet he went on to say, " There are few places in which a surgeon is not accesible, at least within a day or two."

MacCulloch also did not eschew commenting on the physicians. His words seem to contain a certain relish—" If the character of a physician is the best to travel by in Abyssinia so it is in the Highlands. Take your degree, fill your pocket with bread pills and you will be pestered and adored wherever you can. Diseases too will rise up ready armed on points like Cadmus' men the moment you appear. You may silence 9/10th of them at least. ' Pulveris exigui jactu,' and from the rest your natural progress will compel you to fly." Or again, " I know of no people more subject to melancholy and fear . . . than the Highland wives . . . Heaven knows they have little of either luxury or idleness ; yet the ailments of a Highland wife would astound the most fashionable physician daily conversant with the disorders of Grosvenor Square and with the miseries that send our idlers to Bath and Buxton and to Ramsgate and Cheltenham. I must leave this to physicians to explain ; as they understand everything."

MacCulloch did not think that the science of medicine was all. " As soon as Dr. Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood he lost all his practice. It is a complete proof that he had no ability for physic." MacCulloch noted that in the Highlands " white was the hue of virtue as well as of purity ; and thus white animals have received other honours than those of having their brains knocked out and their livers ransacked for prophecies." " If a raw egg is still good for bile because both are yellow, England may share the folly and philosophy with them." " Physic or no physic, Death knocks alike at the door of all ; at the wicker gate of the Highlander's cottage, as at the proud portals of the Nobles of the land. If he throttles the fisherman with a billow or a breaker, he chokes the wealthy citizen who is regaling on his labours in Fishmonger's Hall with turtle and custard. Arithmetically speaking, at least, it appears a matter of some indifference whether we take physic or not, whether we reside in Canna or ' among the homicides of Warwick lane ' ; the averages will not differ by a hair's breadth."

The Statute of Iona of 1609 allowed the islanders to distil but not to import spirits, (Gregory 1836). Official permission for the former practice has of course long since been withdrawn. St. Kilda mentioned by Dean Monro figures also in Martin. " A phisician could not expect his bread in this commonwealth." Yet Martin went on to say, " They always contract a cough upon the Steward's landing." This is the " boat cold " of which Connell (1887) says that they considered a boat from Harris brought a worse cold than one from Glasgow or Liverpool. The 19th Century saw a very high and tragic incidence of infantile tetanus on St. Kilda. Apart from the medical accounts of this scourge by Ferguson (1958) and others, the private diary of George Murray a divinity student written 1886-1887 makes interesting but tragic reading. The observations of the late Dr. R. S. Doig of Stornoway on tuberculosis underlines the

position until modern times with regard to Hebridean infectious illness in general —" Good constitution, good diet, bad housing." He considered that tuberculosis extending over a century had its peak in 1900 and was in fact well on the wane before the era of modern drugs.

It was MacCulloch also who wrote " It is the peculiar merit of the Medical Art that it can be understood and practised by intuition." But the crystal ball has gone and with it the weight of cane and protuberance of wig—even the dog Latin of prescription and medical science is to-day extremely chary of mentioning, other than in a whisper, the immeasurable and imponderable but eternal considerations of intuition, luck and chance ; and will not even breathe the word magic. Yet medicine is not quite unaware of these things in the still and lonely small voice of deep reflection. " Better," says the proverb, " a lucky Physician than a learned one," and in Para Handy tales of Neil Munro, surely now established in history as an outstanding, if unorthodox book of Clinical Psychiatry for the Highlands and Islands, the Captain himself says, " I would sooner have lucky chaps on board wi' me than tip-top sailors that had a great experience o' wrecks."

There is also the strange fascination of numbers and not a little history in them. Lancelot Hogben (1936) in his " Mathematics for the Million " said, " When we amuse ourselves at the expense of these early societies struggling to lisp the language of numbers in the childhood of civilisation it behoves us to ask whether we ourselves have completely grown out of magic ? " It behoves us to ask whether the most scientific member of the medical profession choosing this very day a lottery ticket will not pick one with a 3 or a 7 in it ?—not of course because he thinks it matters, but well, just for luck. Hogben's view was that for European civilisation the numbers in which magical propensities reside are more particularly 3 and 7. The Hebrides are certainly no exception to this Scriptural awareness.

Many are the controversial matters existing in relation to the old Hebridean folk cures. Said repeatedly to be known only by the superstitious, perhaps of the preceding generation, they strangely linger on from pagan to Christian times on to the very apron of the scientific age. Modified by the succeeding generations they seem always dying but never really dead. Often apparently local in impact yet they are often universal in belief. J. F. Campbell (1860), in his " Popular Tales of the West Highlands," orally collected many years before Freud, Jung and Frazer of the " Golden Bough," was not unaware of the wider connotations. It is fairly well known that the legendary Highland Physician, Farquhar Leech the Healer, achieved his wisdom by drinking serpent's brew, a brew from a white serpent in the 7th of a group. Legend assigned his place of nativity to Sutherland, but Islay tradition has the same tale of the same name. It is said he cured a poor woman with an enormous appetite which could not be satisfied by placing before her a roasting sheep. The appetising smell tempted the toad she had swallowed to come up her throat and out of her mouth. She was completely cured, but Campbell adds that he heard a similar tale in Norway, but here it was a young woman who fell asleep in a corn field and a serpent had run down her throat. A clever young doctor enticed the snake out of her with a saucer of milk. The question is as Campbell says, " When did that clever man live and where ? "—in Copenhagan, in the Hebrides or in Africa, where the creature swallowed was a baboon and the bait a banana skilfully administered by a doctor ?

The wife of a man who was suffering from rheumatism consulted one of the Mull doctors who went to see the patient bringing a birch rod and having got his patient out of bed advised his wife to lay the birch rod smartly on his back and the poor man perspired freely and became supple and free from pain. But as Campbell says, a learned doctor in the Arabian Nights, the Sage Dooban

makes King Voonan play the ball until he perspires and absorbs some medicaments from the handle of the golf stick.

Where did it all originate and when ? How long will it survive in some form or another ? One of the cures still known for epilepsy in the Hebrides is for the patient to drink dew water from the skull of a suicide, but Pritchard (1934) states that in the Zandé tribe it is the ashes of the burnt skull of a red bush monkey which are used.

It seems more than probable that it started long before St. Columba said " Behold this white pebble by which God will effect the cure of many ailments among this heathen nation." Long indeed before the old cures were recorded by Martin, by MacCulloch, by Arthur Mitchell, and by Alexander Carmichael in his *Carmina Gadelica.* Certainly long, long, before the more modern accounts to be found in the Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness, the Celtic Reviews and the Caledonian Medical Journals. In the last decade I have made three cautious investigations, modest and tentative in scope compared to that of Edward Lluyd, into the present position of the cures. Examples are given in the Appendix. " History " said Dionysius " is philosophy drawn from examples." Some may merely react by saying there is nothing new in quackery. Others will see archetypal forms of thought in the racial unconscious and think in terms of continuance of thought rather than of cures. If yet others echo the words conjectural and controversial, it may be said that these words are surely the epitome of the fate of any Hebridean commentator. And yet in relation to this particular aspect of human knowledge and thought, if as MacCulloch said " It is a peculiar merit of medical art that it can be understood and practised by intuition," then that intuition should perhaps include an awareness that not only can successive generations absorb the displaced ideas of their predecessors, but they may even endow those ideas with magical properties. Campbell notes in his West Highland Tales that in Hebridean folklore iron protects a person against the bad fairies. But he says, " Who were the powers of evil that could not resist iron ? Were they the conquered race who had only stone implements and were they in fact a pygmy race ? "

In our present scientific or pseudo-scientific adolescence it is not unpopular to dwell on how much our medical fathers did not know. As for grandmother's cures and folklore are they even worthy of mention ? Do they not smack of empiricism and perhaps magic ? But what will future generations think of us ? Might not it be expressed something like this 300 years from now in the words of some future physician interested in history ?—" They used in the 20th Century a white tablet known as aspirin, given some three times a day, for a whole variety of ailments. They did not really know how it worked. It was of course an empirical remedy. The white colour may have been associated with purity. The number three a lucky Pagan number was doubtless Christianised by the Trinity. Aspirin was of course known to alleviate mild pain and temperature and perhaps rheumatism—whatever that is. It is known of course that a large number of ailments get better if the doctors do not interfere too much. Other drugs were given in a teaspoonful, three times a day. That measure was as variable in size as a Molluca bean so the amount given cannot have really been of overwhelming importance. But perhaps after all there was something magical about aspirin. Could this small tablet have been a minute medallion or amulet ? Fine no doubt if you had faith in it. Further comment may be considered superfluous. Yet these words are written not without a sense of gratitude because they have delayed my return home during this time of Springcleaning—a ritual so dear to my wife."

Perhaps after all, the last words should, as the first really lie in the mists of antiquity with Martin Martin. " The field of nature is large and much of it

wants still to be cultivated by an ingeneous and discreet application and the curious by their observations might daily make further advances in the History of Nature."

Sources of Literature.

1. Gaelic Medical Manuscripts (?) — Cameron Gillies (1911) Regimen Sanitatis.
2. Donald Monro (1549) — Monro's Western Isles of Scotland.
3. Martin Martin (c.1695) — A Description of the Western Isle of Scotland (1704).
4. Edward Lluyd. — In the Scottish Highlands (1699-1700).
5. Thomas Pennant (1772) — A Tour in Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides.
6. Samuel Johnson (1773) — A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland.
7. James Boswell (1773) — The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, L.L.D.
8. John MacCulloch (1824) — Annual Journeys between 1811 and 1821. The Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland. In letters to Sir Walter Scott, Bart.
9. J. F. Campbell (1860) — Popular Tales of the West Highlands orally collected.
10. Arthur Mitchell (1862) — Various superstitions in the North West Highlands and Islands of Scotland especially in relation to Lunacy.
11. George Murray (1886-87) — St. Kilda Diary. (Privately owned).
12. Alexander Carmichael — Collection during the years 1855-1899 entitled Carmina Gadelica. Hymns and Incantations with illustrative notes on words, rites and customs dying and obsolete collected orally in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland and translated into English.
13. Personal Communication from the late Dr. R. S. Doig, Stornoway, about Tuberculosis in Lewis.
14. Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness (1871-1965).
15. Caledonian Medical Journal (1897) — Dr. W. A. MacNaughton. Medical Heroes of the " Forty-Five."
16. Scottish Medical Journal (1958) — Professor T. Ferguson. Infantile Tetanus in Some Western Isles in the second half of the Nineteenth Century.
17. J. G. Frazer (1922) — The Golden Bough.
18. W. C. MacKenzie (1919) — The Book of the Lews.
19. Robert Connell (1887) — St. Kilda and the St. Kildians.
20. E. E. Evans Pritchard (1934) — Essays Presented to C. G. Seligman.
21. A. MacKenzie — Prophecies of the Brahan Seer.
22. A List of Persons concerned in the Rebellion 1745-1746. Printed in 1890 from a Manuscript in the possession of the Earl of Rosebery.
23. Donald Gregory (1836) — History of the Western Highlands and Islands.
24. George Henderson (1911) — Survivals in Belief among the Celts.
25. Lancelot Hogben (1936) — Mathematics for the Million.
26. Neil Munro (1931) — Para Handy and other Tales.

THE FIFTY-SECOND MEETING AND SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Fifty-second Meeting and Seventeenth Annual General Meeting was held on Friday, 12th November, 1965, in the Bloch Lecture Theatre, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, Dr. Alexander in the chair. Twenty-five members were present. The Society's Annual Report of Proceedings for 1964-65 was presented and formally adopted. The Honorary Treasurer showed that the financial position of the Society was satisfactory and his report was approved. On the motion of Dr. A. T. Sandison, seconded by Dr. W. S. Mitchell, the President, Vice-Presidents, Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Secretaries and Members of Council eligible for re-election were unanimously re-elected, and Mr John S. G. Blair and Dr. Robert J. Peters were elected Members of Council in place of Mr D. C. Miln and Mr G. R. Pendrill who retired by rotation. After other items of private business had been discussed, the President called upon Dr. Douglas Guthrie to read his paper entitled:

JOSEPH LISTER: A TALE OF THREE CITIES

On the 12th of August, 1865, James Greenlees, a boy of eleven, was admitted to Professor Lister's ward in Glasgow Royal Infirmary, suffering from a compound fracture of the leg. Little did he think that his accident would inaugurate the revolution in surgery which we now celebrate in this Centenary Year. Various congresses have already been held to discuss " wound infection," and the progress of surgery since Lister's day, and it is only fitting that the Scottish Society of History of Medicine should join in the tribute to Lister's memory as we look back upon his career in three great cities. The period of his active practice as a surgeon extended over forty years; nine in Glasgow, fifteen in Edinburgh and sixteen in London. It began at Edinburgh in 1853, when as a young man aged twenty-six he came from London to Edinburgh to study under Professor James Syme. In 1860 Lister was elected Professor of Surgery at the University of Glasgow, where he remained for nine years, including, of course, the year of his discovery. Recalled to Edinburgh in 1869 to succeed Syme in the Chair of Clinical Surgery, a post which he held for eight years, Lister continued the researches which he had so well begun in Glasgow. This second Edinburgh period lasted until 1877, when he returned to London, as successor to Sir William Fergusson at King's College Hospital, and to occupy a special Chair of Clinical Surgery which had been created for him. He continued to hold these posts for sixteen years, when he retired from active practice. It is true that his services were in demand after his retiral, notably, when he was one of the surgeons in attendance on King Edward VII on the eve of the Coronation in 1902, and that he continued to reside in London until about ten years before his death when he went to live at Walmer in Kent. There he died on 10th February, 1912 at the age of eighty-five.

Among many others honours, Lister had been awarded the Freedom of each of the three cities which had been the scenes of his activities—that of Edinburgh in 1898, of London in 1907 (his eightieth year) and of Glasgow in 1908.

His triumphal progress by way of three great cities is the keynote of Lister's career. Had he remained in one place, his influence might have been curbed, at least for a time. Certainly his brave decision to go to London, when he was fifty years of age and at the height of his fame, in order to convince the sceptics there, was a bold and noble venture which commands our admiration.

Wound Treatment before Lister's day.

The problem of the septic infection of wounds had occupied the minds of surgeons since very early times. The earliest physician was a priest or sorcerer; in fact, a witch doctor. But the art of surgery arose even earlier than that of

medicine, and no mystery surrounded its beginnings. The primitive surgeon was simply a craftsman, concerned with the treatment of bodily injuries, long before any surgical operation was practised, and also long before mankind discovered the virtues of plants as remedies, and their vices as poisons. Antiseptics may well have been the first medicaments in history, and perhaps the first wound dressing was the leaf of a tree or shrub. The Good Samaritan in Biblical times treated the wounds of his patient by " pouring in oil and wine," and at a much later date boiling oil was used for gunshot wounds.

In his fascinating account of his life as an army surgeon, Ambroise Paré recommends that wounds made by gunshot ought to be dressed with suppurative medicines and not with scalding oil. Although Paré recognised the healing power of Nature when he wrote the famous words, " I dressed him to the end of his case, but God healed him," he held the age-long belief that *suppuration was a normal and necessary process* during the healing of wounds, and that it ought to be promoted. This was a fallacy which persisted for centuries, from Galen, right down to the time of Lister, who found it necessary to tell his students. " There is no such thing as a healing ointment." The so-called " laudable pus " was extolled as essential, and all manner of dressings were used to favour its appearance.

Lister was ever opposed to such meddlesome surgery. He would not have agreed with the methods of Paracelsus, that violent apostle of the Renaissance who showed his contempt for his predecessors by publicly burning their books, but he would have approved the view expressed by Paracelsus, that Nature healed wounds by sealing the edges with a " balsam " manufactured by the body. This did not explain the cause of wound infection. It was not until the so-called " germ theory " was expounded by Pasteur, that Lister recognised that here, at last, was the clue for which he had been seeking.

How Discoveries Are Made.

In order to understand *how* Lister arrived at his great discovery, and the solution of a problem which had baffled so many of his predecessors, it is necessary to consider briefly the principles of scientific investigation which have been followed since early times. In prehistoric days, when the quest for knowledge was sadly limited by superstition and magic, Nature hardly had a chance. The study of natural phenomena was despised and thwarted by the current trend of exalting the supernatural. Another difficulty appeared during Roman times, when no support was given to studies which did not yield practical results. (Indeed, it may be said that, down the ages, the so-called " practical man " has always been an enemy of progress).

There was also a time when mankind preferred to argue instead of observing and making experiments ; a phase which we find it difficult to understand today.

The practice of accurate measurement inaugurated by Galileo, and many others, brought great advances which continued from the Renaissance to the present day, and it is now recognised that even the specialist (and nearly everyone is a specialist) should be well grounded in the basic sciences, and must retain an interest in work outside his own chosen field. All these matters are essential to any useful survey of Lister's work. In the very year of Lister's discovery, 1865, Claude Bernard published his " Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine," in which he showed very clearly the principles upon which medical research ought to be conducted. The basis or starting point for the solution of every problem, Claude Bernard argued, is a theory, an *assumption,* a *hypothesis*—call it what you will. The hypothesis is to Science what inspiration is to Art. Every physician uses it in establishing a diagnosis. Nevertheless, the hypothesis is simply a scaffolding or framework, to be discarded or altered as the work of construction proceeds.

The observer ought to note what he sees, and not just what he expects to see, or wishes to see. The unusual or the unexpected should be *specially* noted, as here may lie the way to a discovery. Furthermore, to discover an error in accepted facts may be quite as important as the revelation of new facts ; indeed Lister himself wrote, " Next to the promulgation of truth, the best thing a man can do is the recantation of error." As the process of research proceeds, the investigator finds that the *end* is even more difficult than the beginning, because the researcher may find himself well-nigh drowned in a mass of facts, leading nowhere. Thus, mere knowledge is not enough: it must be linked with existing knowledge. Lister was well aware of all these pitfalls and difficulties as he approaced his task of enquiring into the causes of wound infection. His methods deserve careful study.

Lister's Early Life and Preparation.

Although the facts of Lister's career have been stated clearly by many especially during the present Centenary Year, it may be of interest to give a brief summary of his work and outlook during the years of preparation. Joseph Lister, the son of Joseph Jackson Lister, a prosperous London wine-merchant, was born at Upton House, Plaistow, Essex, about six miles from the centre of London. It was at that time a pleasant residential area, much favoured by the Quaker community which included, besides the Listers, such well-known families as the Frys and the Gurneys, and during the previous century, Dr. John Fothergill. In more recent times, the Listers' house became St. Peter's Vicarage, and the village of Lister's day is now part of Greater London.

Lister's father devoted much of his time to a study of the microscope, and perfected the modern achromatic microscope, for which services he was awarded the Fellowship of the Royal Society in 1832. From his father, Lister doubless inherited that love of Nature which was of such value in all his researches. Even at the age of eleven we find him writing the following letter :—

My Dear Cousin Rachael, I hope thee wilt accept this little drawing in one of the leaves of the books that thee gave me. Excuse me for writing this badly it was done in haste. I remain thy affectionate Cousin Joseph Lister."

At the age of sixteen, Joseph Lister passed from school to university. Quakers and Non-conformists were denied entrance to Oxford and Cambridge, but in 1825 there had been established in London a centre of learning called University College, which welcomed all comers. There, Lister graduated B.A. in 1847, and later became M.B., and a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons. Two papers published in 1853, " On the Contractile Tissue of the Iris," and " On the Muscular Tissue of the Skin," reveal his interest in Physiology and in the microscope.

Lister goes to Scotland.

Lister, now twenty-six years of age, had decided to visit some Continental Schools before settling in London as a surgeon, but the Professor of Physiology at University College, Professor Sharpey, (the first professor in that subject to be appointed in Britain) advised him instead to visit Edinburgh to see the work of Professor James Syme. Accordingly, in September 1853, with Sharpey's letter of introduction in his pocket, Lister set out for Scotland, which was to be his home for the next twenty-four years. Syme was then nearing the height of his fame. Having failed to secure appointment to the staff of the Royal Infirmary, he had opened a surgical hospital of his own called Minto House (long since demolished), which he conducted with great success until 1833 when he became Professor of Clinical Surgery in succession to James Russell then

aged eighty-one. Russell had offered to resign from this post on condition that his successor should pay him £300 a year for the rest of his life. Syme accepted this curious bargain, and Russell died three years later.

Syme's hospital, *Minto House,* was the scene of the moving events so dramatically described by Dr. John Brown in " Rab and his friends." Syme is described as the surgeon who " never wasted a word, a drop of ink, or a drop of blood." This sketch was made by Alaxender Peddie, who was Syme's " dresser " along with John Brown. These two were schoolboys together, were both ministers' sons, and were together as Syme's assistants in Minto House. This was twenty years before Lister came to Edinburgh but it seems to be an essential preface to the story. Syme was immediately attracted by his visitor from London, and offered him the post of house-surgeon. In the following year, owing to the death, from cholera in the Crimea, of R. J. Mackenzie, the position of Assistant Surgeon became vacant, and Lister was appointed. A photograph taken about this time shows Lister with six of his associates, including one who became Sir John Kirk the African administrator and friend of David Livingstone, and others who attained eminence, such as Heron Watson and Hogarth Pringle. The only Englishman in the group besides Lister, is John Beddoe. In his interesting autobiography, " Memories of Eighty Years," Beddoe tells how he and Lister, one Sunday morning, went climbing on the Salisbury Crags, not very far from the Infirmary. Lister fell, and was badly bruised, though no bones were broken. He was carried back to the hospital on one of the familiar basket stretchers, and was met by the Staff Nurse, the famous Mrs Porter, who exclaimed, " Eh Doctor Beedie, I weel kent what would happen. Ye Englishmen are sae foolish gaeing aboot fustling on the Sabbath." Mrs Janet Porter was a strong character who served the Infirmary faithfully for forty-seven years. She was never called Sister or Matron. The Matron at that time was the housekeeper who took no part in the nursing. Mrs Porter was always Staff-nurse, Syme was The Master, and Lister was The Chief. Further details will be given presently, when we speak of the second Edinburgh period in Lister's career.

Meantime a word about Agnes Syme, later Lady Lister. On 23rd April, 1856, Joseph Lister was married to Syme's eldest daughter Agnes in the drawing-room of Millbank House, which is now the Astley-Ainslie Institution. He had found an ideal partner. Agnes Syme was a charming hostess and a devoted wife. They made their first home at 11 Rutland Street, which was then the " Harley Street " of Edinburgh. She attended to her husband's instruments, she wrote, for hours, to his dictation, before the days of typewriters, and she even imitated his handwriting. Theirs was a happy union, of 37 years. Lady Lister died in 1893, while on holiday in Italy, and just before Lister's retiral from the Chair, and hospital appointment at Kings College Hospital, London.

While waiting for practice in Rutland Street, Edinburgh, Lister was occupied with various researches, and although we do not know just when he concentrated his attention upon septic infection. Meanwhile he studied the circulation in the foot of a frog captured in Duddingston Loch, and published the results in two papers entitled, " On the early stages of inflammation." He devised various instruments—his ear hook, his bluntpointed scissors, and, best-known of all, his *sinus forceps* with blades so slender that he could pick fluff out of the smallest key.

In 1860, a new phase of his busy life commenced when he was appointed Professor of Surgery in Glasgow University. To his dismay, he discovered that he must deliver a speech in Latin on assuming office, and we find him writing to his father ever his confidential adviser, telling him that " by Aggie's suggestion I took with me a Latin dictionary in a small carpet bag, and completed the task during the railway journey." Lister had the advantage of entering surgery at a

time when the introduction of anaesthesia had abolished the pain of operations. Nevertheless there remained the dread menace of septic infection which anaesthesia did nothing to mitigate. It does not surprise us to learn that the death rate was even greater after the use of anaesthesia became the usual practice. The operation might be painlessly conducted, but within a few days the patient and the surgeon found themselves fighting a losing battle.

One-third of the cases of amputation died. The danger of sepsis greatly limited the surgeon's field. It was Sir John Erichsen, one of Lister's teachers in London, who suggested that the trouble arose " in the very fabric of the hospital." He coined the word " Hospitalism," and affirmed that the only remedy was, to demolish and rebuild hospitals. Sir James Young Simpson of Edinburgh supported this view, and wrote dramatically on the need for hospital reconstruction. Lister's wards in Glasgow Royal Infirmary, built on the site of a cemetery used during a cholera epidemic, were a flagrant example of the need for reform. The success of his early experiments were all the more remarkable, conducted as they were in such an environment. One reason for Lister's success lay in the fact that he had studied all the sciences which had any bearing upon surgery.

It was Thomas Anderson, his colleague in the Chair of Chemistry, who drew Lister's attention to the work of Louis Pasteur, who had proved that the fermentation of wine was not a chemical process but was the work of minute living organisms. This idea, Lister applied to the prevention of putrefaction in wounds. At first Lister tried out his antiseptic method in the treatment of compound fracture. He sought to interpose an antiseptic barrier between the wound and the outside world ; " an antiseptic to exclude putrefaction, and a protective to exclude the antiseptic." The use of carbolic acid, was only a step in Lister's reasoning. The essential cause of sepsis was micro-organisms, and so far, no one had demonstrated their presence. This idea led to the use of the famous flasks which Lister carried about with him when he lectured. It was not the air, but " something in the air " which caused sepsis in wounds. His preoccupation with a germ-free atmosphere led Lister to devise the carbolic spray in 1871, two years after his return to Edinburgh to succeed his old Master James Syme in the Chair of Clinical surgery. It remained in use until 1887.

By this time it had come to be realised that the air was not the only carrier of septic infection. The surgeons' hands, the instruments, the skin of the patient, the swabs and dressings—all might be potent sources of infection. The change in surgical outlook came slowly. Surgeons could not understand how there was any connection between the fermentation of milk and the putrefaction of wounds.

In 1877, at the age of fifty, Lister resolved to remove to London in order to convince his colleagues there of the value of the antiseptic doctrine. He met with strong opposition and a chilly reception, but victory was complete at last, as was fully demonstrated by his cordial reception in Paris in 1892, on the occasion of Pasteur's 70th birthday. The two great men embraced each other amid loud and prolonged applause.

A Poet as a patient under Lister.

It may be suitable to conclude those rather scattered remarks with some reference to the poet, W. E. Henley, who was a patient under Lister's care in the old Edinburgh Infirmary about 1873, that is to say, during the second Edinburgh period of Lister's career. No one could claim that Henley was a poet of the first rank, but his verses are worth reading, if only to capture the atmosphere of that date. Listen to him as he enters hospital:—

" A small, strange, bandaged child, so aged and yet so young,
Precedes me gravely to the waiting room.
I limp behind, my confidence all gone.
The grey-haired soldier-porter waves me on,
And on I crawl, and still my spirits fail :
A tragic meanness seems so to environ
These corridors and stairs of stone and iron,
Cold, naked, clean—half-workhouse and half-jail."

Then comes the operation, when—

" You are carried in a basket,
Like a carcase from the shambles,
To the theatre, a cockpit
Where they stretch you on a table.
Then they bid you close your eyelids
And they mask you with a napkin,
And the anaesthetic reaches
Hot and subtle through your being."

There follows a description of Nurse and Surgeon—

" These thirty years has she been nursing here,
Some of it under Syme, her hero still.
The doctors love her, tease her, use her skill.
They say The Chief himself is half-afraid of her."

Some oft-quoted lines describe Lister himself—

" His faultless patience, his unyielding will,
Beautiful gentleness and splendid skill,
Innumerable gratitudes reply.
His wise, rare smile is sweet with certainties,
And seems in all his patients to compel
Such love and faith as failure cannot quell.
We hold him for another Herakles."

And finally, a vigorous song of rejoicing as the patient leaves hospital labelled DISCHARGED—

" Carry me out
Into the wind and the sunshine,
Into the beautiful world.
O, the wonder, the spell of the streets,
The stature and strength of the horses,
The rustle and echo of footfalls,
The flat roar and rattle of wheels.
Free, . . . but
Dizzy, hysterical, faint,
I sit, and the carriage rolls on with me
Into the wonderful world."

THE FIFTY-THIRD ORDINARY MEETING

The Fifty-third Ordinary Meeting of the Society was held in the University Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, on Saturday, 4th June, 1966, the President in the Chair. Members and their guests met for informal lunch prior to the meeting. The Society being constituted for business, the President called upon Dr. W. S. Mitchell to read a paper on " Six Letters of John Leyden."

In introducing his subject, Dr. Mitchell remarked that it was in the nature of an appendix to Dr. Douglas Guthrie's paper on Leyden read at Hawick two years ago, when the Society made a pilgrimage to Leyden's birthplace and memorial at Denholm.

The six letters, subsequently bound in one volume, are from the Robert White Collection in Newcastle University Library; they were written to Dr. James Brown, Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University of Glasgow, though all but the first are addressed to St. Andrews. They were written between December 1799 and mid-November 1802, and describe some of Leyden's literary activities and his journey through the Highlands. The first refers to his days in St. Andrews, where he met James Brown. There are puzzling references to " the fashions of Camperdown " and the " votarys of the Red Cross St. Andrew " in St. Andrews. He mentions the friends whom he has met in Edinburgh. The second letter mentions the writer's feuds with Robert Heron (editor of *The Globe* and other works) and Thomas Campbell, the poet, mainly over certain articles in *The Critical Review*, a short-lived periodical which published abstracts of the sermons delivered in the various churches in Edinburgh, but which, it was suspected, was run by a coterie of atheists of whom it was said that Leyden was one; he was very indignant about this, and disclaimed any connection with " this vile publication." He refers to his editing of *The Complaint of Scotland,* now his best known literary work. The third letter is very short, and consists simply of a request for details of " the gallant adventure of Honey," as Leyden had been asked to write this to accompany an engraving of the hero. Honey, a student at St. Andrews, had gallantly rescued seven men from a wrecked ship early in 1800.

The fourth and fifth letters consist of a condensed account of Leyden's tour in the Highlands, his journal of which was eventually edited by J. Sinton and published in 1903 as *Journal of a Tour in the Highlands and Western Islands in* 1800.

The sixth letter was written after he had obtained the degree of M.D. from St. Andrews University when his plans for going East were under way. In a curious P.S. he asks his correspondent to " write to me as usual without Dr. which I have not mentioned and do not mention to Constable my writing you at all for reasons I shall mention." However, what the reasons were, we do not know.

Following the paper on Leyden's letters, the members of the Society and guests (who included Professor W. R. Hindmarsh, Chairman of the Library Committee, and Professor Ian Rannie, Chairman of the Medical Book Selection Committee) proceeded to the Pybus Room to inspect the Pybus Collection. Dr. Mitchell, in his capacity as Keeper of the Pybus Collection, spoke of the delight of all concerned when Emeritus Professor F. C. Pybus, F.R.C.S. had decided in 1965 to present to the University of Newcastle upon Tyne his renowned collection of medical books, engravings, letters and portraits. A tape recording was played of the donor's words at the ceremony on 15th September, 1965, when Professor Pybus said that this was the culmination of a dream of forty years of collecting, and that he hoped that the collection would be used and that it would be a stimulus to the study of the history of medicine. Among the exhibits were: an illustrated manuscript of the works of John of Arderne, the earliest English writer on surgery, c.1380; students' notes of lectures by

John Hunter, William Hunter and Alexander Monro *tertius*; Among the incunabula on view were: Celsus, *De Medicina,* 1478; *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum,* 1480; Savonarola, *Practica,* 1497; and there were early editions of the works of Galen, Hippocrates, Dioscorides (with an interesting Scottish provenance—Rev. J. B. Craven, Archdeacon of Orkney—Forbes Leith family—Earl of Cromer), Guy de Chauliac, Andrew Boorde, Taliacotus, Vesalius. Later and modern authors represented were the Hunters, James Lind, Sir Charles Bell, Laennec, Jenner, Beaumont, Pasteur, Madame Curie. A copy of Haller's *Icones anatomicae* was pointed out as having an inscription in the hand of Sir Charles Bell recording that this was his favourite copy of Haller and that he now presents it to John Goodsir; the names of other members of the Bell family appear on the flyleaves and a later note records that the book was purchased by one Allan Thomson at the sale of Goodsir's books in December 1867. Particular attention was devoted to the most unusual item among the printed books—William Harvey's own copy of his *De generatione animalium, London* 1651, with notes in his own hand. Among the oil paintings adorning the walls of the Pybus Room were noticed those of Samuel Argall, M.D. by Sir Godfrey Kneller, Sir Thomas Sydenham, by Sir Peter Lely, and Percivall Pott, by Sir Joshua Reynolds. A selection from the 2,000 engravings in the Collection included portraits of William Harvey, John Armstrong, "Lang Sandy Wood," and Joseph Black, and letters of Robert Knox, Baron Larrey, Sir William Osler and Lord Lister were also on view. The members learned with interest that Miss J. S. Emmerson, Assistant Librarian in the University of Newcastle Library had been appointed Pybus Fellow for the two years 1966-68 to catalogue the Collection. In the absence of Emeritus Professor Pybus through indisposition it was agreed to convey to him the pleasure felt by the members of the Society in seeing the Collection in its new home.

A most enjoyable meeting was brought to a close with tea being served in the Library staffroom.

W. A. ALEXANDER, *President.*

H. P. TAIT, *Senior Honorary Secretary.*

APPENDIX

PRINCIPLES OF FAITH AND FOLK CURES

Scientific interest has increased since Frazer's Golden Bough and modern psychopathology.

WELLS AND SPRINGS.

Well worship, pagan or primitive belief. Some Christianised by dedication after a Saint, i.e., St. Ronan's (Lewis) St. Andrew's (Shader, Lewis). Part of the cure was to drink the water of the well and leave an oblation—from Hebrides to Granges.

FIRE WORSHIP.

Certain Beltane (May) festivals and cures, i.e., passing an ailing child through a hoop of iron to which blazing wisps of straw had been fixed, etc.

CURATIVE PROPERTIES of local Plants, Herbs and sometimes Fungi.

From Foxglove to tormentil and sorrel, tribileach (trefoil) etc., (quoted by Martin Martin).
Seaweeds, dulst, carrageen, limpets, etc.
Cobwebs, fungi—for cuts and septic sores.

CURATIVE PROPERTIES of Animals, Birds, Fishes.

Deer's grease, deer horn scrapings, eel flesh, thyroid gland of sheep killed on St. Bridget's day for dwarfs, etc.

CHARMS AND CURES.

From Molluca beans to queer shaped stones and fossils, i.e., stones with a hole in them for warding off witches, the evil eye and curing ailments, etc. Some used as Amulets, etc.

FRAZER's Principles of Sympathetic magic.

1. That like produces like.—Law of similarity, i.e.—
   (a) If you make an image of someone and destroy it slowly by pins, or running water in a stream it will affect the person.
   (b) Heart shaped piece of lead for heart disease, etc.
2. That things that have been in contact with each other go on exerting effect after they have been severed—Law of Contact, i.e.—
   Hairs or nails, leading on to transference of disease.
3. Evil may be transferred to animate or inanimate objects, or be cleansed, i.e., by running water, especially that over which the living and dead have passed, or into which a silver coin has been put.

COLOURS.

White—purity.
Red—blood, suffering. Colour of the Rowan tree.
Black—evil.
Grey—mystery.
or as Frazer puts it "the black thread of magic, the red thread of religion, and the white thread of science."

METALS.

The metals have long been supposed to play a part in healing:—
Gold
Silver
Copper
Iron—To ward off evil.

SPECIAL VARIATIONS of Blessing of the Trinity.

Influence of the seventh son (or some one born feet first, etc.).

SHOCK TREATMENTS.

Dragging behind boat 3 times round island clockwise.
Pagan survival of sun worship and sunwise direction.
Blacksmith with hammer—treating neurosis, rheumatism, etc.

SPECIAL NUMBERS.

3 (number in Trinity) and multiples of 3, also 7.

N.B.—*All these with special variations, admixtures and enigmas at special times, such as full moon, night without moon, etc.*

FURTHER EXAMPLES.

(1) FOR SHINGLES:
The Blood of a black hen or a Munro (Outer Isles).
Smear with blood of a black cow. (Lewis).
(The colour Black and the sacrifice of blood).
Why a Munro ?

(2) FOR EPILEPSY:

(a) Hair clippings and nail pairing from the affected person tied round black cock with black sash. The cock is then buried alive on exact spot where patient fell. (Skye, Lewis, etc.).
(Law of contact: Colour black: Sacrifice).
Evil or disease will go into black cock and die with it.

(b) Drink dew water from skull of suicide taken from grave at midnight. (Isle of Lewis).
(Law of similarity + cleansing effect of dew water).
Sacrifice of suicide.

(c) Special wells, etc.

(3) TOOTHACHE:

Mixture of gunpowder and tallow. (Skye).
A coffin nail held in the mouth. (Skye).
Chew tobacco. (Lewis).

(4) RHEUMATISM:

Put affected limbs in ant heap.—Idea of pain and punishment, Why ?.
Rheumatism " p-p-punished " out of him.
Copper bangle to be worn. (Isle of Lewis, Skye and Outer Isles).
Wearing of amber, etc. (Skye).

(5) WARTS:

(a) Put nine (3 x 3) grounds of corn in secret place and leave them. As they rot so will the warts go away. (Skye, Lewis, Tiree, etc).

(b) Little green blob (gallbladder) attached to sheep's liver punctured and contents rubbed over wart. (Outer Isles).

(c) Apply a piece of stolen meat to the wart and then bury it. As the meat decays so will the wart.

(d) Rub on first spittle (own) in the morning. (Outer Isles).

(6) SPRAINS:

(a) Paste made of seal or eel fat. (Outer Isles).

(b) Tie 3 knots on hemp cord and recite rhyme.

(c) Tie black thread tightly round sprained part without being asked by patient. (Lewis).

(d) Tie three-stranded black or red thread round sprain with invocation of Trinity.

(7) JAUNDICE:

(a) Person wades to 7th wave of incoming tide, fills bottle with water and anoints the small of his back. (Tiree).

(b) Mouse cooked and dressed to look like a sparrow is given to the patient. After his repast the sufferer is informed of the nature of his meal. Smitten with disgust and revulsion the patient vomits getting rid of the jaundice. (Lewis).

(c) Yellow salt butter put on and strapped round the stomach until absorbed. (Lewis).

These are only a few examples. They are still known, remembered and no doubt sometimes used. They span the centuries and the continents of the world. Some represent the persistent archetypal thoughts of mankind. Others are more trivial and local in concept. The fact that they are regarded as faith cures should not obscure the empirical results obtained in some instances, i.e. In the case of a sore back hyper-extension of the spine was no doubt obtained by someone walking up and down the patient's back while he lay prone. But the part considered really vital to the cure was for this to be done by a 7th son or a son born feet first.

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 fixed from time to time by the Council and reported to members of the Society.

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.

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