

Appendix to Dr. Duncan's "Observations on the office of a faithful teacher, and on the duty of an attentive student of medicine."

Contributors

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Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

APPENDIX

TO

Dr DUNCAN'S "*Observations on the Office of a Faithful Teacher, and on the Duty of an Attentive Student of Medicine.*"

FROM the preceding Lecture, it appears that Dr DUNCAN still continues, at a very advanced period of life, daily to discharge his duties as a Public Professor in the University of Edinburgh. But, that he is not insensible of his being subjected to the disease of old age, may be inferred from his having lately relinquished the practice of Medicine, as a lucrative profession, by visiting Patients at their own houses, even in the City of Edinburgh. His resolution on this subject will be best understood from the two following Letters, which have appeared in *The Edinburgh Advertiser*, and other Newspapers.

Copy of a Letter to WILLIAM WOOD, Esq. President of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, from Dr DUNCAN, *sen.*

"ADAM'S SQUARE, Sept. 27. 1823.

"DEAR SIR,—Upon my return to Edinburgh yesterday, after an absence for about ten days in the county of Fife, I found upon my table an invitation from you, to the Annual Breakfast of the Royal College of Surgeons;

on the election of their President. I trust that my being more than thirty miles distant from Edinburgh, at the time when the Breakfast took place, will be held a sufficient excuse for not doing myself the honour of accepting that invitation, as I have done on many former occasions of similar Elections. Though now very old, I can still derive much happiness from good company; and I am not without hopes that I may yet be able to join your College at some future annual convivial meetings.

“ Now, however, advanced to the Eightieth year of my age, it cannot seem wonderful that I should be desirous of retiring from employment, attended both with mental anxiety and bodily fatigue. Permit me, therefore, to take this opportunity of informing you, that I have now resolved to decline visiting any patients at their own houses; and, in future, to confine my medical practice to giving advice in writing respecting cases communicated to me in writing. Permit me, also, to request the favour, that you will take whatever mode you may think best of communicating my resolution to your fellow Members of the Royal College of Surgeons.

“ Believe me to be, &c.

“ ANDREW DUNCAN, *sen.*”

Extract of a Letter to the Rev. ANDREW BROWN, Professor of Rhetoric in the University of Edinburgh, from Dr DUNCAN, *sen.*

“ ADAM'S SQUARE, Oct. 7. 1823.

“ I send you inclosed, the two printed papers of which you wished to obtain copies. By my printed letter to

Mr WOOD, you will see that I have now made myself an emeritus Physician, and that I no longer intend to visit patients, even in Edinburgh, with the view of obtaining fees. But I have great reason to be thankful, that I still retain sufficient vigour, both of mind and body, to be able to give gratuitously, my best advice as a Physician, to those with whom I am nearly connected.

“ I do not therefore mean to discontinue visits to my friends, when they think I can be of any use to them. And persisting in the same plan which I have now followed for more than fifty years, when any particular friend, any clergyman in Edinburgh, any colleague in the University, or any student, thinks that gratuitous medical visits from me can be of any service to him, I shall most cheerfully give him my best advice at his own house; I shall think myself amply compensated by the satisfaction which must always result from exerting my best endeavours for the removal or alleviation of the diseases of my friends.

“ I remain, dear Sir, &c.

“ ANDREW DUNCAN, *sen.*”

Although Dr DUNCAN has now retired from the toil and anxiety of medical practice in Edinburgh, yet he still retains such vigour of body as well as of mind, that, on the 17th of October 1823, the Eightieth anniversary of his birth-day, he walked with perfect ease to the top of Arthur's Seat, a high hill in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh. For many years past, it has been a practice with him, to walk to the top of that hill, on the morning

of May-day, when the English Villagers are, with great joy, hopping about the May-pole. On these occasions he has sometimes written there short poetical addresses, on remarkable occurrences which have taken place in the course of the year. These addresses have appeared in different newspapers, and have conveyed, with regard to Dr DUNCAN's state, both of mind and body, intelligence very agreeable to many of his friends at a distance. Among others, the DUKE of GORDON, himself an Octogenarian, who had occasion to correspond with Dr DUNCAN on the subject of his Grace's health, concludes one of his letters, with the following good wishes :

“ High on the top of Arthur's Seat reclin'd,
Perfectly sound in body and in mind,
May you, each May-day, that famed hill explore,
And still write verses, even when past fourscore.”

The fulfilment of this wish may now be said to be at least nearly accomplished ; for Dr DUNCAN, on the Eightieth anniversary of his Birth-day, when, upon the top of Arthur's Seat, wrote the following Address to Old Age :

“ Welcome, Old Age, I'm glad to see your face,
On this high hill, we meet with mutual grace ;
I've reached its summit, in my Eightieth year,
In good Auld Reikie where is my compeer.
My legs, thank God ! are still for motion free,
I'll stand by them, while they can stand by me ;
Together we'll jog on, while I have breath,
Till to a better world I'm sent by Death.”