

**Address of Charles West, M.D., F.R.C.P., President of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London, at the annual meeting, March 1st, 1879.**

**Contributors**

West, Charles, 1816-1898.

Trimmer, Edward, 1827-1904

Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London.

Royal College of Surgeons of England

**Publication/Creation**

London : Printed by J.E. Adlard, 1879.

**Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/dw32cp2b>

**Provider**

Royal College of Surgeons

**License and attribution**

This material has been provided by This material has been provided by The Royal College of Surgeons of England. The original may be consulted at The Royal College of Surgeons of England. where the originals may be consulted. This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.

**wellcome  
collection**

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

*E. Jenner Es.*

*with the Author's name* (5)  
ADDRESS

OF

CHARLES WEST, M.D., F.R.C.P.,

PRESIDENT

OF THE

ROYAL MEDICAL AND CHIRURGICAL  
SOCIETY OF LONDON,

AT THE

ANNUAL MEETING, MARCH 1st, 1879.

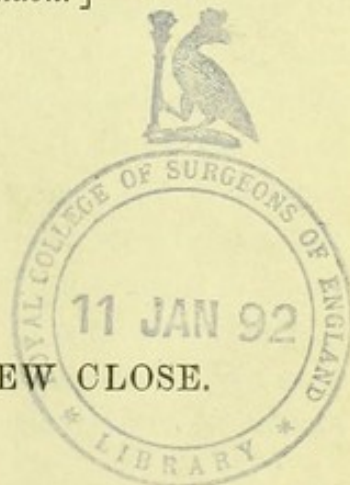
*[From Vol. VIII, No. VII, of the 'Proceedings of the Royal Medical  
and Chirurgical Society of London.']*

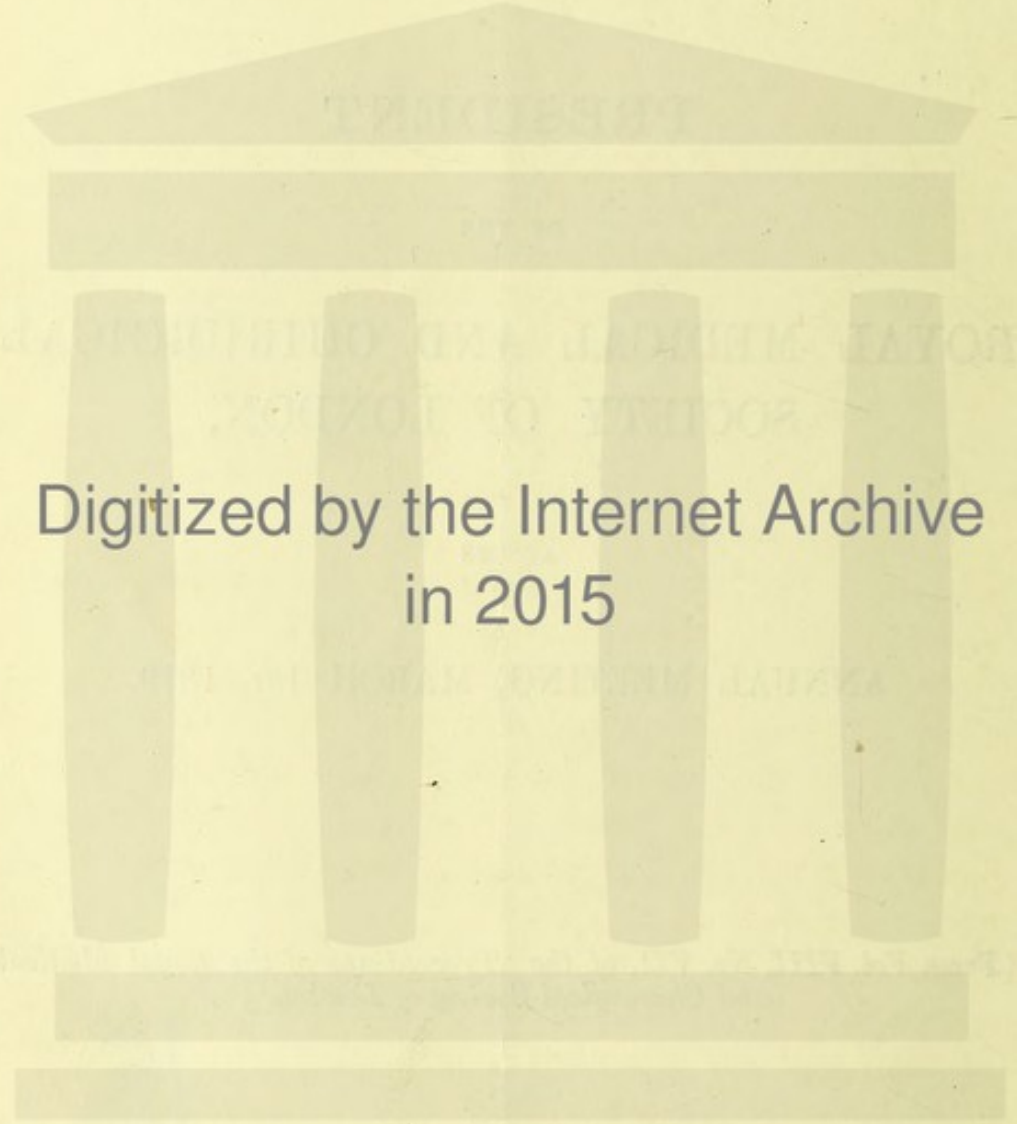
LONDON:

PRINTED BY

J. E. ADLARD, BARTHOLOMEW CLOSE.

1879.





Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2015

<https://archive.org/details/b22304605>





11 JAN 92  
PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN,—You have heard in the Report which has been submitted to you, all that is to be told of the uneventful history of our Society. Unlike the Royal and other kindred societies we have no grand discoveries to announce, no new planet seen, no unknown land explored, no unexpected manifestation of the hidden powers of nature, for our's is the humbler task "to give account of knowledge for the benefit and use of man."

And so, deprived by necessity of those topics on which it might otherwise have been a pleasure to dwell, I find in the past year two subjects on which I may venture to offer you my congratulations. The first of these is the completion of the Report of the Sub-Committee on Diphtheria, formed, as I am pleased to remember, at my request, which though it has not solved all the problems connected with the subject, has yet exercised great diligence, collected large materials, displayed great acumen, and, I believe, has contributed much towards the greater accuracy of our diagnosis, and consequently to the greater wisdom of our therapeutics.

And, next, I must congratulate you on the choice made by you, on the recommendation of the council, of gentlemen to fill the number of our Honorary Fellows. The name of Sir John Lubbock must be approved by all, as conferring as well as receiving honour by his association with ourselves. In the selection of our British Honorary Fellows it has always been the endeavour of the Society to seek for men who, by their labours, form a sort of connecting link between medicine and those kindred domains of natural science from which medicine, if it is to be ought else than the grossest empiricism, can never be dissociated. We hold that the highest honour for such of our countrymen as devote



themselves to the *practice* of medicine, is to be enrolled as earnest working members of our body.

With our foreign brethren the case is different, and I trust that you all approve at heart of the selection which your votes have confirmed:—of Professor Schwann, of Liége, who first propounded that theory of cell development, based on no vain imaginings but on carefully studied facts, which underlies almost all the recent advances in physiology and pathology; of Guido Baccelli, of Rome, the careful and acute clinical observer whose diagnostic tact has helped us to discriminate the nature of pleuritic effusions, and to solve important questions with reference to ovarian disease; of Noel Gueneau de Mussy, physician to the Hôtel Dieu at Paris, well versed in all branches of the healing art, a fit representative of practical medicine in France; and Scanzoni, of Würzburg, patient in inquiry, diligent in research, cautious in inference, moderate in practice, who in an age of charlatanism has been strictly honourable in word and deed.

But another and a sadder duty awaits me—to commemorate those who have passed away from among us since our last annual meeting, not all of them exceptionally distinguished as those whom we have gladly enrolled among our Honorary Fellows, but who have lived; some well known, others little heeded; who, now,

“Home have gone, and taken their wages,”

whom praise cannot move nor blame.

Gratitude, friendship, affection, would not let their names pass into oblivion, but yet I take it that it is mainly for the sake of us, the living, that we thus each year make mention of the dead. While we follow them with our regrets, and cherish with tenderness memories which to some of us are very precious, we must not lose sight of our great object, which is to gather from their histories something for the correction of our own faults, for the cultivation of our own intellects, for the purification of our own motives, for the perfecting of our own characters.

With these few words of preface I betake me to my task.

First in order comes the name of *Mr. Josiah Clarkson*, who died in the neighbourhood of Birmingham on the 13th of February of last year, at the age of sixty.



He was a native of Birmingham where he commenced life as an engraver, but while still young he exchanged his original profession for that of physic the study of which he followed in his native town, where he afterwards practised. Some thirty years ago he contributed to our 'Transactions' a case of colotomy for the relief of a complete intestinal obstruction, creditable alike to his medical knowledge and to his surgical skill. One might from it have augured for him a larger measure of success than he attained, but this seems to have been his single effort. He passed through life known in a somewhat narrow circle for his artistic power which he never lost, and for his gentle manners; but ill health, and a nervousness which he never overcame, unfitted him for life's battle.

The next of our Fellows was personally known to comparatively few of us, *Dr. John Roberts*, who died at Cimiez, near Nice, at the age of 68, on the 28th of last March. He studied partly at King's College, partly in Paris, in which city he obtained permission to practice, and in 1849 he became a member of the College of Physicians. After a residence of some years in Paris he came to London and settled in Grosvenor Street, where he had a practice select rather than extensive. I cannot but think that the man who was the trusted physician of the late Lord Palmerston must have had some qualities beyond the common. He retired to Norwood some years before his death, and at last went abroad in vain quest of health. He had the reputation of being an able physician, and from many quarters I have heard testimony borne by his patients, and he had the art of making all his patients friends, to his generous considerate kindness on all occasions.

*Mr. Thomas Carr Jackson* died at the age of 55 on the 23rd of April last, after much suffering from, I believe, malignant disease of the prostate and bladder. He was a Yorkshireman by birth, educated at Merchant Taylor's School, then after serving his apprenticeship to Mr. Garstang, of Lytham, in Lancashire, who still survives in honoured age, he studied at St. Thomas's Hospital, and joined the College of Surgeons in 1845, taking the Fellowship by examination in 1857. He was connected first with the Royal Free Hospital, afterwards with the Great Northern,



and had the reputation of being an able surgeon. He wrote but little, though his success in lithotomy, for he did not lose a single patient of the twenty-nine on whom he performed it, led him to send some remarks on the operation to the 'St. Thomas's Hospital Reports,' and he published, besides, a small pamphlet on 'Circumscribed Abscess of Bone.'

He was much respected and beloved by all who knew him well, for, in spite of a somewhat rough exterior, he was very kind and very sympathising, and this not merely with those who came to him for medical advice, but with a large number of people who trusted his judgment and sought his counsel in their personal anxieties and troubles. I know this from private sources quite apart from members of his family, and there is something very charming in lighting on unsuspected virtues practised so unostentatiously, that the secret of them is revealed only when death undraws the veil which has concealed them.

Most of us were familiar with the youthful figure, the lissome gait, the keen black eye, the cheerful smile, the courteous speech of *Arthur Noverre*, which told of his French descent, and were the outside of a skilful doctor, a high-toned gentleman, a ready friend. He was a man who, though his practice lay much among people of rank, never lost his own dignity, who kept most thoroughly the spirit of the oath still taken by the graduates in medicine at some of the German universities, "*Nunquam ad vana aut sordida deflectendum*," while he was most liberal in the exercise of his profession towards those whose resources were small; a man, in short, who—

"Knew his art, but not his trade;"

and who was, in my judgment, the highest type of the general practitioner—one whom we can ill spare and shall long miss.

His family was of Swiss descent, his great grandfather living at Lausanne at the end of the seventeenth century. His grandfather, born in 1729, was driven to England by the storm of the revolution in 1793, and here his father settled, and here in London Arthur Noverre was born, the youngest of ten children. He received his education in a private school, and at the age of seventeen was placed in a Government office and tied down to



work which he hated, and hated all the more since, like many lads at his age, he had a sort of craze for becoming a soldier. The family resources not admitting of the purchase of a commission, he determined to enter the army as a non-combatant, if not otherwise, and with the intention of becoming an army surgeon, he borrowed the money to pay his fees at St. George's Hospital, and, inflexible in resolution as he was all through life, he worked so well that he took the licence of the Apothecaries Society, and the Membership of the College of Surgeons in 1836. For a man who for three years had so disciplined his mind the life of a soldier in time of peace had no longer any charm; and furnished with strong recommendations from Sir Benjamin Brodie and others of his old teachers he settled at Stanmore, in Middlesex, in 1838. Here he practised for twenty-one years, and his first care was to repay the money he had borrowed. Here he married, and I suppose it gratified his old military predilections that his two sons became soldiers.

Among his patients at Stanmore was the family of the then Marquis, now Duke, of Abercorn. The friendship of that nobleman and the advice of Dr. Bright, who had a high opinion of him, induced him to move to London; and he did so all the more readily, urged by the importunities of a chronic muscular rheumatism which the damp air of the country aggravated, while his home had been darkened by the death of his wife.

In London a second period of success and happiness awaited him. His home was brightened by a second marriage. His old patients who had relied on him in the country were faithful to him in town, for his rare perspicacity in the discrimination of disease had secured their confidence, while his kindly nature had won their friendship. I could not have imagined from his unabated cheerfulness of manner when he talked to me a few days before his death about retiring from practice that he was aware, and had told some of his patients, that he had an obscure ailment which might suddenly prove fatal. But so it was, and in a few hours, but not unprepared, he was called away on the 22nd of April.

*Dr. Julian Evans*, who died in London at the age of 73 on the 16th of June, was little known to the Fellows of this



Society, he having retired from practice more than thirty years ago.

I know nothing of his early career, but while still a young man he was induced to visit the West Indies in the hope that the climate might benefit his wife's failing health. He settled in the Island of Santa Lucia, and embodied the results of his observations during a stay of some years in "A Treatise on the Endemic Diseases of the West Indies," published in 1837. This work, as far as I can judge, is of very considerable merit. It displays great diligence, of which the record of seventy-one cases and of twenty-eight post-mortem examinations made under the burning sun of the tropics may be admitted as good proof. The arrangement is orderly, setting out with a description of the topography of Santa Lucia. This is followed by an examination of the conditions in which malaria is generated in different countries, and the influence of malaria and heat on man and animals. The detail of cases and post-mortem examinations is succeeded by an investigation, one by one, of the symptoms by which the fevers are characterised, and the question of the identity of those diseases with yellow fever is answered in the affirmative; and the subject is concluded by a very discriminating chapter on the treatment of the different varieties of endemic fevers of the tropics. I have thus hastily enumerated the contents of the book, because it is distinguished by thoughtful care, by patient inquiry, by dispassionate judgment, and as the work of a man who was only thirty-two years old when it was given to the press may serve as a good example to the younger members of our profession of what they may hope to do by honest work.

He settled in London after the publication of his book, but domestic bereavement gave him a distaste for the struggle for success. He retired to the country, and passed his life in a sort of intellectual indolence, which did injustice to his abilities and has deprived us of the fruit on which we might have counted from their continued exercise. One feels indeed much sympathy with him in his sorrow, but nevertheless, he who living to old age has yet from any cause lain down to rest in the middle of life's journey cannot wholly escape Seneca's verdict on such an one, *Non diu vivit, diu fuit.*



The name of *Mr. Hunter*, who at one time practised in Wilton Place, but who retired to the country some years since, where he died at the age of 43, on the 8th of last August, must not pass unnoticed. He took great interest while House-Surgeon at St. George's Hospital, where he was educated, in the subject of hypodermic medication, and a very able and carefully written paper upon it appeared from his pen in the first volume of 'St. George's Hospital Reports.' He did more than any one else to establish the fact that the action of sedatives or of other agents injected under the skin is not local, extending gradually from the point of injection to the system generally, as the ripple caused by a stone thrown into water extends from it as from the centre,—but general from absorption of the agent into the circulating fluid. To have conclusively determined this fact was no small matter, and we must not ignore our obligation to him to whom we are indebted for it. He took a part in the investigations by a committee of this Society into the action of remedies employed hypodermically; wrote a pamphlet on it, and contributed an article to the 'Medico-Chirurgical Review,' "On the Hypodermic Administration of Strychnine." He also took part in Dr. Marshall Hall's experiments on the treatment of suspended animation from drowning, and seems to have been in every way a person of more than average ability, and of a very active mind.

When *John Hilton* died on September 14th, although he was then 74 years old, one felt that his death was premature, so closely was his name associated with British surgery. He was born at Castle Hedingham, in Essex, the smaller but the more notable of two adjoining villages, each of which has a historic interest:—Castle Hedingham as the chief stronghold of the De Veres, Earls of Oxford; Sible Hedingham as the birthplace of the famous leader of freelances in the wars of Italy, Sir John Hawkwood, whose monument many will recollect in the Cathedral of Florence. This latter village, too, will long be held in remembrance as the place whose inhabitants killed an old woman, some ten years ago, in the endeavour to solve to their satisfaction the important question of whether she was a witch or not. A rough form of vivisection by experimenters who had not taken out a licence.



Mr. Hilton received his early education, and a somewhat incomplete one, at Chelmsford, and came young to Guy's Hospital. Here his active mind found full scope, and so diligently and to such good purpose did he pursue his studies that at the age of 21 he was appointed Demonstrator of Anatomy. He joined the College of Surgeons in 1827, and was early appointed Assistant Surgeon to the hospital. It was in these days that he laid the foundation of his high repute as an anatomist by those wonderful dissections which, perpetuated in Mr. Towne's exquisite models, give to the school with which he was connected an advantage such as no other possesses, which all must admire, and many I can well believe must envy.

His life was one of steady and successful work, his rise slow but sure, until at length he occupied the chair of President of the College of Surgeons, and the post of Surgeon Extraordinary to the Queen: He was not remarkable as a lecturer, but an excellent teacher at the bedside, and therefore deservedly popular with the students. He contributed many papers to our 'Transactions,' but his high reputation, beyond the sphere of his daily work, rests mainly on his lectures "On Rest and Pain," originally delivered at the College of Surgeons in 1860-62, and which passed deservedly through two editions.

I did not know Mr. Hilton intimately, and am therefore under no unconscious bias which should lead me to over-estimate his work. But to my thinking this book bears the stamp of originality, of that which is far higher than mere laboriousness can ever attain to, and I therefore prize it as something rare. For my own part I read it, even where it treats of subjects quite outside my own pursuits, over and over again with pleasure unabated by the fact, which he himself proclaims, that another hand than his own had helped to dress his child in seemlier garments than those with which he could have clothed it withal. I know some say he harped upon one string, that one idea had taken possession of him, or he of it. *One* really original idea, however, is not so common that we need complain of its recurrence like the theme in a piece of music, which one can trace throughout as giving its harmony to the whole. And thus running through nearly 500 pages we have but variations on the two ideas, that pain



suggests the necessity of rest, that rest is nature's mode of bringing about repair. Rest as the condition of growth is seen in the winter repose of vegetation, in the nocturnal closing of the leaves of plants, in the hybernation of some animals, in the sleep of all. Sleep is the evidence of the favourable progress of an injury, of recovery from disease. Sleep is but perfect rest, and rest restores the power of the over-taxed man of business, and gives opportunity for the repair of his brain, just as perfect repose is the most favourable condition for recovery from accident. And, following still further the same idea, the pouring out of lymph after injury to a serous membrane "is but a temporary splint until the original structures repair themselves, and in this way the inflammatory effusion produces a certain degree of rest to the original structure, and thus contributes to the work of reparation." And this idea he follows through all the details of inflammation of various parts of diseases of the different joints, and lays down rules which show careful observation and fertility of resource in all the emergencies of surgical practice, while they convey lessons no less worth the learning for those who are conversant only with medicine.

There is not much more to tell of Mr. Hilton. He lived somewhat apart from intimate associates, but he was kind and helpful to many, and within his somewhat narrow circle he had warm and attached friends. I doubt whether for most of us one hand is not enough to count our real friends upon.

Next comes a name on which my memory dwells with affectionate regret, that of *Dr. Robert Willis*, who died at Barnes on September 21st, 1878, in the eightieth year of his age. He was born at Leith in 1799 of a good Edinburgh family, which suffered as many others did by the abolition of the slave trade in 1807. He lost his parents early, his father dying of some illness which he contracted in Jamaica, whither he had gone to try to save something of what had been an important property. It says much for the steadfastness of Dr. Willis's principles that the occurrence which robbed him of fortune did not prevent his being all his life long a thorough liberal in the best sense of the word. I would gladly have known who brought the lad up, for his tender loving disposition in his home told that some gentle



woman had nurtured the motherless child. But I can tell but this that from boyhood he showed a passion for medicine, and having studied at Edinburgh took his degree, a mere stripling in 1819. He then went abroad where in Italy, Paris, and Vienna he matured his knowledge, and acquired that mastery of modern languages which was one of his great accomplishments. He formed there too some fast friendships, such as that with Professor Marx, of Göttingen, in conjunction with whom he published long years afterwards an extremely interesting work 'On the Decrease of Disease, with the Advance of Civilisation.' He did not finally settle in London until after having joined the College of Surgeons in 1823, and having paid a second visit to Germany he started in general practice in Westminster.

It was while thus engaged that on the recommendation, I believe of Mr. Abernethy, he became Librarian to the College of Surgeons in 1828, and found there a more congenial field for labour, though he did not then renounce the other. In 1837, however, he became a member of the College of Physicians, and having removed to Dover Street, he began practice as a physician, and accepted the Chair of Medicine in the Aldersgate School. One thing alone, a hospital, was wanting to his large success as a practitioner and teacher, for he was well acquainted with his profession all round. He was eminently clear-headed, free from prejudice and from partiality; he clothed his ideas in fittest speech; while with patients, and I saw much of him among the poor, he was pains-taking, kind, and sympathising. He was ever helpful to the younger members of his profession, and to him I owe, by his throwing open to me the Infirmary for Children in the Waterloo Road, to which he was then physician, the opportunity given me now forty years ago of fitting myself for most of what I have ever been able to accomplish for the advancement of my profession, the benefit of others, or my own good name.

He worked on for years with failing health, doing good work in every way, translating from the French and German, and adding notes which enhanced the value of the originals, sometimes guiding the pen of others, or putting their ideas into his own lucid English, till the parents of some ricketty bantling fell in love with it when it had passed through his hands, and fancied



its beauties were all their own. But he did good practical work as well as good literary work, and his 'Treatise on Diseases of the Urinary Organs' was, to my thinking, at the time of its publication the best and most useful work on its subject. It differed indeed altogether from the great original work of Dr. Prout with which he would not for a moment have compared it, but it was more directly serviceable to the young man seeking for wise guidance.

I believe that had his health permitted Dr. Willis would have attained good success as a physician, but frequent attacks of hæmoptysis drove him from London, and he settled at Barnes where he once more resumed general practice in a pleasanter field than that in which he first made experience of it, and where for the last thirteen years of his life he had the help of his son-in-law, Dr. Marshall.

In the comparative leisure which he now enjoyed he returned in his old age to the pursuits that had been the delight of his youth, and which will keep his name an honoured one in our profession so long, at any rate, as that of Harvey is had in remembrance. His translation of that great man's works published by the Sydenham Society in 1847 is all that a translation should be. It is just what we may believe Harvey would have written, if instead of Latin he had employed his mother-tongue. The writer is not made to masquerade in nineteenth century dress, but we have him "in his habit as he lived," a speaking portraiture of his thoughts, as his likeness in the College of Physicians is of his outward form, and figure, and expression. A short and reverend notice of Harvey's life and work was prefixed to the translation, and was afterwards expanded into a biography, the last sheet of which he corrected only three days before his death, which took place at just the age at which his great master died.

It were idle to attempt here a criticism of the 'Life of Harvey;' time is wanting me, and the skill to do it. But his own profession did not suffice for Dr. Willis's active mind. There were other subjects, the highest problems that can engage human thought, things which cannot be seen or handled, enigmas whose full answer cannot be given in this world, and on



these he pondered long, and anxiously, and honestly. His conclusions are given partly in the introduction to his translation of Lessing's 'Nathan the Wise,' and still more fully in his 'Life of Servetus' and in his 'Life of Spinoza,' faithfully to write which latter biography he taught himself Dutch when seventy-two years old. We may not assent to his conclusions—for my part I do not in the least, but we may at all events learn charity from the gentleness with which he almost always speaks of those whose opinions he most condemns, a lesson in which the boasted liberalism of the present day is yet unskilled.

Though Dr. Willis's conclusions may seem to some of us altogether wrong, we also know that to our finite vision a part only of truth reveals itself. This man discovers one side, that another, but of one thing we may be sure, that they who diligently seek it, as he did, will not miss it altogether. Some of us may feel that the light which guides us, like the sun's rays, warms as well as illuminates, and that compared with it all others are but like the cold starlight or the pale shining of the moon. Of this, however, I am sure, that light and warmth from the All Giver could alone have led our friend through the many difficulties of his long journey by the narrow path of moral right, of truest friendship, and of gentlest love, with steps so unfaltering that we can scarcely hope for more than at a distance to follow him.

In strongest contrast with Dr. Willis in almost every point except high principle stands out the name of *Dr. John Ashburner*, who died on November 13th, 1878, in the 86th year of his age. To many of the Fellows of this Society he was probably altogether unknown, while to others his name is associated only with some of the wildest vagaries of spiritualism. But he was a very remarkable man, whose history, indeed, reminds us of tales read long ago, of a mortal endowed with richest gifts, whose bestowal would seem to guarantee to their possessor all good fortune but for the interference of some mischievous fairy who cast over the gifts a spell which took away their value. Born in Bombay, where his father, a man in easy circumstances, devoted to literature, conducted a journal; and after his father's death become, by his mother's second marriage, the stepson of Sir



Charles Forbes, one of the merchant princes of India, the commencement of his life seemed to promise success. He was highly educated, a good anatomist, an accomplished chemist, well versed in physical science, with a sound knowledge of his profession, and yet he failed for want of that balance between his different faculties, the just equipoise of which is of more practical importance to their possessor than the extent of any.

I do not know where he received his early education, but while still a youth he was apprenticed to Mr. King, a surgeon at Clifton, whose wife was a sister of Maria Edgeworth. His life there seems to have been a happy one if we may judge from the graceful and grateful terms in which he dedicates to him as well as to Dr. Macartney, of Dublin, the thesis which he wrote for his doctor's degree at Edinburgh in 1816.

He received his earlier medical education at Dublin, and even there was not undistinguished, for he acted as demonstrator to Dr. Macartney, the most eminent anatomical teacher of his day, and was also elected a member of the Royal Irish Academy, no mean honour for so young a man.

He became a member of the College of Surgeons in 1814, graduated at Edinburgh in 1816, took the membership of the College of Physicians in 1818, and during the ensuing five years lectured on chemistry at St. Thomas's Hospital, and held the office of physician to the St. Marylebone and Westminster Dispensaries, to the St. Pancras Infirmary, and the Smallpox Hospital.

In 1823 he for a time renounced the practice of medicine, and joined a mercantile house in Calcutta. I cannot, however, imagine the pursuit of wealth to have ever been congenial to his disposition, and in three years he gave up the experiment.

Returning to England in 1826, he was led by, I know not what circumstances to devote himself to the obstetric branch of his profession, and became Physician-Accoucheur to Queen Charlotte's Lying-in Hospital and to the Middlesex Hospital, and Lecturer on Midwifery, first at the Middlesex and afterwards at St. Thomas's Hospital, as well as Accoucheur to the St. George's and St. James's Dispensary.

During this time he wrote the only purely medical book of



which he was ever the author, 'On Dentition and some coincident Disorders,' which appeared in 1834. It contains much that is both novel, and interesting, and suggestive, on the influence both of the first and second dentition on the health in general, and especially on the nervous system. Its involved style, however, betrays a want of clear thinking on the part of the author, and it is characteristic of his habit of mind that a book of 200 pages contains neither index nor table of contents.

Time and practice would have remedied these defects, but unfortunately his imagination ran away with his reason, and he left the lowlier walks of experimental medicine for the heights of spiritualistic dreamland. He took up with the half facts of phrenology without the sobriety which distinguished its great apostle, Andrew Combe. All the revelations of electro-magnetism found in him an ardent neophyte, and Faraday's hesitation to complete by speculation what was wanted in proved fact seemed to him due not to wrong-headedness only, but to something worse. In short, he was like a man who, catching through a parted cloud a glimpse of some distant landscape, should venture to map out the country, instead of waiting till the risen sun had dispersed the mist and enabled him to go through the sure but tedious process of a survey.

Not only was he, as his writings show, not a clear thinker, but his impetuous temper led him too often to use angry language towards his opponents, which did him, as well as them, injustice. Still, his intellectual defects were such as dulness is exempt from, while his personal good qualities were very high. He was kind and generous, and free from any petty feeling, and personally I was much indebted to him for kindness when I was appointed Lecturer on Midwifery at the Middlesex Hospital, where he then held the post of Physician-Accoucheur, in which I succeeded him.

One thing more remains to tell of him whose nature was so strangely mingled. The distorted images which he fancied that he saw in the spirit world first led him, as he himself told me, to realise another and a higher region of the unseen,

"All true, all faultless, all in tune,"

and so it came to pass that the blindness in which the last years of his life were spent was cheered by "light from heaven."



There still remain some names to notice. I cannot profess to take them in the exact order, and I fear that for want of knowledge I may not do them all full justice.

*Dr. Shearman*, of Rotherham, died in his 80th year on the 8th of October last. He was born at Wrington, in Somersetshire, studied at St. George's Hospital, passed the usual examinations, engaged with much success in general practice at Rotherham, and afterwards taking the extra Licence, and subsequently the Membership, of the College of Physicians, became a consultant in the town where he was so well known.

He had a large share in the establishment of the Rotherham Hospital, to which he was for many years physician, and besides was active in helping the different local literary and scientific societies of the place, and especially the Mechanics' Institute, to which he gave a large collection of books and instruments. He wrote a few papers on medical subjects of no great importance, but though a Fellow of our Society he never contributed to its 'Transactions.' He was a man of much ability, energy, and activity, all which continued to the last, and he took with him when he died the respect and regret of very many of his fellow citizens.

It seems but natural that a man should die at eighty, but when death strikes down the young man who filled a post of special usefulness which it seems to us that no one else can supply as well as he did, and when this premature death comes not in the form of any ordinary disease, but in consequence of an accident, and when that accident occurs in the discharge of highest duty, and in the endeavour to learn how best to save the life of others, there is a sadness which accompanies it far beyond the measure of any common sorrow. All this is realised in the case of the late *Dr. Koch*, of Colombo, who died of a dissection wound at little past thirty years of age, at the end of the year 1877.

I am indebted to my friend Sir Joseph Fayrer for the following tribute to *Dr. Koch's* memory.

"*Dr. Koch*," says he, "was one of my best pupils in the Medical College of Calcutta. He was a Ceylon student, and was, I believe, descended from one of the good old Dutch



burgher families most highly respected. After finishing his studies in India, he came to England and graduated. He returned to Ceylon and became Principal and Professor in the Medical School at Colombo. He was the moving spirit, and the great supporter of all progress in that institution, and it proved to be a great success. He was a thorough gentleman, an excellent physician and surgeon. In all respects he was a good man, and his premature death was deplored as a national calamity. He died from the consequences of a dissection wound, in the full tide of his usefulness and the prime of life. I knew him well, and had the highest regard for him.

“ You cannot speak too highly of him. You will, I am sure, touch a responsive chord in his own country when you speak well, as I think you will, of the early death of so good a man.”

It is something, gentlemen, to deserve and to receive praise such as this.

My catalogue is unhappily a long one, but I must not pass without mention the *Rev. Dr. Peyton Blakiston*, late of St. Leonards, with whose tall figure and commanding person many of us were well acquainted.

He was a man of good family, the seventh son of Sir Matthew Blakiston, was educated at Eton and Cambridge, obtained a Fellowship at Emanuel College, and took holy orders. He held a curacy at Bilton in Warwickshire, and was afterwards the incumbent of Lymington in Hampshire. While there his health failed: he experienced threatening of affection of the chest, and went to Paris to consult Louis, then in the zenith of his reputation. On learning from that eminent man that he was not likely to regain the power of preaching in a large church, he resigned his living, and with that resolution which distinguished him through life he at once applied himself to the study of medicine, which he pursued at Cambridge and in Paris, and having obtained the Cambridge Licence to practice, he settled as a physician in Birmingham, drawn thither probably by his family connection with the Midland counties. I may mention as a proof of his energy, that while, in 1832, he preached the visitation sermon at Winchester; in 1837 he published an account, and a very good one, of the influenza at Birmingham. In 1841 he



took his doctor's degree at Cambridge, and in 1843 he was admitted a Fellow of the College of Physicians, and in 1848, when he had already been, for some years, Physician to the Birmingham Hospital, he published the first edition of his book on 'Diseases of the Chest, which embodies the results of 122 carefully recorded cases.

In 1865 appeared his second, and still more valuable work 'On Diseases of the Heart.' The two books have much in common. They tell of honest, earnest work. They are eminently truthful, are evidently written with no second thoughts of self, but from the fulness of ripe experience; with thorough knowledge and appreciation of what had been done by others, and with anxious desire to come to a right conclusion. They are not light reading, but they well repay the labour, and if I were forming a library for a student I should certainly include in it Dr. Blakiston's 'Clinical Observations on Diseases of the Heart.'

The ungenial climate of Birmingham induced him to remove to St. Leonards, where for many years he was *the* doctor, and it would be hard to adjust the balance between what he owed to the fashionable health resort, and that to him. He wisely left practice when he felt the infirmities of age affect his body though not his mind, and in full intellectual vigour he retired to London, where I often met him at the meetings of the College of Physicians, though I had not the honour of a more intimate acquaintance.

In his retirement he yet was never idle. His "Clinical Reminiscences," published at first in the 'Medical Times' a year or two before his death, are shrewd, gossiping, but not without a more serious interest, as showing the changes which the past forty years have brought about in medical opinion and practice. His 'Remarks on Modern Society,' which appeared in 1877, are valuable, as showing the attitude of his own mind, the verdict of that "old experience" which the poet tells us, doth

"Attain

To something like prophetic strain,"

rather than for anything" either new in their subject or in their mode of treatment.



Lastly, I have but this to say of him, as the conclusion of a well-spent life, "*Felix etiam opportunitate mortis.*" In the enjoyment of intellectual vigour to the end he passed suddenly, almost painlessly, to the realization of the happiness to which he had long looked forward, for which he had long prepared. He died on December 17th, 1878, in his 78th year.

Concerning one of our deceased Fellows, elected in 1843, *Mr. Edward Pope*, who died at East Harptree, near Bristol, on June 4th, 1878, at the age of 77, I have been able to obtain no information other than is contained in the following lines. He was a M.R.C.S. and L.S.A., and took, in the year 1842, the Extra-Licence of the College of Physicians. He lived and practised at different places in Somersetshire; at Bridgewater, Somerton, and Glastonbury, in which last place he resided nearly twenty years, and in 1871 removed finally to East Harptree. He appears to have taken special interest in the pursuit of natural science, of which the Fellowship of the Geological and Linnæan Societies may be accepted as evidence. The good done by the country doctor as by the country parson, is not to be measured by the fame which accompanies or follows it.

Last year I had to mention the death of our greatest physiologist, *Claude Bernard*, and this year we mourn the loss of one of our greatest morbid anatomists, *Carl Rokitansky*, the worthy successor of Morgagni. And thus, year by year, we journey on like travellers by the Appian way, our road marked on either side by the tombs of the illustrious dead.

Claude Bernard and Carl Rokitansky had this in common, that they loved their work for the work's sake, with no selfish object beyond. The one investigated the hidden springs of life, the other studied the causes of decay and death; the ultimate object of both the same, to help to realize the motto of our Society—"*Non est vivere sed valere vita.*"

Similar as they were in some respects, there were yet notable points of difference between them. Absorbed in his own pursuits Claude Bernard had no sympathies beyond, and as life would not suffice to solve all the problems which presented themselves to his mind, he devoted to them all his time and energy and thought, and lived like an anchorite in his cell, unshackled by the ties,



unheeding the interests, unwarmed by the affections which bind most men to the world around them. Rokitansky, on the other hand, was a man of equal diligence, of most varied general culture, and of wider sympathies. He had a home, and loved it, and was loved in it; his wife was a most accomplished lady, a great linguist, a musician of high repute; while of his four sons two have followed medicine, two music; his family thus somewhat strangely dividing their allegiance to Apollo; some votaries of Asclepias, some of Hermes.

He rose by hard labour to posts of honour and usefulness; honour and usefulness were to him correlatives. The steps by which he climbed are recorded in various German journals, and in the admirable memoir from the pen, I believe, of the Librarian of the College of Surgeons, which appeared in the 'Medical Times and Gazette.' He was born at Königgrätz, in Bohemia, a name unwelcome now to Austrian ears, and received his early education partly there, partly at Leitmeritz, where his father held a government appointment. His mother was descended from an Irish family which had settled in Austria, and been ennobled in the seventeenth century—an incident which carries us back to the time of Wallenstein and the Thirty Years' War. He began the study of medicine at Prague, completed it at Vienna, and graduated there in 1828. He became assistant to Johann Wagner in the Pathological Department of the General Hospital, and on Wagner's death succeeded to his appointment. In 1842 he began the publication of his 'Manual of Morbid Anatomy,' and in 1844 was nominated Ordinary Professor, having for some years held the position of Professor Extraordinary. The second edition of his work 'On Morbid Anatomy,' expressing in many respects widely different views from those contained in the first edition, was published in the years 1855 to 1861.

But for work such as Rokitansky's, the recent advances in our knowledge of morbid anatomy would have been simply impossible. I prefer to give, as I am permitted, the estimate of Dr. Murchison, so much more competent than I to judge of the value of his labours.

"Rokitansky was not a clinical physician, and cannot be said to have been remarkable as an inquirer into the intimate nature



of pathological processes ; but he was a careful observer and an indefatigable collector of facts in morbid anatomy. He made the best use of his great opportunities in collecting and recording the morbid appearances of every organ and tissue of the body, which he had found in over 30,000 autopsies. The like had never before been done. His great work on 'Pathological Anatomy' was a register of well-observed and well-recorded facts, and became at once a standard for reference by all subsequent writers on morbid anatomy, while it furnished a fresh starting-point for new discoveries. The publication of this work not only effected a greater revolution in the study of pathological anatomy than even Morgagni's great work, 'De Sedibus et Causis Morborum,' had done a century before, but by making known the different morbid states to which any organ is liable, it contributed in no small degree to the perfection of clinical diagnosis."

In 1862 the Institute of Pathological Anatomy was opened ; I suppose the most wonderfully elaborate and complete workshop that ever was constructed for the study of machinery spoilt beyond repair. It was on this occasion that Rokitansky gave an address which excited much attention, on "Freedom of Inquiry." The theme is an old one, nor even in ablest hands could its treatment be new. I find it in words written more than two hundred years ago, "Well knows he who uses to consider that our knowledge thrives by exercise as well as our limbs and complexion. Truth has been compared to a streaming fountain : if her waters flow not in a perpetual progression, they sicken into a muddy pool."

However some may have been offended, free thought found favour in high places ; and in 1863 Rokitansky was appointed Referee for Medical Education in connection with the Ministry of Public Instruction, and also referee in all cases of medico-legal inquiry, or *Gerichts-Anatom*. There is no time to trace further his rise from one post of distinction to another, or to tell of all the honours, scientific or public, which he received. In 1872 he was nominated by the Emperor life member of the Upper House of the Austrian Legislature, and the Senator worthily maintained in his speech on Freedom of Instruction the opinions which the Professor had boldly announced. The last mark of favour which his sovereign conferred on him was graciously bestowed on his 70th



birthday, when he received the cross of Commander of the Order of Leopold, an honour which brought with it his elevation to the order of nobility with the rank of Freiherr or Viscount.

He died somewhat suddenly of angina pectoris, from attacks of which he had occasionally suffered for some years, on the 23rd of last July. All the honours which the sovereign, the people, the men of science, or the student could pay were shown to him at his funeral. Old men lamented him as a brother, young men as though they had lost a father.

At the grave there befel an incident of most touching pathos. The dying Skoda had himself lifted from his bed of anguish and brought in his carriage to the grave-yard, where he sat watching the last of the friend whom he had loved all life long. And as he watched, he envied him the great rest which that friend had found, while bodily suffering wrung from him the cry, "I cannot die, and yet is my pain no less than his."

Skoda still lives, and still suffers. We can form for him, whose services in a different department of our art were scarcely less eminent than Rokitansky's, no better wish than this, that the lesson which pain was meant to teach well learnt, he too may enter into rest.

But one word more of Rokitansky, and this chiefly as a hint to those who seek in morbid anatomy an end instead of a means to an end. "My science," says he, "has brought healing to the sick bed." Our object this, or ought to be in all our inquiries.

And here, gentlemen, ends my task, and with it end my duties and my tenure of office; and it remains for me but to descend as best I may from the position to which two years since your kindness raised me. The position is the highest which a member of our profession can occupy, and to have one's name enrolled upon the honoured list of past Presidents of the Medical and Chirurgical Society may well satisfy any reasonable ambition, as it does mine.

I have very much to thank you all for, courtesy, forbearance, kindness, and for all and more than all this, I have especially to thank my colleagues on the Council, and the gentlemen who this year, as well as those who last year, filled the office of



secretaries. But, besides the happiness which I have enjoyed in forming new friendships and confirming old ones, the position of your President has an element of satisfaction which none other in one's professional career affords. It is undisturbed by the anxiety as to whether it will open the way to this or that above it, or beyond it. It overpays all past labour, for it sets the seal of one's contemporaries' approval on one's past life; it is the compensation for growing old; for as the great Roman has said, "Omnium ætatum certus est terminus, senectutis autem nullus, recteque in eâ vivitur, quoad munus officii exsequi et tueri possis." And so in his words again, I take my leave of you.

"Hæc habui, de senectute quæ dicerem: ad quam utinam perveniatis! ut ea quæ ex me audistis, re experti probare possitis."