

**An address delivered at the Birmingham School of Medicine and Surgery,
October 6th, 1834 / by John Johnstone.**

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AN ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE

BIRMINGHAM

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY,

OCTOBER 6TH, 1834.

By JOHN JOHNSTONE, M. D.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY,

AND OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, LONDON.

BIRMINGHAM :

RICHARD DAVIES, TEMPLE ROW.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

BIRMINGHAM

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY,

OCTOBER 1841.

BY JOHN JOHNSTON, M.D.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY.

AND BY THE MEDICAL OFFICERS OF THE ARMY, NAVY, &c.

BIRMINGHAM:

ALFRED DAVIES, PRINTER, 1841.

ADDRESS.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

ALTHOUGH I have no anxiety lest the celebration of this day should prove satisfactory to you, and although I have so frequently experienced your kindness personally to myself, yet when I see so many venerable and learned persons around me—men accustomed not only to give counsel in private affairs, but even delegates to the Supreme Authority—I cannot but wish that you had assigned the part now entrusted to me to some more able hand. I am encouraged, however, to believe that my cause, if not my talents, will secure for me that benevolent attention which, in an audience like this, whatsoever tends to the public utility is sure to meet with—and therefore confidently do I address you on the opening of this, permit me to call it, Temple of Science—not sprung, indeed, from the ashes of antiquity—not adorned by venerable recollections—not built on the remnants of columns which, in their pristine glory, supported an edifice dedicated to science, and worthy of its author; but an establishment altogether new, altogether the work of our own compatriots, created by their own hands, furnished by their own industry, and to be perpetuated, I trust, by the continued munificence of you, its noble patrons—and of you, its learned, its industrious, its vigilant, and its exemplary instructors and promoters.

Well knew our ancestors that, where instruction was to be imparted, *there* instruction should have a home and an abode: they well knew that the seed cast on the sand had little chance of rooting. From the earliest beginnings of this Institution, it was a necessary part of the meditation of the founders to have regard to a domicilium—to a place of refuge, as it were, where those who taught might resort, and where those who wish to learn might attend. In the beginning of our Institution, narrow indeed were the means, few were the powers, and small the accommodations of those persons whose intentions have been thus far realized this day. Though Birmingham may be called the metropolis of the west, it has

hitherto brought forth no Linacres to frame a royal foundation of science, no Harvey to enrich it with invention, and to illustrate that philosophy which Verulam has now made universal and immortal. Yet may we gratulate ourselves on making no humble attempt. Yet do we hope that the foundation of our Academy will be laid deep and firm; and with the patronage of such friends as those which now surround me, and of such, moreover, as decorate our list, surely we have a right, not only not to despair, but even greatly to hope.

In tracing the history of this School, the work is in so narrow a compass that I need not detain you long in the detail. From small beginnings under our own eye has the Medical and Chirurgical School advanced to its present height. We have witnessed its birth, we have watched its growth—all about it is clear and ascertained; and some among you have the greater reason to be proud, because, in contemplating it, you contemplate the work of your own hands and your own minds. To Mr. Sands Cox is due, not only the formation of the School, but the idea in which it originated. After a liberal education in his own country, he visited Paris in 1824, for the express purpose of preparing himself for delivering lectures in anatomy and surgery. In October, 1825, he first submitted his plans to the Profession in Birmingham, and delivered his inaugural lecture. In 1826 and 1827, for the purpose of obtaining information, he visited the Schools of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dublin—still continued to recommend the formation of a regular School in Birmingham; and, by that impulse which zeal and talent are sure to impart, in 1828 he gained the patronage of some of the seniors of the Profession in Birmingham, and the School was constituted.

That there might be neither monopoly, nor the appearance of monopoly or exclusion, the lectureships were offered to all the Physicians and Surgeons of the Hospital and Dispensary, according to seniority; and Dr. Pearson, Dr. Booth, and Dr. Eccles, Mr. Jukes, and Mr. Ingleby undertook the task of Lecturers in the several branches of medical science: and although Dr. Booth and Mr. Jukes did not long retain their posts, yet was the School materially served by their zeal and activity, whilst they continued Lecturers. The School was then formally opened by an eloquent address from Dr. Pearson.

Pupils flocked to the lectures, and all the Physicians of the General Hospital threw open their practice to them without fee; and thus a regular train of instruction was laid. Long before this period, clinical discourses had been delivered at the General Hospital, and in the end the example originally set there was followed by the Dispensary. The Physicians to the latter Institution liberally opened their practice to the classes; and thus the clinical part of the instruction became general after 1832.

Up to 1829, the School had only the convenience of one room for all its purposes. In consequence of this narrowness of accommodation, the Lecturer in Anatomy offered to build a set of rooms, provided the body of lecturers would guarantee a certain rental, for the reception of the Museum and Library; and in order to learn how to arrange the Anatomical Museum in the best form, our enterprising and unwearied founder undertook to visit various collections in France, Germany, and Italy. On his return, the means of founding a Museum and Library appeared so scanty, that it was determined, in 1830, to solicit the aid of the neighbouring patrons of science to extend the plans and the usefulness of the Institution. This aid was liberally granted, and the donations of our benefactors, to the amount of £900., were expended in the purchase of preparations, expensive books of plates, and the fitting up of the Museum and Library. The Institution now assumed its present form and feature, and the different offices were filled up as they at present stand. In 1832, a catalogue of the Museum and Library was published; prizes of ten guineas were offered by Edward Johnstone, M. D., and of five guineas each by T. Lane Parker, and Edward T. Cox, Esqs., given to Mr. James Wilkes and Mr. Hammond, for their compositions; the first, on the Sympathetic Nerve, was adjudged by Dr. Pearson, Dr. Eccles, and Mr. W. S. Cox, and the other, on Hernia, was adjudged by Sir Astley Cooper. Sir Eardley Wilmot next gave a gold medal, and E. T. Cox, Esq., who has been one of our most zealous benefactors from the beginning, another, for the best Anatomical Preparations; and finally, a gold medal is offered by John Meredith, Esq., for the best Essay on the Blood. To these honorary stimuli the pupils have ably responded; the treatises of Mr. James Wilkes and

Mr. Hammond, which have been printed and given to the public, deserve, and would have received commendation from either of our Universities; and the preparations of Mr. John Elkington could not fail to extort praise, even exhibited to the experienced eyes of London and Paris Anotomists.

I have particularized the names of these students, because they have received the public honours of the Institution. There are many other preparations, from other hands, highly distinguished by their merit, and there are other works read amongst themselves which evince the ardour, the diligence, the originality, and the intelligence of the aspirants; but these exertions and these merits have been praised in better terms than I can express them in, by the celebrated men who have probed the qualifications of the students annually, at the set examinations. I wish the time would allow me to repeat them all; but we can none of us forget the emphatic commendation of Mr. Bransby Cooper, whose lecture on Hernia we listened to with so much admiration, at the first public meeting, in this very room. The fruits of the Instruction received in the School have indeed manifested themselves so conspicuously, that it is our pride to be able to point out gentlemen, educated here, who have been marked with praise and distinction, not only by the public examiners in London, but at this hour we can boast of practitioners, settled in several counties around us, who are diffusing the benefits of their good education, and are already receiving their due honours and rewards from the public confidence.

I might here enter on a detail of the instruction imparted by this School, and the means of affording it; but you yourselves will estimate it from one fact. Since the Anatomical Bill came into operation, forty-three bodies have been permitted to be anatomically inspected, by the wisdom and just feelings of the overseers; and thus the most minute instruction has been imparted to the students. Judge of your own security, and of the security of the public, from such opportunities; and I am sure it must be a high gratification to those Noble and Honourable Members of the Legislature here present, to know that their views in enacting that bill have entirely answered, so far as our own experience goes, and that the prejudices against dissection have been mainly extinguished.

It was for this purpose that we threw open our Museum to the public gaze, and let me add, the public admiration, during the past month; and I am delighted to affirm, that not one instance of disregard to property, or of disrespect to persons, was manifested; and that of the thousands and tens of thousands that flocked through the Museum, every one expressed his gratification, and his conviction that the Museum has been furnished for the good of the community.

I have thus brought the history of our School to the period of its having a fixed abode; though with many and great conveniencies, yet far from complete. But even then, the chief subject of admiration to all, was the springing up of the Museum, as it were by magic. This, too, was chiefly the work of the mind and the hands of Mr. Sands Cox; and you who viewed it in its primitive state,—what must be your opinion of his merits and exploits, now that you view it in its present advancement? The store of the most curious anatomical preparations, and those most useful for the instruction of the pupils—the wax models, so unrivalled in beauty and exactness—the replenished state of the Museum of Natural History—the Library—and, above all, the fitness as a whole, for its great purpose, the instruction of our pupils in the auxiliary sciences which administer to medical education.

The house which you are called upon this day to consolidate and render permanent as a School, by the laws you shall ordain, has been put into your hands by the public spirit of the two proprietors, the Lecturers in Anatomy and Materia Medica: and rears its front no less a monument of their generosity than of their ardour in the promotion of science. To them though thus mainly indebted as proprietors, yet on the whole body of the Lecturers the Institution must always chiefly depend,—on their exertions, on their ability. These Lecturers are, Mr. Sands Cox on Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology, and Surgery, Mr. Ingleby in Midwifery, Mr. Woolrich in Chemistry, Mr. Knowles in Botany, Dr. James Johnstone in Materia Medica, Dr. Birt Davies in Medical Jurisprudence, and Dr. Eccles in the Theory and Practice of Medicine; and to Mr. Cox is associated Mr. George Elkington as Demonstrator of Anatomy. It is clear that such a round of instruction nearly completes a medical and surgical education,

when combined with hospital practice; and how well it has succeeded the concourse and the merits of the pupils have fully demonstrated. The past is a pledge of the future: and so we may confidently trust that the diligence and zeal of those truly respectable and learned men will amply fulfil your hopes.

Of the former Lecturers who have resigned their offices, it cannot be deemed invidious for me to select the name of Dr. Pearson for particular mention; his age, his classical erudition, his research into medical lore, especially his diligence in exploring the properties and virtues of medicaments, his sagacity in discerning diseases, and that ardent thirst for knowledge which is the surest test of success in imparting it, need not the humble meed of my testimony—yet these were the qualities and accomplishments which made him so useful a Lecturer in this School, and which so materially helped it on in its progress. To Dr. Booth like thanks are due; his large stock of medical acquirements, and his rare acquaintance with foreign medical learning, combined with his early patronage of the Institution, were precious advantages, which were afterwards continued by his Clinical Lectures. It was said by an illustrious man, on an occasion which must have stirred up the whole soul of his compatriot auditors to sympathy and tenderness,

Ἀνδρῶν γὰρ ἐπιφανῶν πᾶσα γῆ τάφος,

and so to elevated minds their own munificent and generous actions are a sufficient memorial. But it is the duty of those who receive benefits not to forget them; it is even their business to record them, when they are of a public nature, and, for the sake of posterity, not to bury them in oblivion.

And here it is impossible for me to forget, and it would be ungrateful not to enumerate, the names of those benefactors who liberally lent their patronage to this establishment when it stood so greatly in need of it. I before stated, in relating the annals of the School, that to form that necessary appendage to a place of instruction like this, a Museum and Library, our own funds were inadequate, and therefore it became necessary to ask the aid of the patrons of science. I know that I should be intruding on the delicacy of several noble Lords and honourable Gentlemen, were I to name every individual act of bounty which, to my own knowledge, and sometimes even from my own application, has been liberally granted: but I cannot

refrain from mentioning the name of the Earl of Dartmouth in connection with the Medical Benevolent Society, as well as this School, because, among the many acts of his well-known munificence, they belong exclusively to medicine. To the Earl of Bradford we were indebted for the honour of his presence on the day of the opening of this house, as well as for his contribution to it, and the patronage of it. To the Barons of Birmingham of the house of Dudley, our charities have always been largely indebted; and to the present noble Baron, Lord Ward, we owe the additional honour of his patronage of this School. From the foundation of the Philosophical Institution, down to the present occasion, Lord Lyttelton has always been the munificent patron of the arts and sciences of this town. His illustrious father-in-law, the Earl Spencer, has repeated to you, from his own mouth, in your own School, his generous wishes for your welfare: but this is not all—by his influence with the government, the duties on anatomical preparations, brought to your Museum from foreign parts, have been remitted; he has added to your funds, he has made a precious addition to your Library; and, with that true noble spirit which characterizes him, he still offers to add to it any duplicate of any medical work in his unrivalled library, not found in your own. To our enlightened and independent representative, Sir Eardley Wilmot, we owe the never-to-be-forgotten boon of patronage given early, when patronage is most efficient; as well as the stimulus offered to the exertions of our pupils by the presentation of a gold medal. To Sir Charles Throckmorton we are likewise indebted for early patronage, and also for the riches he has poured into our Museum. It is our boast to have received this proof of patronage from one of the chiefs of our county in ancient family and large possessions—from a gentleman and a scholar, who enrolled his name, in early life, in our profession, and who now, from the claims of oldest standing, is the father of it. Of your benefactors by donation, the name of Mr. Woods, of Coleshill, will be always prominent in your Museum and Library, from his ample present of books and fossils, as that also of Mr. Freer Proud, of Wolverhampton; and there are many other names which might be added, to whose bounty we are indebted—many present, and many absent, who, I trust, will not think us ungrateful or unmindful because the allotted

time does not admit of further enumeration. But I hope to be forgiven if, in departing from this rule, I allude to one other name, which I should fail indeed in justice were I to omit, although it is the name of a brother. The merits of Dr. Edw. Johnstone to this School can never be forgotten by those who know the zeal and sincerity with which his patronage of it has been carried on from the beginning; and although it may be urged, both to him and to myself, that our obligations to medicine and to science are not inconsiderable, yet I trust that the efforts we have both made for their advancement in this instance, are an earnest that we shall not desert in our gray hairs that cause which we have cherished from our youth.

Thus then here, in the centre of a vast population, you have a School of Medical Science, a Museum of Natural History in all its branches, and of Anatomical Preparations, and a Scientific Library, already fitted for their important purposes. Your ingenuous youth may be here imbued with all the necessary elementary instruction for the practice of medicine and surgery; and suffering humanity may be comforted by the reflection that it need not look up to you in vain. On that primary education on which a scientific education can be alone securely founded, I shall not detain you by enlarging. On a recent public occasion I ventured to declare, that mere lectures on science are barren without it—that unless a store of good sense is formed out of the materials of general and common information, and a certain portion of polite literature, and by founding all on the adamant basis of moral and religious principle, the rest of education is a bubble.

To you, then, my young friends, the Students of this School, while the subject is warm in my mind, let me address this parting sentiment. You well know what a bright ornament classical learning is, how much it decorates the character, purifies the style, and tends to create accuracy of idea, and elevation of sentiment. It is on these accounts, as well as of the number of medical books written in the learned languages, and also on account of the usage of writing prescriptions in Latin, that your superiors have made a certain proficiency in this knowledge part of your examination for admission to practice. It is not then as a mere embellishment that classical literature is recommended to you; for destitute of dignity and barren of

utility is every acquirement which has not for its end and aim the *real* information of your understandings. It is to render your minds better receptacles of science that primary education is necessary—it is to expand your views, and substantiate and fix your principles, that classical learning, as a part of moral discipline, is so available; and, in fine, it is the union of all these which, by correcting and enlarging the heart, makes you the fit companions and the best comforters of sickness and of sorrow—bringing your professional acquirements to bear, wheresoever they are needed, a blessing to humanity.

And now it only remains for this general meeting to take into consideration those laws which may secure to our successors the School of Medicine, not only sound and inviolate, but advancing in usefulness and prosperity. The Committee, to draw up the rules, has had all the advantages to be derived from gentlemen distinguished in the law, in consultation with the Rev. and Worshipful the Chancellor of the Diocese of Lichfield and Coventry, (another of our munificent patrons,) and other gentlemen of judgment and discretion. It is your part, my Lords and Gentlemen, to set a seal upon their labours, and to enact such a code for the Institution as shall correspond with what I know to be their most earnest prayer and devout wish. *Esto Perpetua!*

At the conclusion of the Address, the following Resolutions were unanimously passed:—

Proposed by the EARL OF BRADFORD, and seconded by JOHN JOHNSTONE, M. D.

1.—That the best thanks of the Governors be given to W. Sands Cox, Esq. the Honorary Secretary, and that he be requested to continue the office.

Proposed by the Rev. LORD WARD, and seconded by COLONEL CARTWRIGHT, Esq.

2.—That the best thanks of the Governors be given to the Lecturers, for the zeal and assiduity with which they have discharged their important duties.

Proposed by W. S. DUGDALE, Esq. M. P. and seconded by E. T. Cox, Esq.

3.—That the best thanks of the Governors be given to the Committee and Sub-committee, for their valuable services, especially in drawing up the Laws and Regulations.

Proposed by Sir E. E. WILMOT, Bart. M. P. and seconded by JOHN MEREDITH, Esq.

4.—That the best thanks of the Governors be presented to John Johnstone, M. D. for his eloquent address, and that he be requested to allow the same to be published with the Laws and Regulations.

Proposed by the High Sheriff for the County, Sir FRANCIS HOLYOAKE GOODRICHE, Bart. and seconded by J. K. BOOTH, M. D.

5.—That Edward Johnstone, M. D. John Johnstone, M. D. the Rev. Chancellor Law, John Wilkes Unett, Esq. Edward T. Cox, Esq. J. G. Reeves, Esq. and Henry Smith, Esq. be appointed the Sub-Committee for the ensuing year for the current management of the Institution.

The Chairman having left the Chair, which was taken by the EARL OF BRADFORD,—

Proposed by JOHN MEREDITH, Esq. and seconded by J. K. BOOTH, M. D.

6.—That the best thanks of the Governors be presented to the President and Vice-President, for their important services to the Institution.

Proposed by JOHN JOHNSTONE, M. D. and seconded by EDWARD JOHNSTONE, M. D.

7.—That the best thanks of the Governors be presented to Earl Spencer for his valuable donation of Books, and munificent offer of presenting any duplicate of any medical work in his unrivalled library.

Proposed by J. K. BOOTH, M. D. and seconded by JOHN JOHNSTONE, M. D.

8.—That the thanks of the Governors be presented to the Noblemen and Gentlemen who have attended this Meeting.

Proposed by Sir E. E. WILMOT, Bart. M. P. and seconded by W. S. DUGDALE, Esq. M. P.

9.—That the thanks of the Governors be given to Edward Johnstone, M. D. not only for his kind attention to the business of the day, but for the important sanction and support he has ever given to the Institution.

BRADFORD.