The Scottish Society of the History of Medicine

(Founded April, 1948)

REPORT

OF

PROCEEDINGS

SESSION 1950-51

The Scottish Society of the History of Medicine.

President - - -	Dr. DOUGLAS GUTHRIE.
Vice-Presidents - -	Mr W. J. STUART.
	Professor G. B. FLEMING (Glasgow)
Hon. Secretary - -	Dr. H. P. TAIT.
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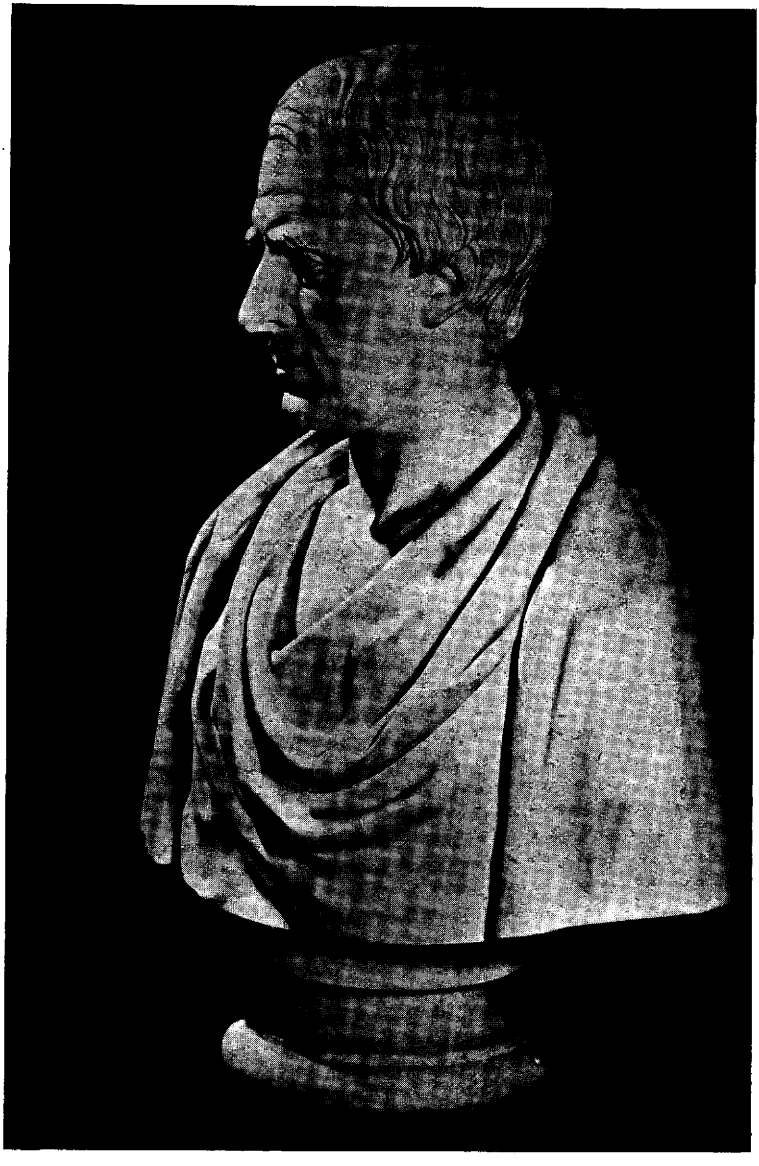
	Dr. WILKIE MILLAR.
	Professor CHAS. M'NEIL.
	Mr A. L. GOODALL (Glasgow).
	The Senior President, Royal Medical Society.
	Dr. J. MENZIES CAMPBELL (Glasgow).
	Dr. A. M. GILLESPIE.
	Dr. W. S. MITCHELL (Aberdeen).



DR. FRANCIS ADAMS OF BANCHORY (1796-1861)

The Scottish Society of the History of Medicine.

The general satisfactory position of the Society has been well maintained this year. Membership *now exceeds the hundred mark* and considerable interest has been displayed at the various meetings held. Printing difficulties have again prevented the publication of full reports of the papers delivered but a synopsis of each is given in this Report. It is hoped that the President will soon publish his most original address on Maya and Inca medicine *in extenso*. Professor W. J. Brownlow Riddell gave those present at the Tenth Meeting a racy and sympathetic account of J. R. Wolfe, his life and activities. He had already published a more formal paper on Wolfe in *The British Journal of Plastic Surgery* of October, 1950. Mr A. L. Goodall has given a considerable amount of patient research to the life of Peter Lowe and it is confidently hoped that his probings will prove successful in elucidating some of the uncertainties of Lowe's life.

At the most delightful and successful meeting at Aberdeen on June 16th, 1951, Professor John Craig gave a very full description of the development of the Aberdeen Medico Chirurgical Society, which he hopes to publish in full soon. Dr. Richards gave an interesting paper on Hippocrates and showed how careful observation by an old master would remain for ever fresh in the annals of clinical medicine and surgery. The exhibition of incunabula and old books arranged by Dr. Mitchell was of such absorbing interest and importance that the exhibits have been listed in full in this Report.

The Council of the Society looks forward to the future with confidence, strengthened by the knowledge that the Society is fulfilling its purpose in spreading an interest in and stimulation to research in the history of medicine and science.

The Ninth Meeting and Second Annual General Meeting.

The Ninth Meeting and Second Annual General Meeting of the Society was held in the Hall of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, on Monday, 16th October 1950. Dr. Douglas Guthrie, the President, was in the chair. The Second Annual Report of the Society was presented at the meeting and unanimously approved. The Treasurer reported that the Society had one hundred members, and that its financial position was sound. On the motion of Dr. A. T. Wallace, seconded by Dr. J. L. Henderson, it was agreed, without dissent, that the President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer, together with Sir Henry Wade, Dr. W. D. D. Small, Dr. John Ritchie, Dr. A. F. Wilkie Millar, Professor Charles McNeil, Mr A. L. Goodall and the Senior President of the Royal Medical Society of Edinburgh be re-elected as Office-Bearers of the Society, and that Dr. J. Menzies Campbell, Dr. A. M. Gillespie and Dr. W. S. Mitchell be elected members of Council in place of Professor David Campbell, Dr. H. J. C. Gibson and Major-General E. A. Sutton, resigned. The President accorded a warm welcome to the new members of Council and paid tribute to the whole-hearted support and encouragement given to the Society by the retiring Councillors.

Thereafter the President delivered an address entitled "A Medical Historian in Latin America," which was illustrated by a series of maps and colour photographs.

The art of healing among primitive people is always of interest to the student of medical history, but it must be viewed in its contemporary setting and not merely regarded as the earliest phase of what we know as modern medicine.

To primitive man disease has ever appeared to be a supernatural phenomenon, which must be treated by magical methods. This conclusion emerges whether we study the medicine of primitive man as he exists today, or that of prehistoric man, so far as he can be studied from the slender evidence still available.

The early inhabitants of the New World form a kind of half-way house between those two extremes. At some very early date they arrived in America, from Asia, by way of the Behring Straits, and gradually proceeded south along the long mountain chains of the Rockies and the Andes. Such, at least, is the prevalent idea among pre-historians today. When the Spaniards invaded South and Central America in the sixteenth century, they found the Incas firmly established as a Socialist State in the uplands

of Peru and Bolivia, the Aztecs well nigh committing race suicide by mass human sacrifices in Mexico, and, more remarkable than either, the Mayas of Yucatan and the Gautemala highlands, the greatest of all American aboriginals, the Greeks of the New World, as they have been called. The Maya people, at least in Yucatan, have preserved their racial and linguistic identity to this day. Their two great achievements were the cultivation of maize and the discovery of a calendar. This remarkable civilisation reached its zenith about 1000 A.D. It was already in decline when the Spaniards landed, but the wonderful buildings and stone carvings which still exist at Chichen Itza and elsewhere, bear witness to the ability of those architects and sculptors. Of their system of medicine, little evidence remains, and although the serpent or rattlesnake is a dominant feature in the sculpture, there is no reason to associate it with medicine in that part of the world.

The ancient Maya made use of many medicinal plants of which there was, and still is, an infinite variety, just as do their modern descendants. Some of the "yerbateros," or herbalists, of today possess a wide knowledge of vegetable remedies, but this art is rapidly disappearing under the growing importation of cheap and easily procurable synthetic drugs. The modern representative of the Maya race is of short stout build, with glossy black hair and features strangely resembling the Chinese. His blood pressure is low and his pulse rate slow, averaging 52 per minute. The apparent immunity to syphilis is also surprising. When we turn from the Maya of Central America to the Inca of Peru, we find a more fruitful field among the relics of earlier civilisation, although the modern "Indian" medicine man or "brujo," is for the most part a charlatan. The main sources of their early medical history are to be found in the earthenware jars or vessels which are decorated by all manner of designs, some of them representing diseases, such as *Verruga Peruana* or Oroya fever, which in the 1860s, took heavy toll of the builders of the Oroya railway, and which is still found in some of the valleys. Dr. Guthrie referred to his personal experience of *sorocke* or mountain sickness, while travelling on this railway at a height of 15,000 feet. Another physical abnormality depicted on those jars were the results of mutilation of the lips and nose, sacrificial or punitive, also the operation of trephining, which was practised in early times in many parts of the world witn the idea of allowing the demon of disease to escape from the head of the victim.

The operation of trephining, and the artificial production of cranial deformity by bandaging the heads of infants, were among the early practices of Ancient Peru. The spade-shaped knife, or "tumi," used for trephining and other operations, has been adopted as the emblem of the Peruvian

Academy of Surgery. As everyone knows, we are indebted to South America for such drugs as quinine, cocaine, curare and tobacco, originally smoked as an antidote to "wearinesse." Researches among native remedies are still in progress, although it is doubtful whether any further result may be expected.

Finally, mention may be made of the practice of embalming which was prevalent among the Incas. The corpse was flexed at all joints, in the foetal attitude, seated in a basket, treated with various varnishes and resins, and wrapped up in many layers of cloth until a pear-shaped bundle was produced. Those bundles were then placed in dug-out grottos or artificial tombs, many of which have been explored. Syphilis of bones and of skulls has repeatedly been noted in Peruvian mummies. The Mayas, on the other hand, either cremated or buried their dead, so that their human remains are not so plentiful as sources of historical information.

The Tenth Meeting

This Meeting was held in the Hall of the Royal Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow on Monday, 12th February, 1951. Professor G. B. Fleming, Vice-President, was in the chair in place of Dr. Guthrie who was then in South Africa and from whom cordial greetings were conveyed to the Society by the Secretary.

Professor W. J. Brownlow Riddell gave a paper on "John Reissberg Wolfe, 1823-1904."* Wolfe was a Hungarian of good family, brought up in the Protestant faith though he was generally believed to be of Jewish descent. Born in Breslau, he was educated and prepared for the Church, but about 1845, on account of religious troubles in his country and because of the interest shown in the Protestant cause by the United Secession Church in Scotland which sent a deputation to Breslau to observe the course of events there, it was probable that Wolfe was persuaded to come to Scotland. In his early days in this country, Wolfe was careless about his name, but Professor Riddell mentioned that it first appeared in a Glasgow Directory in 1853 as J. R. Wolf, of 4 Cambridge Street. After graduating M.D. at Glasgow University in 1856 Wolfe went to the Jewish Mission of the Established Church of Scotland at Salonika where he spent two and a half years. He then went to Paris and commenced the serious study of ophthalmology, worked in the cliniques of such clinicians as Nelaton, Trousseau, Desmarres, and Anger from all of whom he received certificates, and initiated the Paris correspondence of the *Lancet*. In 1860 Wolfe

* British Journal of Plastic Surgery, 1950, 3, 153-164.

obtained a letter of introduction from J. G. Wakley, the editor of that journal, to Garibaldi to whom Wolfe offered his services. These were gladly accepted and Wolfe served with the Liberator of Italy until 1862 when our ophthalmologist returned to Scotland and settled at Montrose. In 1863, he moved to Aberdeen where he was appointed Surgeon to the Royal Infirmary and Ophthalmic Institution there. On the death of the well known Dr. William Mackenzie in 1868, Wolfe applied for the vacancies as Lecturer in Ophthalmology in the University and as Surgeon to the Glasgow Eye Infirmary. His application was unsuccessful, but undeterred, he opened as a private venture, the Glasgow Ophthalmic Institution at 65 Bath Street, with six beds. Many prominent citizens felt that Wolfe had been badly treated and contributed to the foundation of a larger private clinic, and a Lectureship in Ophthalmic Medicine and Surgery was virtually created for him at Anderson's College. This post he held until 1889 when he was appointed Professor of Ophthalmology in the newly instituted St. Mungo's College.

Wolfe set off for Australia in 1893 on a holiday trip but stayed in Melbourne and practised ophthalmology there until 1901 when he returned to Glasgow and lived in semi-retirement there till his death on 26th December, 1904.

Wolfe devised his well known method of skin grafting and described it in *The British Medical Journal* (1875, 2, 360), and carried out a successful corneal graft using human material for the graft. This operation was fully described in the *Medical Times and Gazette* (1879, 2, 579). while his *Diseases and Injuries of the Eye* was published in 1882. This book contained references to most of his signed contributions to ophthalmic literature to that date. In addition to his purely technical writings, Wolfe in his earlier days published works dealing with Hebrew Grammar and theological subjects.

Professor Riddell arranged a demonstration of reclics of J. R. Wolfe and at the conclusion of his address, presented to Mr Walter W. Galbraith, President of the Royal Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons, the robes of Wolfe for safe keeping by the Faculty.

Mr A. L. Goodall also gave a short paper on "The Puzzle of Peter Lowe." He felt that the title of his paper was fully justified as Lowe left few traces of himself in history and even those which have been preserved are open to dispute. There was scarcely one fact of his life which was undisputed. The place of his birth was the first problem and Mr Goodall described his vain endeavours to settle it. Lowe's religion, politics, education, marriage and date of death were all discussed, the last event having taken place without doubt in 1610.

The Eleventh Meeting

The eleventh Meeting of the Society was held in Aberdeen on Saturday, 16th June, 1951. After lunch the Members and their friends adjourned to King's College for Public and Private Business, over which Dr. Guthrie, the President, presided. Papers were read by Professor John Craig and Dr. Robert Richards, and an exhibition of incunabula and old books was arranged by Dr. W. S. Mitchell, Assistant Librarian to the University of Aberdeen.

Professor Craig, in speaking on "The History of the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Aberdeen," described how the Society was founded on 14th December, 1789, by James (later Sir James) McGrigor from Speyside, James Robertson, son of an Aberdeen Burgess, and ten other medical students from Marischal College. At first the meetings were held weekly in the homes of the members, and the Society was essentially a students' debating one, though anatomical demonstrations were given from time to time. A Library was founded in 1791 with three volumes, and in two years these had increased to 440 books. Many of these books are now of great value and of considerable bibliographical interest. Gradually, as the Society became known, medical graduates joined it as honorary members, and in 1811, it was resolved to change the name of the Society to "The Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society." In the following year it was reconstituted under new regulations and trust deed, but the undergraduate section became less and less active and ceased to function in 1862. The desire for a permanent meeting place, evident from the very foundation of the Society, was not fulfilled until 1820, when the present handsome Hall in King Street was opened. Gifts of furnishings, specimens and books followed and the Society was proud to have hanging on its walls a portrait of Harvey reputedly genuine. The newly constituted Society was a very active one, and in 1827, it began to conduct examinations of midwives and issue certificates to successful candidates. The board of examiners consisted of the President, Secretary and four other members, none of whom were to be practitioners of midwifery.

James McGrigor, the main founder and first secretary of the Society maintained an active interest in it throughout the whole of his successful career as Army surgeon and as Director-General of the Army Medical Department in Spain and France under Lord Welleslay, later Duke of Wellington. The minutes of the Society since its formation in 1789, are complete and form a record of the rise of modern medicine in general and of the Aberdeen Medical School in particular. At all times the Society

had a helpful influence on the local hospitals and even on the University itself. One of the most important meetings was held on 20th February, 1920, when Professor Matthew Hay outlined his scheme for co-ordinating the Aberdeen Hospitals and clinical departments of the University on a common site—a dream now realised at Forresterhill.

In paying tribute to the Medico-Chirurgical Society's most distinguished President, Dr. Francis Adams, Professor Craig dramatically drew aside a curtain and disclosed the long lost bust of that eminent Scottish physician and scholar. By dint of indomitable perseverance, Professor Craig had finally discovered the bust in an old storeroom of the University joiner! He chose the visit of our Society to Aberdeen as being the most appropriate occasion for the official restoration.

Dr. Richards read a paper on "Dr. Francis Adams and the Corpus Hippocraticum." Adams was the most noteworthy President of the Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society in its long history. He published English translations of many Greek and Latin authors, but the one for which he was most justly famous was that of the *Genuine Works of Hippocrates* (1845). These works formed the main theme of Dr. Richards' paper. He showed how modern was the Father of Medicine in his interpretation of medical and surgical problems, the *Aphorisms* being especially noteworthy. These represented a crystallisation of general conclusions from actually observed cases, and to which there was nothing comparable in the medicine of other ancient peoples.

After the two papers, the members examined the many items of interest in the exhibition arranged by Dr. Mitchell in the Library at King's College. A full list of these exhibits is given in the Appendix. Thereafter, the members and their friends were entertained to tea by Dr. and Mrs Mitchell.

DOUGLAS GUTHRIE, *President.*
H. P. TAIT, *Secretary.*

APPENDIX

CONTENTS OF THE EXHIBITION OF INCUNABULA AND OLD MEDICAL BOOKS at King's College, Aberdeen

ARRANGED BY DR. W. S. MITCHELL

PAPAL BULL OF FOUNDATION of King's College. This Bull was granted by Pope Alexander VI. (Rodrigo Borgia) at the instance of William Elphinstone, Bishop of Aberdeen, on 10th February, 1494/95.

THE ABERDEEN BESTIARY. Written in an East Anglian monastery in the late 12th century.

DE REVOLUTIONIBUS of Copernicus (1543). Formerly in the possession of Dr. Duncan Liddel.

ORTUS SANITATIS (1491). Printed by Jacobus Meydenbach at Mainz. In the copy the initials have been rubricated and the illustrations coloured by hand.

DE TRIPLICI VITA of Marsilius Ficinus (circa 1495). This copy was orginally owned by Hector Boece, first Principal of King's College, and was evidently for a time also in the hands of Robert Gray, second Mediciner.

CIRURGIA of Petrus de Argellata (1499). Printed at Venice, by unknown printer.

FASCICULUS MEDICINAE (1500). This is a collection of tracts by Joannes de Ketham and is of importance in that it contains the first printed anatomical illustrations. Originally published in 1491, it was frequently reprinted. This copy was printed by Joannes and Gregorius de Gregoriis in Venice.

THEGNI or ARS MEDICA of Galen (1519). Printed at Venice, was given by Robert Gray, Mediciner, to Hector Boece.

COMPENDIUM MEDICINAE of Gilbertus Anglicus (1510). Printed at Lyons, this copy was owned for a time by Philemon Holland, translator of Livy, and was bequeathed to King's College by Alexander Read in 1641. The binding was done in London shortly after the book was printed.

CANONES UNIVERSALES of Mesue (1519). Originally belonging to Robert Gray, second Mediciner, it was presented by Alexander Hay the Elder, an Aberdeen Burgess, to the Common Library of New Aberdeen in 1585. This Library was transfered in 1632 to Marischal College by the Town Council.

ARTICELLA (1519) This Collection of medical writings was reprinted many times and in various places. This edition was printed at Lyons and the binding was by John Reynes of London.

DE GUAIACI MEDICINA of Ulrich von Hutten (1539).

DE HUMANI CORPORIS FABRICA of Andreas Vesalius (1543 and 1555). The first two editions of this book.

PARAPHRASIS IN NONUM LIBRUM RHAZAE (1592). Was originally the doctoral thesis of Vesalius (1537). This copy is of the Wittenberg edition.

DE SIMPLICIUM MEDICAMENTORUM of Galen (1544). This fragment is all that is known of the translation by Jean Bauhin the Elder. Printed in Antwerp by Jean Loe, it was probably never printed in the proper sense of the word.

PRACTICA COPIOSA of John of Vigo (Giovanni da Vigo) (1550). Originally published in Rome in 1514, it was a popular textbook during the 16th century. This copy is of the English translation.

DE NATURALI PARTE MEDICINAE of Jean Fernel (1551). Published at Lyons, this copy was presented to King's College Library by Sir Charles Sherrington, whose autograph it bears.

DE CONCEPTU ET GENERATIONE HOMINIS of Jacob Reuff (1587). This work first appeared in 1554 and was particularly notable for its woodcuts. The copy on view, from the Gregory family library, was printed at Frankfurt.

THE BYRTH OF MANKYNDE (1560). This copy of the 1560 edition was presented to Marischal College by the third Earl of Bute, its Chancellor, in 1783.

CHIRURGIA PARVA of Lanfranc of Milan. Was translated by John Hall, Shakespeare's son-in-law, in 1565.

LES OEUVRES de M. AMBROISE PARE (1579). Second Edition.

DE CURTORUM CHIRURGIA PER INSITIONEM by Gasparo Tagliacozzi (1597). Printed at Venice, this copy belonged to Alexander Read.

THE SAME (1598). This might be term a "Penguin" edition.

REGIMENT OF LIFE by Thomas Phaer (1596). This is a translation of Goeurot's text, and includes Phaer's BOKE OF CHILDREN, the first work on paediatrics written in English. The original English translation of this work was published in 1545.

DE MORBIS QUERORUM (for Puerorum) of Robert Pemell (1653). This is the second work in English on paediatrics. Pemell was buried five days after the publication of his book.

DE FEBRIBUS of Duncan Liddel (1610). Published at Hamburg.

ARS MEDICA of Duncan Liddel (1617). Published at Hamburg. The second edition.

A TREASURE FOR ENGLISHMEN by Thomas Vicary (1633). Originally printed in 1548, its long life as a book on anatomy is shown by the fact that the copy shown is of the 1633 edition.

EXERCITATIO DE MOTU CORDIS of William Harvey (1628). Published at Frankfurt this copy was in the possession of Alexander Read. It is bound with several other works, including the ANIMADVERSIONES of Primrose

DISCOURSE OF CHYRURGERIE of Peter Lowe (1634). Copy of the third edition.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BODY OF MAN (1634). By Alexander Read.

THE SAME. Alexander Read's own copy of the second part of his DESCRIPTION with his notes and corrections.

ROYAL PHARMACOPOEA of Charras (1678). Published in London, this copy bears the signature of Dr Francis Adams of Banchory, and a prescription for rheumatism in his handwriting.

LECTURE NOTES on BOERHAAVE'S Lectures. Taken in 1734 by a student, probably Thomas Bradford, who matriculated at Leyden in 1731, and graduated M.D. at Rheims in 1734. They were later owned by Sir William Fordyce, Rector of Marischal College, 1790-91.

The Scottish Society of the History of Medicine.

CONSTITUTION.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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