

## **Historical sketches of St. Thomas's Hospital. Pt. II / by William Rendle.**

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*2. The Hon. Mr. R. & Co.  
with William Rendle's  
kindest & most respectful compliments*

Old Southwark and its People.

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ST. THOMAS'S HOSPITAL,  
SOUTHWARK.

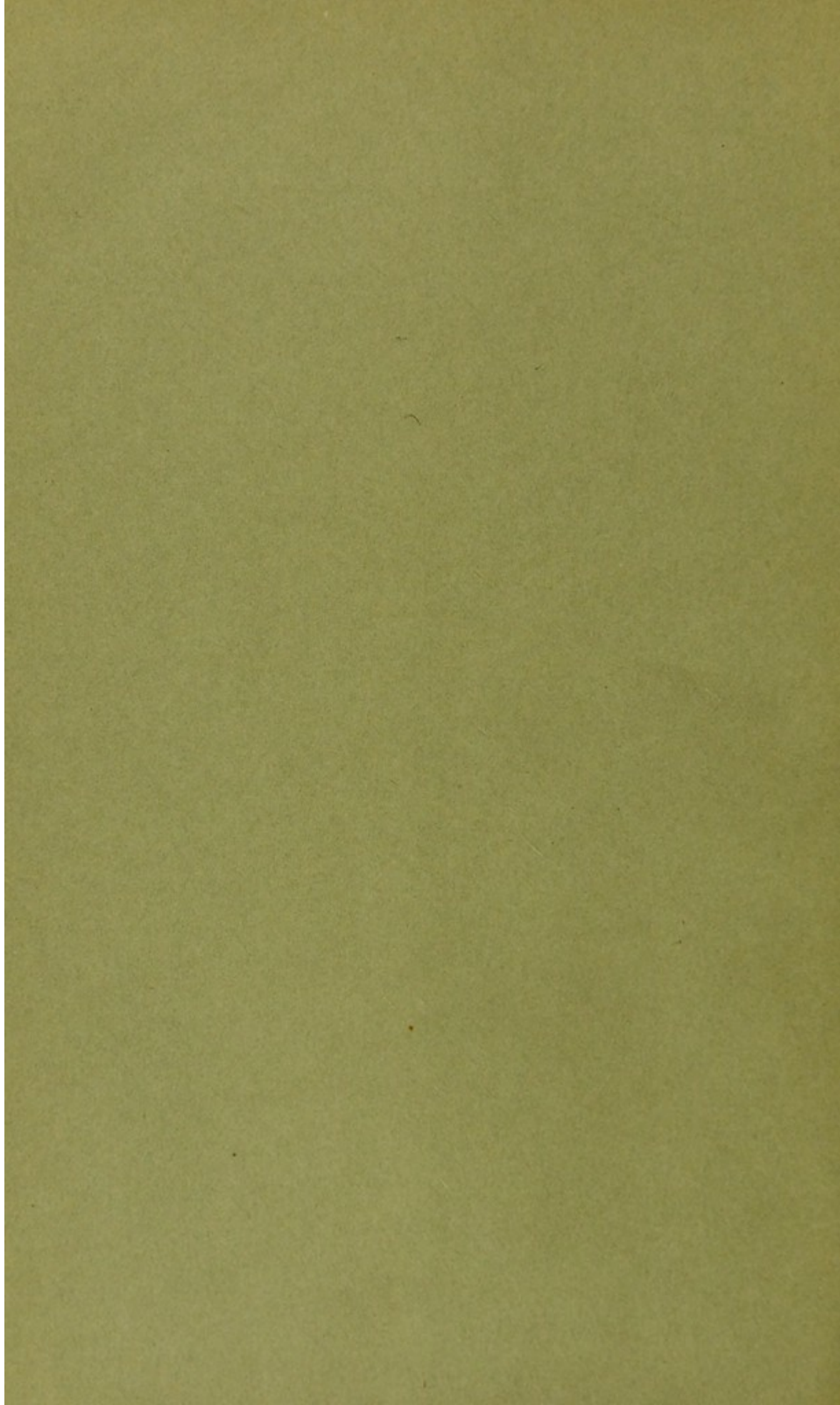
PART SECOND.

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W. RENDLE,

1887.







# HISTORICAL SKETCHES OF ST. THOMAS'S HOSPITAL.

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## PART II.

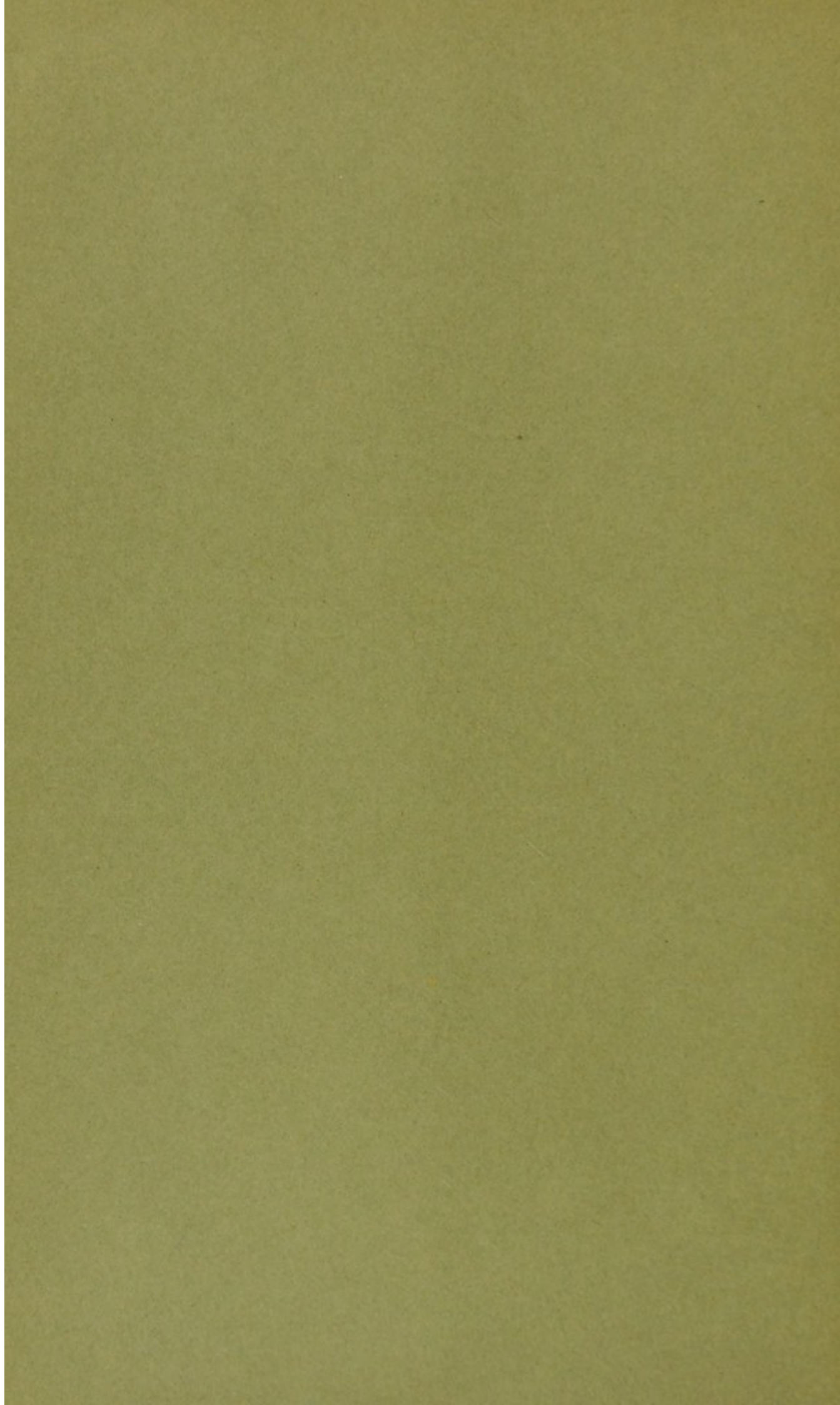
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BY

WILLIAM RENDLE, F.R.C.S.

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# HISTORICAL SKETCH OF ST. THOMAS'S HOSPITAL.

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## PART II.

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BY WILLIAM RENDLE, F.R.C.S.

[Read November 25, 1885.]

MORE than a year ago, I had the honour of reading before this Society a short sketch history of St. Thomas's Hospital in Southwark, from about A.D. 1200 downwards, chiefly from original manuscripts. I gave the very words of the charity sermon, or address, put forth by the Bishop of Winchester for the re-building of the Hospital in 1228 after its destruction by fire, and many notices of bequests involving curious customs common to those times. You were brought down to another re-building in 1507, and to the forfeiture, as a religious institution, in 1538.

Many most interesting matters were related, of great local and even national interest, which had their centre here. Some points were hurried over or barely referred to; two or three of these claim a little further notice now.

As to the early origin of such places, Lanfranc, the Norman Archbishop, is said to have set the example, about 1100, of building hospitals for the poor and sick and unlearned, in connection with the great houses



of his own Church; the example was no doubt soon followed by the founding of hospitals in Southwark, the first within the precincts of the Priory of St. Mary Overy, and shortly after that, the one next the Almery in the precincts of Bermondsey Priory—entirely separate hospitals, although, being of the same name, often confounded since.

In an old document relating to the Dolphin and Bear at the Bridge foot, celebrated inns in Southwark so early as 1319, the boundary on the south was land belonging to the Hospital of St. Thomas's Overy—incidentally noted in my first Paper read before you—with a lane leading down to the Thames, and a barn belonging to the Priory. This I suppose to have been the earliest site of the St. Thomas's founded by the Normans, now covered by the Bridge House Hotel, Westminster Bank, and Overman's Almshouses, the last administered even lately by St. Thomas's Hospital, and so still showing the connection.

The ground on which the Hospital of 1507 was built had been occupied long before by quite other people. In the spring of 1840, while digging the foundations for new wings, evidence of an elaborate Roman dwelling was discovered, the tessellated flooring of a room, with walls and passages leading to other apartments, all built on piles. A little north of this, coins of Gratian, Claudius, Domitian, and Valens were found, together with lamps and other pottery; and on the floor showing the probable time of occupation, coins of the Constantine family.

I have studied a document in the Record Office, giving a list of the possessions of the Hospital just



before the Dissolution in 1538, and one of the several inventories made of the rental of lands and tenements for a year, the date of which is not given—it may be 1537–8, or earlier. The word “sold” in the margin against certain properties seems to imply the worldly-wise realization and sale of property in anticipation of the violent forfeiture. In this list the names of tenants, and the rents they paid, are given. The total rents named amount to about £333 7s., in present value say three to four thousand pounds.

The list shows some 111 tenements, or gardens, within the Close known as the parish of St. Thomas's Hospital, the rents varying from four shillings to forty shillings or more, tenements within tenements from four shillings to thirteen shillings and fourpence. Thirty gardens are noted. Among the tenants are John of the Bond, Nicholas Crumwell, of kin possibly to the Minister, who had many connections in Southwark; Peter and Paul Nicholson, of the printing and glass-painting family, some of whose workshops were here; James Nicholson, printer and glazier, the most famous of them; Robert Acton, Member of Parliament for Southwark; Francis Williamson and Galien Hone, who, with Nicholson, executed those wonderful windows at King's College, Cambridge; the “Herle” of Oxford whose rent was twenty-six shillings and eightpence; the Wardens of Our Lady of St. Margaret's; Sir William Ingleby, priest; John Crosse, of the Red Lion Brewery, and warden of the parish; Robert Swanne, and others. Many of the names show foreign (chiefly Dutch and Walloon) extraction, the result of a foreign immigration, chiefly from religious persecutions. This



district near London Bridge—viz., St. Thomas's, St. Olave's, and St. Saviour's—was on the highway of trade, and was much favoured by these skilled industrious workers—weavers in silks and other fabrics, glass-painters, printers, brewers, and so on. Mr. Bradshaw, the lamented Librarian of the University of Cambridge, showed me the very parchment contract for the windows of King's College, entered into between the authorities of the College and the glass-painters or "glasyers" of Southwark, and dated March, 1522; the names and seal marks at the bottom of the parchment are of "Galione Hone, Jamys Nycolson, Francess Will<sup>m</sup>zoon," inhabitants of St. Thomas's, St. Olave's, and St. Saviour's parishes; the spelling of the names showing clearly enough of what extraction they were (moreover the entries of their denization are in our Public Records). These same men paid rent for tenements and gardens in the Close of St. Thomas's Hospital, or on hospital lands near at hand.

In public papers of the time is recorded a similar business transaction. "John Joise of the hospital of St. Thomas Southwark, Surrey, glasyer, Edith, his wife, Cornelius Mast, glasyer," and others, all of Southwark, had delivered glass to the then value of £100, an enormous sum; all this showing Southwark as a famous place for stained glass in the best time of that art.

Our notion of values is quite confounded; of land, for instance. Here is an entry from this St. Thomas's Inventory, of 20 acres in St. George's Fields let to Johane Sparrow, widow, for a rent of £53 4s.; to Richard Cartwright, 6 acres, rent 20s.; to John-a-Lee, lands, tenements, and gardens, in Kent Street,



and 5 acres in Horsemonger Lande, rent £6 10s.—that is, a rent of less than £10 for 40 or 50 acres of what is now the busiest part of St. George's and Newington parishes.

I noted the impending surrender of the Hospital to the King's officers. At this time the management was in a Master and Brethren and three lay sisters, who made up forty beds for poor infirm people, to whom they gave also victuals and firing.

As to the rebuilding in 1507. It was no doubt of some architectural pretence; the sketch in the map prefixed to my first Paper, although of the rudest, implies a Gothic type. About this time Southwark was graced with fine architecture; for instance, Winchester House, the Palace of the Bishops of Winchester, of which some very fine remains existed to my time; St. Saviour's, or rather the Priory and Church of, as yet, St. Mary Overy, of the same type as Salisbury Cathedral, fully described and pictorially illustrated by Mr. Dollman; Suffolk House, exactly opposite St. George's Church, built about 1518, by the Duke of Suffolk, for his Duchess, the King's sister: the picture of it is roughly shown on the map, but very grandly indeed on Van Wyngaerde's pictorial map of 1543.

These were not by any means all the noble buildings; there were inns of Bishops, Abbots, and Priors, all at that very time in Southwark. We may, I think, assume that the churches also were finely decorated and had musical services; the Rector of St. George's in 1510 was the King's "lutanist." The church was of course supplied with the famous stained glass of Southwark; the brotherhoods and sisterhoods in their



quaint guild costumes were often there praying for the souls of friends and benefactors.

I may note the changes, according to the whim of the time, in the name of our Hospital. The Hospital of St. Thomas Overy, that is, of Thomas of Canterbury, less respectfully "Bekkets spyttell"; the Hospital of the Holy Trinity; speedily changed, out of compliment to the generous re-founder, Edward VI, to the King's Hospital; and finally, and as it is now, the Hospital of St. Thomas the Apostle.

As to some points barely noticed, I should have liked to have said something more about the renowned printing-press within the precincts, whence the first English Bible printed in England was issued—interesting particulars as to contemporary life and manners, business and prices, of which there is an abundance—of the management of the Hospital in the time of Elizabeth—and of even historically illustrious personages connected with St. Thomas's. All that I have seen implies the social history of the people all along, and this is contained in the well-kept and well-preserved minutes of the Governors' meetings, in and after the sixteenth century, to which I have always had free and friendly access.

The first step after the destruction of the Charity to which the poor were wont to turn was the endeavour to re-establish this, and others the like, upon a wider basis. So in 1538 the City approached the King on behalf of the poor and indigent people, "Crystes very images." On this occasion Sir Richard Gresham was Mayor. Nothing very effectual came of it under "this elect and chosen vessell of God, virtuous and charitable" (Henry VIII).



Through the fervent appeals of good Bishop Ridley under King Edward VI, as already said, the Hospital was re-founded and munificently endowed by the King and by the liberal City merchants. Curiously enough, in the selection of the City managers from every Ward, none represents the place of the Hospital, the Bridge Ward Without—that is, Southwark. But then, it is quite understood that Southwark never had more than a left-handed connection with the City. The inhabitants of Southwark were as outlying people beneath the Civic dignity. The particulars as to the management of these charitable contributions are contained in the Memoranda of the Royal Hospitals.

In the interval between this time and the end of the seventeenth century, the history of the Hospital is very rich in incidents: it is almost like a romance, full of quaint and interesting matter. As to people, there are the Woodruffes, whose pedigree is given in Manning's *Surrey*. David Woodroffe, the cruel Sheriff, he who reviled the Martyr Rogers on his way from judgment at St. Mary Overy to death by fire, was one of them; Sir William Chester, the other Sheriff and Governor of St. Thomas's, kind and considerate as Woodroffe was brutal; Robert Offley,—alike in parsimony and princely liberality another Thomas Guy,—also bequeathed half his estate to the poor; William Hewitt, the merchant who lived on London Bridge, was Mayor of London and a Governor: it was his child who fell from the window into the river and was rescued by Edward Osborne, his apprentice, husband of the girl when she grew up—at length himself Lord Mayor, Treasurer of St. Thomas's, and founder of the Ducal house of Leeds.



I have neither time nor space to enumerate these Governors, so many of them noble merchants of the City, and people of great trust. Among them the Harveys, one of whom, when Mayor, had the appointing of "Ministers of the Word of God." Bishop Aylmer, who hated Nonconformists, must needs insult the Chief Magistrate in his person: "he would admonish him from the pulpit at Paul's Cross, and the Lord Mayor should sit, not as a judge, but as a scholar."

Among incidents of management at the Hospital were—the duty of finding work for able inmates; working in flax and at the hand corn-mill; punishment at the whipping-post, set up in the precincts, where offenders, even sisters, "were punished"; the regulation of beer, beef, and bread;—of beer, every one is allowed daily a quart at dinner, and a pint at supper, that is in the hot weather, but after two months their old allowance of one quart. In 1576, Wassall Weblyng, Southwark Brewer, supplies good wholesome drink at 3s. 4d. the barrel. It appears that the patients got a taste for strong beer and went abroad, notably on the "sabothe day," and "did abuse themselves in taverns and alehouses to the great displeasure of Almighty God and the misliking of the governors," so the strong beer was stopped. As to the beef, the steward was to buy the best without bones, "only cleane flesh and specially without the mary bone."

In 1582, Thomas Harvard, one of that family of Southwark, which gave John Harvard to New England to found their great University, was little John's father, a Southwark butcher, carrying on his business in the Close of St. Thomas's Hospital.

### CORRECTIONS.

- Page 8, 3rd line up, "was (*like as* John's father), a Southwark butcher."  
,, 9, 9th line down, "order," *O*, capital *O*.  
,, 12, bottom line, "county" should be *Compter*, and "meat" meal.  
,, 13, 6th line down, after "Hospital," *and the little chapel of St. Saviour's*.  
,, 5th line up, after "work," *was*.  
,, 14, 21st line down, line above the poetry, "Achitophel."  
,, 22nd line down, first line of poetry, "Bless'd."  
,, 19, 7th line up, "appears."  
,, 20, 15th line down, "Mr." should be *Sir*.  
,, 21, 14th line down, *Sir* before "John Simon."  
,, 23, 10th line down, "Achitophel."  
,, 22nd line down, *Lade*, not "Gates."  
,, 28, 2nd line down, "though" should be thought.





Here now is an incident in the management, significant of other times and other manners. The matron of 1564 complains of Jone Loune and Mary Allyn: one is in love with Clement Starkye, the other with Robert Holland, one of the poor—they are respited for a month upon their good and honest behaviour. It must be remembered that among the charges to the nurses and keepers of the wards, in the order of the Hospitals, 1557, is this: “ye shall not resort nor suffer any man to resort to you before ye have declared the same to the almoners or matron and have obtained their favour and license to do so;” and in the revised order, 1647, none of the poor was to “talk susspiciously nor contract matrimony with each other or within the howse.” In 1578, John Willye, under surveyor, confesseth before the Governors that he is toward marriage; he is warned, whereupon he abuses the steward. In 1580, Barker of Lambeth craves favour with the Governors—he wants to marry the cook’s widow; he may do it if so disposed, the Governors say. An order of this time tells its tale. The Governors say there shall after this be no more wedding dinners within the Hospital—they had evidently been too kind. The Governors try to manage the women,—they take note that one misuses her tongue, another is generally unquiet, and several of the sisters had been straying out without leave to Southwark Fair, which was held up to the very gates of the Hospital in September of every year.

In 1571, a “phesyssion,” Mr. Bull, is appointed at a salary of 20 marks by the year, and to have a house in the Close; he acts as general doctor, superintends the apothecary and his drugs, but professionally is in



a position subordinate to an official Governor who has no pretence to a knowledge of medicine. The surgeon is at this time not much more than a curer of sore heads and a mender of broken bones, and has for competitors outsiders, curers of sore heads and bone-setters. The surgeon, as we see, works under the pressure of having his unsuccessful cases handed over to them, who *if they cure* are paid—an early instance of the “no cure, no pay” system. In 1632, the apothecary is side by side with a herb-woman who has £4 a-year for physical herbs. In 1652 a midwife is paid 2s. 6d. for her help to two poor women; long before, Mother Edwyn engages to cure a boy of hernia for 13s. 4d., half of which she will return if she fails; evidently she succeeds, as she is paid, and a truss is provided. In 1589, a woman, E. Bowman, is paid, 4s. 4d. for “hellinge of Wm. Mylles’s child when it had the plague,” but this last is in the account of the parish wardens. We see then that, notwithstanding the order of 1551, the surgeon had little, if any, status at the hospitals; in the list of officers he comes in between the shoemaker and the barber. Even in 1647 he is not to prescribe medicine, which is the duty of the physician only, and the physician and surgeon are of so little importance that no solemn charge is given to them as to their duties, like the charges given to other officers from the treasurer down to the cook, butler, and shoemaker.

The Hospital is an Infirmary, a Poorhouse, a Workhouse with casual ward, a night refuge, a place for stray children, rather than a Hospital pure and simple.

The charter of Edward VI appoints the physician, the surgeon, two women sisters to wait upon the poor



and wash their clothes as often as might be necessary, and one doorkeeper. Two "fitting ministers" were appointed: one, for the poor and officers of the Hospital, and for the Hospital known as the House for the Poor, was called the Hospitaller; the other was for the *parish* of St. Thomas's Hospital.

In the ups-and-downs of religious creeds and parties, feelings often ran very high, and gave rise to violence. The ministers not unfrequently get sequestered and removed to prison. In 1639 Joan Darvell, the matron, is taken from the altar in the chapel while engaged in religious worship, and dragged along the streets on a plea of debt, and is lodged in one of the Borough prisons. Joseph Daves, curate and hospitaller, is sequestered, and is thus reported of by the Commonwealth Puritans: "He hath great malignancy against the Parliament, is confident that God will have no mercy on those who die in the Parliament service, who are all rogues and rascals." He adds that those who died at Edge-Hill in the service of the Parliament went to the Devil. The Parliament committee, whose chairman was John White, member for Southwark at the time, adds that Daves is a "common swearer and haunter of taverns." Adjusting the balance, Hughes, the Hospitaller in 1651, dedicates a sermon of his to Cromwell himself,—the preachers change about, Royalist and Puritan, Puritan and Royalist, and so on, each leaving a legacy of hate.

I have noticed Dr. Bull, the first physician—a strange story is related of his successor, Doctor Wolfe, appointed in 1577 at the same salary, 20 marks a-year. It is a time of plague, and the new doctor is



evidently scared out of his wits, except his wits for self-preservation. Almost directly he gets to work he orders fires, evening and morning, in the wards, and in houses near, for the avoidance of infection, but no doubt unintentionally for the spread of terror; places are to be selected for those sick of the plague; soon he wants three months' leave of absence; he is ill and will find a substitute. In some of the officials cupidity prevailed over fear, the Hospitaller and Surveyor took cases in and kept the money. In 1578 Wolfe is still away, he is too ill to travel. The Governors appear to understand the Doctor's trouble, and warn him. Later on, as he is not back, a deputy is appointed, and in 1580, after much patience, Doctor Wolfe is finally got rid of.

There are, however, men of the highest quality among these little-honoured physicians and surgeons; among others there was Wharton, Fairfax's doctor, who stuck to his post in the plague time, and when so many fled he stayed in London, attending the poor of the Hospital as well as his own patients. How was he rewarded? His case was a remarkable one. He was to be Physician to the King; but at length comes a message from the Court to say it cannot be—he may have an honourable augmentation of his paternal arms, and for this the poor physician had to pay Sir William Dugdale £10. No doubt in this time of Charles II, the good physician went to the wall, and the rascals got the day.

In 1676 the Hospital had a narrow escape from fire. The Queen's Head, Talbot, George, White Hart, King's Head, and Green Dragon, very old inns, together with the county prison, the meat market, and



about 500 houses, were burnt down, blown up, and wholly destroyed. Twenty or more people were killed and many wounded.

The fire ravaged both sides of the main street of Southwark, as far as the porch of St. Thomas's Hospital, which was broken down on the eastern side. In commemoration, a tablet was placed over the great staircase of the Hospital, with the following inscription:—

*“Laus Deo.”*

Upon the 26th of May, 1676, in the 28th year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King Charles the Second, about three of the clock in the morning, over against St. Margaret's Hill, in the Borough of Southwark, there happened a most dreadful and lamentable fire, which before ten of the clock at night consumed about 500 houses. But in the midst of judgment God remembered mercy, and by His goodness in considering the poor and distressed, put a stop to the fire at this home, after it had been touched several times therewith. By which, in all probability, all this side of the Borough was preserved. This tablet is here put, that whoso readeth it may give thanks to the Almighty God, to Whom alone is due the honour and praise. Amen.”

In 1694 the Hospital was complained of as old, low, and damp. £2,000 had been already spent in rebuilding, a first stone having been placed by the Lord Mayor, in 1692; but the work stayed for want of money. A great effort is now resolved upon. A long list of Governors is made out, of those who *had* given, and, by way of stimulus and reminder, also of those who *had not* subscribed towards the



new buildings; the results are altogether contributions of about £38,000, and some other very liberal arrangements on the part of the City of London. Golding's *History of the Hospital*, pp. 91-111, gives an account of this charitable work of reconstruction.

Among the foremost of those who at this period lived to do good was Sir Robert Clayton, heading the list with £600, and showing many a charitable deed beside. The third court, or square, was built by him; in 1701 his statue was placed in it, that is, upon the very site of the old Hospital of 1509. Sir Robert was a scrivener or banker, Alderman in 1670, Sheriff in 1671, Mayor in 1679. He represented London in six Parliaments, and was, indeed, one of the most remarkable men of his time; advanced in his opinions, the political associate of Algernon Sidney, and William, Lord Russell, he, as one might suppose with such dangerous friends, came near to losing his life; no favourite of Dryden, he is portrayed as the Ishban of his *Absalom and Ahitophel*.

“Blest times when Ishban, he whose occupation  
So long had been to cheat, reformed the nation!  
Ishban of conscience suited to his trade,  
As good a saint as usurer ever made.”

But Clayton was too good in fruit to come from that tree, to match that libel. Thomas Guy and Thomas Frederick, fruitful also of good and charitable works, each built three wards, forming the outer court next the High Street.

A few words in passing may well be said about St. Thomas's Church. In my first Paper I mentioned a market held outside this church so early as 1392,



for the convenience of the men of Southwark Town, the King's Court of the Marshalsea being held in the same place—a common enough custom in those days, to hold the market near the church, or even at the door. With bad roads and lawless people about, it was a convenience for people to flock to church and to market on the same occasion.

We may form some notion of the church in the time of Henry VII, from the curious particulars contained in a will of 1489. John Meyricke, of the parish, hospital, and close of St. Thomas the Martyr in Southwark, bequeaths his body to be buried in the chancel of St. John Baptist, before the image of St. John the Baptist therein. There are a Trinity Altar, an Altar of St. John, and an Altar of Our Lady. "Twelve candles and torches are to burne about the herse at the obsequies, at mass, at burying, and at the month's mind."<sup>1</sup> The glass-painters of St. Thomas's Close would surely not neglect their own church—we may therefore assume that the stained glass therein would be of such quality and of such colours as would shame us now, done by the "glaziers" of the Close, who were the workmen of the renowned windows of King's College, Cambridge, and contracted to place therein "good, clene, sure, and perfyte glasse, and oryente colors, and imagery of the story of the old law, and the new law." This wonderful work is still to be seen at Cambridge, and the men who did it could scarcely wholly neglect the little church of the parish they lived in. The

<sup>1</sup> The phrase "month's mind" originally referred to an ecclesiastical custom of commemorating the bounty of a testator, either, as some say, during a month, or, as others, monthly.—EDS.



picture of an interior is prefixed to the *Golden Meane* of Benjamin Spencer, who was minister of St. Thomas's in 1647 and after the manner of the time the hour-glass is fixed on a pole close to the pulpit and to the minister's eye. But I cannot be sure that this was St. Thomas's. From our new churches local colouring has almost faded away, quaintness is gone, and matter of fact and even a colder mechanism has come. We have no heretics sitting before the congregation to be preached at before the burning, no petty sinner stands in white, upon a stool in the aisle or at the entry, for penance. Compared with the old, our stained glass, our ceremonials and memorials of the dead, appear spiritless. Among us is not so often found the always open door of the Latin Church, inviting the passer-by to a few moments of prayer or serious thought, or even to rest in a holy place.

As late as Sunday, 30th July, 1732, Edward Davis, of the parish of St. Thomas in Southwark, is enjoined, immediately *after* Divine service and sermon, in the vestry,—thus the sting of publicity is taken out,—before the minister, wardens, and offended persons, Ann Jones of the same parish, and certain of her friends,—to repeat with a loud voice his confession of repentance for injurious language used by him of the said Ann Jones. The document, the original of which is in my possession, is signed by minister, wardens, and deputy, and stamped with two sixpenny stamps, and some appropriate words are added. This Edward Davis appears to be the same person referred to as doing penance in St. George's Church for slandering a chandler's shopwoman of the Mint.



To return to the Hospital. By Order of State, wounded soldiers and sailors were to be received at St. Thomas's Hospital. Evelyn, in 1689, comes from the Privy Council with orders that half the beds should be kept for the sick and wounded in the war. Out of this comes trouble ; above 4,000 men were admitted, and for each there was an allowance of 6s. 8d. On inquiry it was found that the physician and surgeon, Torlesse and Elton, had kept the money as their right, which it was not ; they were suspended and at length dismissed. Their appeal against the decision, made to the Privy Council, was also dismissed.<sup>2</sup>

Something more is recorded against these two. Torlesse had, it appears, a method of treatment, which, curiously, he kept secret ; the Governors of the Hospital required to know of it, apparently as a test of supply, but the doctor kept to his secret ; a stranger affair than this altogether, the surgeon Elton had assaulted Simon Ridout, another surgeon, in the wards—had in fact beaten him before the patients, and was of course suspended. Elton begs pardon, with promises not to offend again, and is restored. Both are at length dismissed ; Torlesse dying afterwards in great poverty.

Even so late as my own early time, our surgeons were not too delicate : rough jokes were common at lectures, and so were a few oaths at the bedside ; but it was rough in what was called good society fifty years ago.

Let me give you a running sketch of some of our better men.

<sup>2</sup> MSS., Lambeth.



There was Richard Mead, son of a noted minister of religion at St. Thomas's; he is physician in 1703, and takes Ratcliffe's house. Mead is doctor to Queen Anne and George I, a wise, good, attractive man, the most noted doctor of his day. He became rich and lived his life in the broadest sunshine. He was a friend of Atterbury, and attended him in the Tower, and in his last illness. His charity was unbounded; he never took a fee of a clergyman but once, and from him only in that the parson disputed the treatment. Mead was the friend of Johnson, Pope, Halley, Newton, and Boerhaave, almost everybody's friend in fact. He was the trusty friend and adviser of Thomas Guy, and had very much to do with the founding of his hospital. Mead was fond of show and style: witness his carriage and six, careering along to his country house at Windsor. He died in 1754, aged 81.

I have before me a portrait of the great surgeon Cheselden—his ingenuous and jolly face is well shown in that triumph of medallie art, Wyon's medal.<sup>3</sup>

*Born 1688.* He was surgeon at St. Thomas's in 1710. A most dexterous and successful operator, he is said to have been as successful as he was quick, for out of forty-two cases in four years, only four were known to have been fatal.

*Miseratione non Mercede*, was the fine reminder placed over the operating table at St. Thomas's. Like Mead, Cheselden was well esteemed by those who could judge him and his work; he was splendidly successful—Lecturer at 22, F.R.S. at 23, and the best

<sup>3</sup> *Gent. Mag.*, 1829, p. 579.



employed surgeon in England. Pope was attached to them both, and in his choicest way testified his friendship and his trust in the well-known happy lines—

“Late as it is, I put myself to school,  
And feel some comfort not to be a fool:  
Weak though I am of limb and short of sight,  
Far from a lynx and not a giant, quite—  
I'd do what Mead and Cheselden advise  
To save those limbs and to preserve those eyes.”<sup>4</sup>

How could such a man as Cheselden live among envious mediocrities? Envy and detraction pursued him. He resigned his post at the Hospital in 1738, partly in disgust at the asperity to which his ability and marvellous success had exposed him. He gave up practice at forty-nine, but filled to the end of his day the honourable and honorary position of Surgeon to Chelsea Hospital.

*die  
at 64  
in 1752*

The school at St. Thomas's was almost eaten out with dissensions, which in 1708 had greatly crippled it; the feeling was no doubt that worst form of trades unionism labouring to bring the highest natural ability and character down to the level of indolence, mediocrity, and covetousness. The College of Barber-Surgeons appear to have interfered in this way at St. Thomas's. In 1696 they send formal notice that the surgeons are to limit the number of their “cubbs”—the nickname of the surgical student or dresser (from *cubile*, a bed, probably). In 1702 three “cubbs” only are allowed.

Cheselden, as a true surgeon, practised anatomy and

<sup>4</sup> *Imit. Horace*, Book I, Ep. 1.



dissection, even at a time when popular abhorrence was directed against it. Cheselden's great influence and zeal for his profession comes out in the matter of dissection. In 1714 he is charged with procuring bodies, and, without leave, dissecting them at his own house. The result being unsatisfactory, gentlemen on the surgeons' side of the College of Barber-Surgeons agitated for separation from the Barbers,—it would appear that Cheselden, <sup>who had been</sup> surgeon to Queen Caroline, and Ranby, serjeant-surgeon to George II, were the chief movers in this change, which in 1745 led to the separation of those incongruous partners, the Barbers and the Surgeons. ]

Let me note a few more of our doctors. There was Mead's son-in-law, Mr. Edw. Wilmott, Court Physician and Physician-General to the Forces; Thomas Lawrence, Dr. Johnson's intimate friend, President of the College of Physicians, good, learned, but unsuccessful. He died, alas! in sorrow and obscurity. Shall we be assuming too much if we see with the mind's eye Johnson, Boswell, and Lawrence walking the wards and discoursing on the patients? Perhaps if they had, Boswell would have noted the fact; on the other hand, he could not notice everything. Akenside, one of the best of our minor poets, was doctor at Thomas's in 1759: he gave the Gulstonian lecture in 1755, the Croonian in 1756, the Harveian in 1759. Not a money-maker, he was fortunate in a friend who allowed him £300 a year; he was wise and in no way degraded in accepting it. He was capricious, abrupt, and supercilious, losing, as the record says, a good deal of business by his disagreeable ways. He must have presented a curious appearance, with his short



leg, his pale, strumous face, dressy appearance, white wig, and long sword. Once he was very near a duel, but as one doctor would not fight in the morning, nor the other in the afternoon, the meeting could not come off. I come now to a far greater physician, Sir Gilbert Blane, friend of Cullen and of Hunter, and Doctor to Rodney's fleet, a high authority on State medicine—"chill blaine," the wits called him. We may indeed believe him to be the father of sanitary medicine; his work on the diseases of seamen is exceedingly valuable in that way. His mantle has, curiously enough, fallen on a St. Thomas's man, a greater than he, the greatest living sanitary surgeon, John Simon. Cline was a great surgeon, a lover of freedom, and perhaps of something more, and fully alive to the abominable politics of the time. He attended Horne Tooke in the Tower and in his last illness, and was a friend of Thelwall. Many another might be noted, characteristic of the time; but there is necessarily a limit to our admiration of these nobles of medicine.

Not strictly connected with any hospital, with medicine only a little, and somewhat with Southwark, there was Dr. Goldsmith. I must speak of him here. On December 2nd, 1758, Oliver Goldsmith presents himself for examination at the College of Surgeons, then by the Old Bailey, and although we may gather from another doctor, Smollett, in his *Roderick Random*, fictitious barber and surgeon, how rough and unready the whole thing was, yet Goldsmith was rejected as unfit even for that; the full entry runs thus:—<sup>5</sup> "James Bernard Mate to an hospital, Oliver Goldsmith

No,  
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malter, &  
to Lind.  
the new  
relating

<sup>5</sup> *British Medical Journal*, 1875, p. 367.



found not qualified for ditto." Soon after, he is on the Bankside, Southwark, practising as a physician; a friend meets him about, he is clad in a suit of green velvet and gold—a second-hand bargain, his shirt and neck-cloth suspicious of a fortnight's wear—but he was in excellent spirits and appeared to be doing well.<sup>6</sup>

The doctors were rather gay in those days, and in mine indeed; my own first appearance in practice in the Borough was in a blue coat with brass buttons, coloured waistcoat, white trowsers, with light shoes and white stockings.

The first physician appointed to Guy's was a Thomas's man, Dr. Jurin, the judicious Jurin of Voltaire, secretary to the Royal Society. In 1724, London Bridge was the only one over the metropolitan Thames—another projected at Lambeth alarmed the people. Dr. Jurin was to look to it and report. He did so, and pronounced against the additional bridge as dangerous; the lands about would be flooded. A petition went up against the bridge, showing how even great experts might with advantage mix common sense with their science. Could the doctor now see six bridges and more, and London not drowned, he would rub his eyes, might even perhaps doubt his existence. Bridges appear not to have been clearly understood among us. London Bridge, with its numerous arches, its diminished waterway, its street of houses on the bridge, was altogether a barbarous obstruction, *under* which the proverb said only fools went.

It was of old the custom, when the Hospital

<sup>6</sup> Prior's *Life of Goldsmith*.



selected its Governors, to send to the desired gentleman a green staff, and entreat him to act, and to supply, not as a gift, but as a loan, some five pounds or so.

St. Thomas's had no difficulty in finding men, of at least local mark, for its active Governors. In the latter half of the seventeenth, and beginning of the eighteenth centuries we had Sir Roger Le Strange; Peter de Launoy; Slingsby Bethel, the Shimei of Dryden's *Absalom and Ahitophel*, as Sir Robert Clayton was the Ishban; Jonadab Ballam, the charitable Mrs. Newcomen's friend and trustee; in 1684, Samuel Pepys, the same year President of the Royal Society; John Guy in 1704, and Dr. Mead in 1714. We have an instance of quite another sort, although the name is prominent in the will, and in the acts of Thomas Guy for his hospital. This was John Lade, leader of the most corrupt vestry of St. Saviour's, vanishing thence in corruption, in destruction of vestry books and records, in fear of ecclesiastical proceedings. Edmund Halsey, he and Gates are in 1724 Governors of Guy's.

As our climax, here is the noblest of Hospital Governors, Thomas Guy, who, doing great things for Thomas's, found one hospital too narrow for his benevolence. In 1704 a green staff is sent to him, desiring him to accept the office of Governor. In 1708, many are making liberal subscriptions for renovating the half worn-out buildings. On this occasion Thomas Guy builds three wards in the front, or west court, next the High Street, at a charge of £1,100. He had noticed how weak, and unfit for the business of life, recovering patients often



were—wanting time to get stronger, as they so commonly did; he gives £100 a year to help in this way. Often he had supplied the steward with money for clothes and for other things necessary in these cases. Dr. Mead was his great helper and adviser. Guy made also a new entrance from the Borough to the Hospital, having already improved the old stone front which stood next the street, also building two houses on what was called the “toft” of the old gateway, the south-west corner of the court. In the minutes of 1721 I observe the announcement of a new Hospital. “Our worthy Governor and benefactor, Thomas Guy, intending to found and erect an hospital for Incurables, in the Close of this hospital, in the parish of St. Thomas, we have agreed to grant him a lease, or to such persons as he may appoint, of several parcels of ground within the Close of this hospital, and in the parish, upon several leases, and under several ground rents, amounting to £17 14s. per annum—purchased by said Thomas Guy or in trust for him for 1,000 years at £30 per annum, tax free.” At the General Court this is handsomely acknowledged, hearty thanks are given to Thomas Guy for “unparrallel’d bounty in gifts to this hospital, and in erecting at his own charge another hospital for incurables.” A very scarce and large print, published by Bowles,<sup>7</sup> shows this inscription, Guy’s Hospital for Incurables, in one large central picture of the building, and many divisions round, showing the internal conditions of the earliest building, among the rest some very curious beds of clever carpentry along and against the walls.

<sup>7</sup> 1725. The only copy I know is in the Crace Collection, Brit. Mus.



The word Incurables is explained not as meaning cases without remedy, but of those giving small hopes or needing much time, which cases might indeed be selected out of other hospitals than St. Thomas's. In other words it was to be a Convalescent hospital, a need now seen more and more clearly, and which the feeling hearts and wise forethought of Guy and Mead led them to provide. They were deeply impressed with the weakly look of half-cured patients, of their unfitness as yet to begin the struggle of everyday life again; the intention was that wherever possible more time should be allowed for a complete and strong recovery. The words of the Will and Act of Incorporation are clear: the Trustees were to provide beds for 400 poor persons or more, labouring under diseases thought capable of recovery, but who, by reason of small hopes or length of time required, are not fit objects for Thomas's or other hospitals—the same should be admitted into Guy's for so long a time as might be thought fit. Here was scope for a wider good than could be compassed in a mere hospital. It should be said that the Trustees and Governors were allowed considerable discretionary latitude, but it must also be said that they appear to have used it in the wrong way.<sup>8</sup>

The sympathy and charity of Thomas Guy had often been attracted to these cases; his wishes do not, however, seem to have been well regarded, and this led, it is said, to Dr. Mead declining the par-

<sup>8</sup> Dr. Mead and Guy were in advance of their time. I quote from a *Return of Charities*—19th June, 1865, p. 228 :—"A convalescent is intimately connected with a curative hospital, and it is an axiom in medical and surgical practice never to keep a patient a day longer in the curative hospital than is absolutely essential."



ticularly honourable office of President of the new Hospital. Guy's Hospital charities were stupendous, but he gave also for the liberation of poor prisoners; for education, to Christ's Hospital; to poor relations, that they might start fair and learn to be diligent; almshouses at Tamworth; money in 1709 for the poor "Palatines," many of them diseased and starving, living in St. Thomas's Tents and in warehouses close at hand.

Thomas Guy was born in Prichard's Alley, near the site of St. John's Church, and close to Fair Street, Horsleydown; his father was a lighterman, a Baptist, living here in a Baptist colony, as we might say, close to the Baptistery of Dipping Alley, used by that people.

A school kept by Thomas Crosby, the well-known historian of the Baptists, was close at hand, where he taught mathematics, and published his books, here and at the "Looking Glass on London Bridge," as he advertises.

Guy was fortunate every way, in the sale of Bibles, in South Sea stock, in seamen's tickets. When £100 of the South Sea stock rose to £150, Guy was holding £45,500, and by the time it rose to £600 he had sold out all he had; indeed, it is said he obtained more money this way in three months than his hospital cost him altogether, namely, £18,792 16s. for the building, and £219,499 for the endowment.

Guy was a bookseller at Lucky Corner, where Bish, the lottery broker, afterwards did business. Some books which he published here are known: *Death's Vision*, in 1709, at the "Oxford Arms, in Lumber Street." *Jacob's Ladder* he had at the same sign published in 1698.



The cardinal point in the management of Guy's Hospital was a committee of twenty-three, including President and Treasurer;<sup>9</sup> and among the first appointed were four doctors. This, although one of the most natural of appointments, appears to have been systematically evaded. The government of Guy's Hospital seems, indeed, to have been after a time a case of neglect of duty by the "Twenty-three," who were, as the words of the Will and Act say, "for the more constant and ordinary management of the estate and charity."

The Hospital was intended for 400 patients, but bequests since that have very largely extended the scope of the charity. In 1725, 60 patients were admitted; in 1726, 100. In one year of this our time, I note 715 beds and 80,000 out-patients.<sup>10</sup> It must be remembered here that such a number of sick people, relieved or attempted to be relieved at one institution, must surely lead to mischief every way, among others to the hasty and superficial examination of cases,—bad for the poor, for the students too much confused to learn well, and for the Hospital, whose funds are wasted. In the year above referred to the income was £43,000, but no income could be large enough for such unlimited charity, if indeed such methods come at all within the definition of charity. I deplore greatly the evil days that have fallen upon this great Hospital. An entire change of some sort seems necessary here, perhaps in the shape of a younger energy and a more entire adaptation to the conditions of the age.

<sup>9</sup> 11 Geo. III, and Guy's Will.

<sup>10</sup> *Hist. Introd. Prospectus to Medical School.*



Upon the death of Thomas Guy his executors found in his iron chest 1,000 guineas, which they thought might be intended to defray liberally his last expenses, funeral and other. Not less than forty six-horsed coaches followed the honoured remains. From the *London Post*, January, 1725, I quote thus:—"Last Thursday night the corpse of Mr. Thomas Guy late citizen and bookseller of London, after lying in state at Mercer's Chapel, was carried with great funeral pomp to St. Thomas's Hospital in Southwark, to remain there until the finishing his own Hospital for Incurables, and then to be laid in one of the squares, with a tombstone and a statue over it." In the chapel of the Hospital is a fine figure of Guy in statuary marble, by the noted sculptor, Bacon, who was a native of Southwark; it was executed in 1779, and it cost over £1,000 (£1,160 10s.). He is represented in his livery gown, standing, and holding out one hand to raise an emaciated figure, and pointing with the other to a bier being carried to the Hospital, which is in the background. The inscription is—"Underneath are deposited the remains of Thomas Guy, Citizen of London, Member of Parliament, and the sole founder of this Hospital in his lifetime." His death took place in the 80th year of his age, 27th December, 1724.

I have not time to note more than one or two of the celebrated people belonging to this famous Hospital. Keats, the poet, playfully named "Junkets," lived in Dean Street, opposite the chapel now represented elsewhere by Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle. He was dresser to Lucas of Guy's. You may in fancy see him, with his Byron collar, hair parted in the middle,



seeing at the lecture, instead of his subject, airy creatures floating along the sunbeams. Here also was Wakley, coroner, reformer, and founder of the *Lancet*. Lastly, here must be named Frederick Denison Maurice, Chaplain to the Hospital, of whom it may be said that he was one of the greatest lights of his age. But in the Borough we seem, as it were, to have entertained an angel unawares. I am sensible how incomplete this sketch is, notably as to Guy's. I hope, before long, to put forth out of the mass of material to my hand, a much more complete Paper.



