

Annual re-union of Glasgow Lanarkians.

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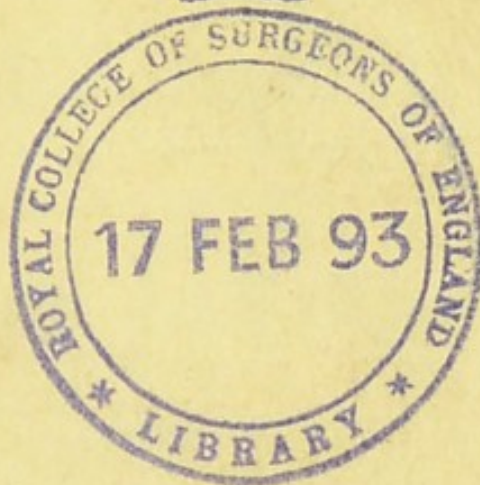
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OF
GLASGOW LANARKIANS.

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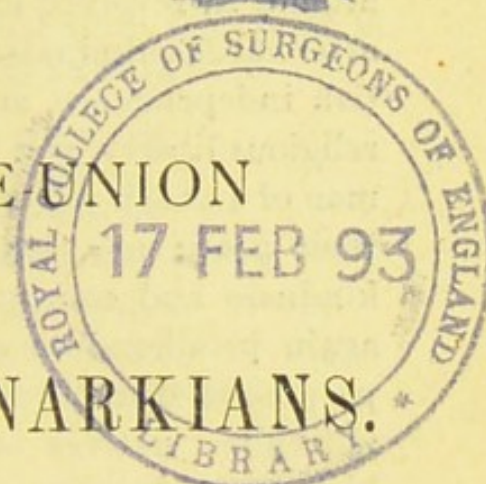


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ANNUAL RE-UNION
OF
GLASGOW LANARKIANS.



THE annual re-union of natives of Lanark and vicinity resident in Glasgow was held in the Trades Hall, Glassford Street, Glasgow, on Friday evening week—Prof. Glaister, M.D., in the chair. On the platform were Mr James Cochrane, Grangemouth; Rev. W. W. Dawson, Bailie Murphy, Mr T. Glaister, Mr M'Kerrow, Lanark; Mr Ellis, Messrs R. & G. M'Culloch, Mr James Young, Mr J. L. Dickson, Mr John Core, Mr Charles Core, Mr James Graham, ex-Commissioner Simpson, Mr Walker, Mr P. Ingram, Mr Rae, Mr Wilson, Mr A. Macgregor, Mr W. Young, Mr John Stewart, Mr R. Laidlaw, Mr Cowan.

The hall was completely filled, and tea was served in excellent style by Mr Jas. M'Farlane, Great Hamilton Street and Duke Street, Glasgow. After the company had joined in singing "Old Hundred,"

Prof. GLAISTER, who was warmly received, said—Six years have now passed since you and I met in the relation in which we stand to-night. On that occasion I had the honour to address you on the subject of "Lanark as a place of historical interest, and on the part it played in the making of national history." I pointed out to you how,

around it, revolved many of the movements which afterwards culminated in the achievement of Scottish independence, and in the attainment also of religious liberty, and to obtain these ends, how the men of Lanark willingly sacrificed their goods and their gear; aye, even their very lives. By the kindness and courtesy of your committee I am again privileged to address you to-night; and I propose to direct your attention to the efforts of individual natives of the old burgh in making history, and, more particularly to one native who, although dead these 130 years, "yet speaketh," and who still influences by the work of his brain, and by the work of his hand, the thought and action of to-day. Doubtless there are some here who would prefer that the address from this chair should take the form of a gossipy "crack," or a pleasant palaver on things in general, and nothing in particular, in connection with Lanark and its neighbourhood. But I confess that I cling to the notion, old-fashioned it may be, that an address on an occasion like this should contain something, however little, that is profitable; something that will linger in the memory after the occasion for its utterance has passed away; something, in short, that will stimulate us all, in whatever position we may find ourselves, to fresh efforts and higher aims. (Applause.) We are being constantly reminded by our teachers that it is the duty of every one of us to so regulate our lives that we strive towards attaining the perfection of the ideal life in our conduct, nay, more, that we attempt to follow humbly in the footsteps of Him who was not only perfect man but was also God. And it seems to me that valuable lessons are always to be found in the life of a note-worthy man who has lived our life, but who has gone to his rest: and to such a life I will now call your attention. If I were to choose a text which would combine these two requirements, I would point you to

"The Psalm of Life," by Longfellow, and from it I would take the two following stanzas :—

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

"Footprints, that, perhaps, another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again."

(Loud applause.) The hero of my text was, truly, a great man, and, what interests us deeply, he was a Lanark man. (Applause.) Probably many of you are aware that the educational reputation of Lanark was as high in the old days, relatively speaking, as it is in our own day. The principal, indeed the only, school in early times was the Grammar School. Who is there among us whose liveliest recollections and kindest memories are not kindled by the name of the Grammar School? (Applause.) Many of us have a very personal interest in the old Grammar School in the Horse-market; some of us, among the elders, have thoughts "too deep for words" on the mention of the name of the still older Grammar School in the Broomgate—(applause)—and I daresay not a few among you, who knew not either, have sat at the feet of a more modern Gamaliel in the new Grammar School in the Wellgate. (Applause.) From the Grammar School of Lanark, scholars from time to time have gone forth to lead famous lives in the world; some in more contracted spheres to lead distinguished lives; and I am sure that I may say of the rest, they left it to lead honest and useful lives in their day and generation. All praise to them be given! for is it not as the poet puts it—

"There is no office in this needful world
But dignifies the doer if well done."

(Applause.) Of the famous men, the names of a few readily recur to the mind; for instance, that

of Sir William Lockhart of Lee, the great statesman and general under Cromwell and Charles II. ; that of General Roy, whose fame as a civil engineer and archæologist is world-wide, and whose elaborate work on "The Military Antiquities of the Romans in Scotland" is still the standard ; that of Robert Macqueen of Braxfield (Lord Braxfield), who was Sheriff-Substitute of Lanark and afterwards Lord Justice Clerk in his time ; and that of William Lithgow—(applause)—the famous pedestrian-traveller, a copy of whose works, entitled, "Travels and Voyages through Europe, Asia, and Africa, for Nineteen Years," prefaced by his portrait and picturesque dress, I now hold in my hand. But there is still the name of another man who was educated at the Grammar School, whose fame became co-extensive with the limits of learning, whose name is still spoken with admiration and respect in the schools of learning of every civilised country, but of whose life and work the people of Lanark probably know least, and the name of that man is Dr William Smellie. (Applause.) Let me, then, tell you something about an old scholar of the Lanark Grammar School, of what he did for his native town, for his country, for the world, for science, and for humanity, and how he did it, in the hope that some here may be stimulated to higher aims with noble issues. William Smellie was born in or near the old burgh in the year 1697—nearly 200 years ago. Little is known of his parents, of his early life, or how or where he received his medical education, but this we do know, that he received his early education at the Grammar School. We pick up his life at the point where he settled down in Lanark as a medical practitioner—then known by the name of apothecary—about the year 1720. He lived in the Bloomgate in a house on a site a few doors above the U.P. Church there, where he also had his surgery. All evidence points to the fact that he

was a successful practitioner, and that he was a reserved and studious man. Not having many printed books at that time, he fell back on the large book of Nature, and began to study closely the subject in which he was especially interested from his patients. He lived on friendly terms with his medical neighbours, for we find him gratefully acknowledging the loan of a book from one, and hints for practice from another. He was a very observant man. He began journals of his work, into which he copied every phenomenon worth observing, and demanding reflection. So valuable did these notes become that he was afterwards able to use them when he published his great work. He was, too, a man of original genius. We find that he was not only a capable artist with the brush, but was also an *artiste* on musical instruments. Observation and experience compelled him to think that everything had not been revealed that was of value in his art, and he was ambitious enough to think and believe that he could do something to improve matters. This led him to leave Lanark for London in 1739, after having practised about twenty years there and in its neighbourhood. This step shows the courage of the man. Even the journey itself to London in those days was no light affair. There were no railways; there were no coaches; and, in some parts of the route, not even roads worthy of the name. But to leave Lanark—a place where he was well known and highly appreciated—and to cast himself into an unknown city, with no knowledge of what his fate might eventually be, evinced the highest courage. With the strong desires of the student, he hoped to find in London more light, but, when he reached the metropolis, he found that not even there was he to obtain that further knowledge of his subject which he had hoped he would. He was thus disappointed; but with the courage of a Scot and the determination

of a Lanark man he pushed on to Paris, of whose medical school he had heard so much. There he learnt the language, and made himself conversant with all that they could teach him, but still he was not satisfied. After a stay of three months in that capital, he returned to London, whither he had taken his wife, and settled down in practice as an apothecary and man-midwife in Pall Mall. What he had seen both in London and in Paris convinced him that he had within himself something new to impart to the medical world, and he therefore began to construct teaching models, in order to commence giving lectures. Shortly after settling down there, there came to live with him a raw lad from East Kilbride, whom he taught part of his profession. This was William Hunter, who was afterwards to become one of the world's famous men, and whose great collection was bequeathed to the University of Glasgow at his death, and which may be seen at any time. Smellie, about this time, obtained the degree of Doctor of Medicine, but from which university no one can yet tell. His great ability, his energy, and his characteristic perseverance soon asserted themselves in London. He began to teach the obstetric art, and very soon, from the marvellous character of his teaching apparatus, and from the lucidity of his teaching, his fame went abroad. Pupils flocked to hear him, not only from all parts of Great Britain, but also from the Continent—some of them, men who were afterwards to fill University chairs, both at home and abroad—and they imbibed the new views which he taught, which he so ably demonstrated, and with such fidelity, that they are the views of the medical profession to this day. There can be no doubt that he was the greatest teacher of this subject in this or any other country at that time. In 1752, after having taught for ten years, he published the first volume of his great work. This book was hailed with so much acceptance by the

medical world that a second edition was called in the following year, and a third two years later, when he also issued the second volume of his work, along with a large folio volume of illustrative plates. He continued teaching and practising in London till 1759, when he retired, and like an exile from home, left the Metropolis for Lanark, there to spend the evening of his days in learned leisure. Having no family to perpetuate his name, he made over his museum and teaching appliances to Dr John Harvie, who had married his niece, Annie Hamilton. He settled down on his little estate which he called "Smellom," now changed to Smyllum, and there he determined at his leisure to bring his professional work to a fitting close by preparing for the press the third volume of his work. He worked at and finished his MS.; it had been corrected for the press, and it had been sent to the printer; but he did not live to see it issue in book form, for he died on 5th March, 1763, while the volume in question was only issued the year after. Eight editions, at least, of Smellie's work were published in London, and others in Edinburgh, Dublin, and Philadelphia. It was translated into French, German, and Dutch. (Applause) He was buried in the old churchyard, close by the ruins of the old kirk of St. Kentigern, and on his gravestone may be read the following inscription:—

This is Doctor William Smellie's burial-place, who died March 5th, 1763, aged 66. Here lyes Eupham Borland, spouse to the said Doctor Smellie, who died June 27th, 1769, aged 79.

The year before he died he made a will, bequeathing to the school of Lanark his library and many other interesting and valuable objects. (Applause.) His will bears the date of 1753, but his bequest to the school is to be found in three codicils, the first of which is dated 24th December, 1762, and the other two shortly before his death. The first codicil reads thus:—

"I, William Smellie, for the regard I have for the school of Lanark, bequeath to the same all my books, mapps, and pamphlets, except those of medicine, surgery, and pharmacy, for to begin a library there. Also, I bequeath £200 sterling for repairing the schoolhouse according to a plan I have left."

"January 20, 1763.—I also bequeath to the school of Lanark nine English flooks, with the thick 4to. gilt music book." (Here follow bequests to friends of his violincello, his concert organ, flutes, etc., together with music books chiefly of Scotch music.) "To John Lockhart of Lee my gold-headed cane and pen-maker."

"February 4, 1763.—I also live (leave) for the library room at Lanark the three pictures in my studdie, viz., my father's, mother's, and my own, drawn by myself in 1719. I also desire that non (*sic*) of the books be lent out, and to accomodate readers I live (*sic*) for their use to be in the foresaid room my large reading dask with the table-flap that hangs to it and stands in the lobie, with the lether (*sic*) cheir, and smoaking little cheir in the studdie, as also the high steps there to take down the books which must be contained in locked presses with weil tirlised doors, the schoolmaster to be the librarian, and to be accountable to the bailies and ministers of the Presbytery of Lanark once a year, at the vacation time. After a more deliberate consideration, and as my collection of medical books are (*sic*) prettie complete, both as to the antient and modern practice, and may be of use to the medical gentlemen of this place, to improve and consult on extraordenar emergencys, I also bequeath all of them to the foresaid library, and along with them two printed books on the composition of musick and a manuscript one. . . . It will also be necessary to caus print a catalogue of the books, with proper statutets to be observed."

By August, 1775, the alterations and additions, according to the plan mentioned in the will, having been completed, several meetings of the trustees took place for the purpose of framing regulations for the library. But it was not opened till the year 1803. In 1814 the trustees agreed that the books should be lent out, but in 1816 that plan having proved a failure, "a motion was made that it should be broken up; this was carried into effect in 1819, when the books which had been purchased from the commencement were divided among the members." The portraits of himself, of his father and mother, the chairs, the writing-

desk, the musical instruments, and many other things have now disappeared from the library. The portrait of himself, "drawn by my own hand," found its way, in what precise way and by what right, I am not yet able to tell, to the library of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, to which body it was presented by a descendant of Dr. Harvie, but by what legal right it became his to bestow I leave lawyers to determine. The subsequent history of this fine library is soon told. It was transferred from the old Grammar School in the Broomgate to the newer building in the Horsemarket. It there occupied a separate room, but its well-made cases were carefully kept locked ; and it was again transferred to the new Grammar School in the Wellgate in recent years. There it was unhappily exposed to a fire which broke out in the school, but thanks to the public spirit of the inhabitants, most of its contents were saved from the flames. Now it is as carefully locked up as ever. I made my first acquaintance with it when a pupil in the Grammar School, under the rectorship of the late Mr John Gray, than whom a finer teacher, a more kindly man, never existed. (Applause.) Even then my acquaintance with it was chiefly from the outside ; but some of us who were locked in during the lunch hour, on one occasion during inclement weather, with the eager curiosity of boys, found one day on the top of the case a collection of diagrams, which later on I recognised in memory as the diagrams used in illustrating Smellie's book. These have now also disappeared. Later on, when a student of medicine, I availed myself of every opportunity of making myself acquainted with the contents of the library, I have carefully gone over every book in a cursory way on several occasions, and I made an inventory of the collection, a portion of which has unfortunately been lost. I have seen the author's interleaved copy of the first volume of his work,

and his annotations on the margin in his own handwriting. That also has disappeared some years ago. I gave in this city, before one of our medical societies, two lectures on the subject of Smellie's life and work, which evinced great interest from the medical profession of this city. I am well aware that, although the books are of little value from the standpoint of modern medicine, I also know that they are invaluable as throwing light on the practice of past times. There were books in it which money could hardly purchase to-day because of their rarity. In the year 1888, when the British Medical Association held its annual congress in Glasgow, I had the good fortune, as one of the secretaries to that large meeting, to personally conduct about 100 of the members, from widely scattered portions of this and other countries, to Lanark, and there was not one feature of that enjoyable day's outing which was more highly appreciated than the sight of the library of the famous man with whose name and work they were familiar, and whose perfected instruments they daily handle in the work of their profession. (Applause.) Smellie's name is to be found and his views quoted in every work on obstetrics worthy of the name, in every civilised language, neither will they ever be forgotten so long as the history of that subject is written. I candidly avow that the work of this great man has done much to stimulate me in the work of the profession to which he belonged, and that many times his life, in its energy and in its perseverance, has acted as a spur when one would fain to lag. (Applause.) From humble parentage then, and from a country school, his name became known all over the world. (Applause.) From being an obscure country practitioner, with few of the advantages either of education or books, or other agencies which are at the command of the practitioner of to-day, but with Nature to watch and her processes to copy,

he revolutionised and illuminated a department of medical practice which was in his time in a state of chaos : he demonstrated the truth with such fidelity that the medical profession of to-day honour his name, accord him fame, and gratefully acknowledge the great value of his work. He himself saved the lives of many, and his work has been the means of saving countless thousands since ; in short, he brought honour to himself, to the profession to which he belonged, to his birth-place, and to his country. (Applause.) As Davidson, in his "History of Lanark," published in 1828, says,

"Never was a donation so handsome attended with such trifling effects. The intentions of the generous donor have been completely lost for want of a bestirring spirit on the part of the trustees." "The books have consequently become useless lumber, and for want of proper attention must soon be destroyed by moths."

I cannot but mournfully endorse these views. I frequently ask myself if nothing can be done to rescue such a valuable collection of books, illustrative of the medical art of past times, from such deadly oblivion. I confess that I will feel ashamed of my native place when I will have to record the foregoing history in a life of Smellie which I hope soon to publish. I ask, if it is in accordance with the spirit of the age that the best monument to the noble life of a pioneer in medicine should be allowed to be concealed in death-like obscurity. I know that the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow would willingly and proudly take the care of this library which belonged to one, who was in his time a member of it ; that they would place it in special cases, and that they would conform to such conditions as would in no way materially change the original terms of the donor's will. I sincerely trust, then, that this address will have accomplished something, if it has the effect of directing the earnest attention

of the people of Lanark to it, and to its destiny. And, it seems to me that the lesson from Smellie's life and work for each of us is this:—Let us each so do our duty, that in doing it we not only honour what we do, but do honour to ourselves, and to our old home. (Applause.) And to the young men "the heirs of all the ages," it in effect says:—the world is all before you, the paths to fame are steep and rugged and arduous, but they are not insurmountable; let them, then, be up and doing, and with "a stout heart to every stey brae" let them rise proudly to fame above every obstacle, God helping them. (Applause.)

A capital programme was sustained by Miss Lizzie Downes, soprano, Mr Carlton Browne, tenor, Madame Robertson, contralto, and Mr J. C. Macdonald, comic, and short addresses were given by Rev. W. W. Dawson, and Mr W. Young.

Mr SIMPSON moved a vote of thanks to the committee and in doing so said the turnout this year was so encouraging that he thought next year they should take the City Hall. (Applause.)

Mr CORE returned thanks on behalf of the committee.

Mr COCHRANE proposed a vote of thanks to the chairman and this having been given the singing of "Auld Lang Syne" concluded the first part of the proceedings.

An assembly which was also well attended both by dancers and spectators, followed, and with Mr John Sandilands as M.C. dancing was kept up till three o'clock.

The committee and their energetic and courteous secretary, Mr Forrest, deserve great praise for the admirable manner in which they carried out all the necessary arrangements.

