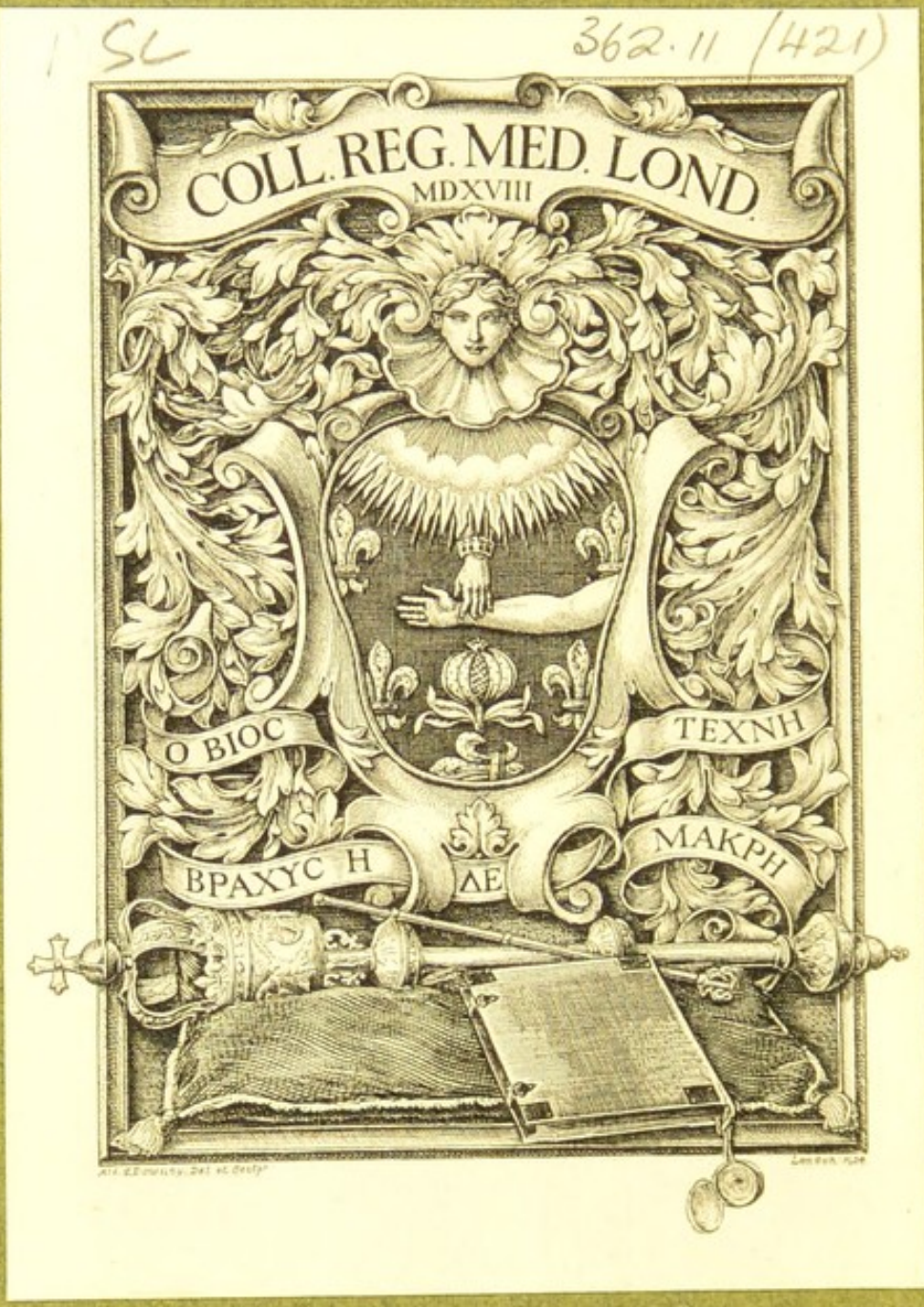
On some old physicians of St. Thomas's Hospital / by J.F. Payne.



Dr Lloyd Roberts

With the author's kind regards

ON SOME OLD PHYSICIANS OF ST. THOMAS'S HOSPITAL.[1]

By J. F. PAYNE, M.D.Oxon., F.R.C.P.,
PHYSICIAN TO ST. THOMAS'S HOSPITAL.

It would be impossible for me on the present occasion to enter systematically upon the history of the medical staff of our ancient foundation. All I can hope to do in the fragmentary observations which I have collected is to draw attention to the merits and distinctions of some few who stand out pre-eminently among their fellows, and to pay to others of lesser fame the modest tribute of respect which our predecessors deserve at our hands, that their memory may not entirely perish.

In attempting to give an account of the St. Thomas's physicians the first difficulty which meets us is, we do not know precisely when the Hospital first had a physician. In old times the staff was exclusively surgical. It was so, I believe, through the Middle Ages before the second foundation of the Hospital by Edward VI in 1553, though we know little of its history in those early times. Certainly, on its reconstitution there was no physician immediately appointed; nor, as I think, for some time afterwards. This was also the case with our great rival or sister foundation, St. Bartholomew's.

Also we must remember that during the time of which I

[1] An Address delivered before the St. Thomas's Hospital Medical and Physical Society, December 2nd, 1897.

am going to speak there was only one physician to the Hospital, and no assistant physician.

The earliest physician of whom I can discover any precise information is Dr. Eleazer Hodson. I do not at all think that he was the first, but his predecessors are lost in obscurity. Dr. Hodson was appointed in the reign of James I, probably about 1620. He was a native of Durham; educated and graduated at Cambridge, being incorporated M.A. at Oxford July 12th, 1608, but took his Medical Degree at Padua in 1612. He became Fellow of the College of Physicians in 1618, and practised in the City of London. A contemporary physician, Dr. Baldwin Hamey (in some interesting MS. lives of physicians, in Latin, now belonging to the Royal College of Physicians), gives the following account of Hodson:

"Dr. Hodson, physician to St. Thomas's Hospital, gradually fell into a wasting, and ceased to pine away on the 19th January, 1638–9. A man of lively intellect and countenance, second to few of his fellows in sagacity, skill in languages, and skill in his art. Fond of a fine house and a fine horse, he lived a bachelor, having as his most intimate friend Dr. Fox, who was his comrade in Italy, in the College, in practice, and in celibacy. When first, as a Censor, he courteously invited me to be examined, he approved me and afterwards became my friend. For the rest, he was neither immoderately fond of gaining money, nor too careless of it; never overwhelmed with practice, nor without patients; the latter result was prevented by his talent, the former he studiously avoided. He was fond of spending some weeks in the country during the summer, and in this followed the example of his friend Fox.

"When about to die he showed his benevolent disposition equally to the College and to his heir, whose estate he very largely increased, but without exciting any ill-will."[1]

From this it would seem that Dr. Hodson was a benefactor to the College of Physicians, but to what extent or in what way is not recorded.

The next physician to St. Thomas's was Dr. Thomas

[1] The Latin original is in Dr. Munk's 'Roll of the College of Physicians,' 2nd edit., 1878, vol. i, p. 172.

Grent, who was, I am afraid, no very great ornament to our foundation. He was of New College, Oxford, M.D. of that University, and admitted Fellow of the College of Physicians in 1623. Grent was made physician to St. Thomas's on the death of Hodson, being elected at a Court of Governors, 4th February, 1638–9, in obedience to the direct orders of King Charles I. The king was moved, we are told, by the influence of the Countess of Denbigh, to whom the doctor's wife was related. Apparently through ill-health, Grent became unable to discharge the duties of his office, and at a Court of Governors held 7th December, 1640, Dr. Francis Prujean (of whom more hereafter) was appointed a temporary substitute for him, and was further elected to the reversion of the physicianship, to succeed if Grent should die within six months. Dr. Grent lived till 11th December, 1649, when he died in great poverty. During his lifetime the Governors had several times voted him gratuities of £20 or £40 in addition to his stipend, "in regard of his extraordinary pains and care taken for the poor of this house;" and after his death their bounty was extended to his widow. His contemporary, Dr. Baldwin Hamey, in the MS. already referred to, has left a very unflattering account of Dr. Grent, which is given in Dr. Munk's 'Roll of the College of Physicians;' but, except so far as he reports Grent's want of success in his profession, it seems spiteful and exaggerated.

This is a translation of Hamey's epigrammatic Latin:— "He (Grent) lived without the good-will of his seniors, and, as naturally follows, without the respect of his juniors. Nor was he more happy in his relations with the citizens of London. For as he was physician to St. Thomas's Hospital, and had not obtained the post by the votes of the Governors, but had been appointed without notice by the king's direct commands (a grace easily obtained through the favour which the Countess of Denbigh enjoyed with the king; and in turn through the interests of Doctor Grent's wife with the countess, her kinswoman and former mistress), so it followed that he was not an acceptable person to the Hospital authorities, and beyond his modest stipend as physician he made hardly any income. Not that he was

specially illiterate, but, as the phrase is, '*insulsus*,' wanting in common sense, not without industry, but incapable of moderation, and in silly babbling next door to a fool [*blaterando proximus futilitati*]."

Poor Dr. Grent! he comes off rather badly in Dr. Hamey's bitter epigrams, and was evidently a failure in life; but it is only just to recall the notice of him already quoted from our Hospital Court Book, and also that the College of Physicians voted to his widow half the profits of their new Pharmacopœia: "Halfe of the money due for the Dispensatory was by the Colledge given to Mrs. Grent, in regard of her husband Dr. Grent, his great poverty at his death," at the Comitia held 13th December, 1649.[1]

The next physician was a very eminent man, Dr., afterwards Sir Francis Prujean, Physician to King Charles II, and for years President of the College of Physicians. He was also a person of great literary and scientific attainments, and a notable connoisseur in the fine arts.

He was born, according to Dr. Munk, in Essex, and entered as a sizar of Caius College, Cambridge, in 1610. He graduated as M.B. 1617, and M.D. 1625. He became Licentiate of the College of Physicians 1621, and Fellow 1626. After obtaining this diploma he seems to have lived for some years in the country, in Lincolnshire apparently, and came up to London about 1639. He held various offices in the College of Physicians, culminating in that of President, to which he was elected in 1650, and which he held for five years. When the great Harvey was elected President of the College in 1654, he excused himself on the ground of his age and infirmities, and recommended the continuance in office of Dr. Prujean, who had already been four years President.

Dr. Prujean was, as we have seen, acting as physician to St. Thomas's before the death of Dr. Grent, but he was formally elected physician on 14th December, 1649. He held this office till 23rd January, 1651–2, when his many engagements compelled him to resign.

He was knighted by Charles II on 1st April, 1661, and died 23rd June, 1666, being buried at Hornchurch, Essex.

[1] Munk, 'Roll Coll. Phys.,' i, 184.

Sir Francis directed by his will that a monument should be erected there to himself, his first wife, and his deceased son, Thomas Prujean, also a doctor and Fellow of the College of Physicians at the same time as his father. His friend Dr. Baldwin Hamey was to write the epitaph, and a very elaborate piece of Latin resulted, which is given in full by Dr. Munk. It commemorates the accomplishments of Sir Francis, who, besides being a master of his own art, was skilled with "the pencil, the turning-lathe, and the lyre." It states that his land and money, with great store of books and treasures, were left to enrich his two grandsons, and sums up the character of the doctor in the following curious lines :

> Summatim cupis habere lector omnia ?
> Quæ in *Pru*jeani nomine, primam facit *Pru*dentia syllabam
> Hæc porro, in totâ hominis vitâ, utramque fecit paginam.

> "Reader, would you have all this in a summary form ?
> That which, in the name of *Pru*jean, makes the first syllable to *Pru*dence—
> That, in this man's whole life, made every page."

This quaint sentence seems, in the guise of a pun, to have conveyed some truth, for Sir Francis, who began life as a humble sizar, is said to have died very rich. A year before his death he married, as his second wife, Lady Margaret Fleming, daughter of Lord Gorges, and, says Pepys, "lived very handsomely, this lady bringing him to it."

But Sir Francis was distinguished for other qualities than that of being able to make a fortune. He is referred to with marked respect by the two well-known diarists of the time—Pepys and Evelyn. Pepys tells us (24th October, 1663) that Prujean acquired great honour by his attendance on Catherine, the queen of Charles II, in a severe attack of spotted fever (or typhus), and that Her Majesty's recovery was universally ascribed to a cordial prescribed by him in a critical moment, which, in her despair, did give her rest, and brought her to some hopes of recovery.

From Evelyn's diary the following passage is quoted (9th August, 1661) :—"I went to that famous physician Sir Francis Prujean, who showed me his laboratory, his work-

house for turning and other mechanics, also many excellent pictures, especially the Magdalen of Caracci, and some incomparable *paysages* done in distemper. He played to me likewise on the polyphone, an instrument having something of the harp, lute, and theorbo, by none known in England, nor described by any author, nor used but by this skilful and learned doctor."

Sir Francis, we are told, was a man "of very great judgement, but hath writ nothing to leave his name to posterity." With the regret indicated in the last sentence I fully agree. Many physicians, the most noted in their day, have left no works behind them. As a medical biographer I always wish that they had, for the book reveals the man, and, whether good or bad, forms some kind of monument of the writer; often, indeed, it marks a grave that would otherwise be without distinction.

Sir Francis Prujean was a man of whom as physician to St. Thomas's we may be proud. One who was recommended by Harvey as the fittest President of the College of Physicians, and who enjoyed such universal respect and high distinction in his lifetime, will not be forgotten, though he left nothing written by which we can judge of his medical capacity. The fine portrait of him by Streeter in the Medical Committee-room is the best work of art we possess, commemorating any of our staff.[1]

About the son, Thomas Prujean, it may be mentioned that he presented to the College of Physicians a collection of surgical instruments, even then very remarkable, and now of great historical interest.

When Sir Francis Prujean resigned the office of physician his place was filled by Dr. Edward Emilie, who was appointed by the Court of Governors 23rd January, 1651–2, after a contest with a gentleman whose name, as given in the Court books, I cannot decipher. Of Dr. Emilie there is

[1] The College of Physicians possesses another portrait of our physician, bought in 1873 from Miss Prujean, a direct and, it is believed, the last surviving descendant of Sir Francis. This was painted in 1662, and is supposed to be also by Streeter. Dr. Munk, for some reason which I do not know, supposes the St. Thomas's portrait to represent Dr. Thomas Prujean, the son of Sir Francis mentioned above.

not much to be said. We learn from Dr. Munk that he belonged to an old family of that name at Helmdon, Northampton, that he became M.D. of Leyden in 1640, and afterwards incorporated with the same degree at Oxford in February, 1641–2. Being then qualified for the Fellowship of the College of Physicians, he was elected in May, 1647. He was Gulstonian Lecturer, and also delivered in 1656 the first oration on Harvey's foundation, the well-known "Harveian Oration." On this occasion he gave offence by inveighing too strongly against the army, thus reflecting on the Government of the day, that is the Protectorate of Cromwell. The matter was brought before the Censors' Board; the orator declared he did not mean any harm, but ultimately it was resolved that in future all Harveian Orations should, one month at least before they were delivered, be read through and approved by the President and one of the Censors,—a provision which, I may say, has happily fallen into abeyance. Dr. Emilie died 6th November, 1657, barely forty years of age, and was buried in St. Olave's, Silver Street. Dr. Baldwin Hamey says that his funeral was attended by the whole College of Physicians, and many other persons, including the Bishop of Chichester (such were the times!) without a bishopric. Emilie, he says, was "a sagacious investigator of disease, careful in prognosis and successful in treatment, as was often shown in his public practice at St. Thomas's Hospital, where he was the chief physician. He had greatly distinguished himself in the discharge of the duties of Gulstonian Lecturer, in which he 'treated of Atoms not less learnedly than of Anatomy.'

"In fine, nothing but time was wanting for him to obtain high distinction in our art, for it was impossible but that an abundant harvest would have followed a crop which was so promising in the green blade."

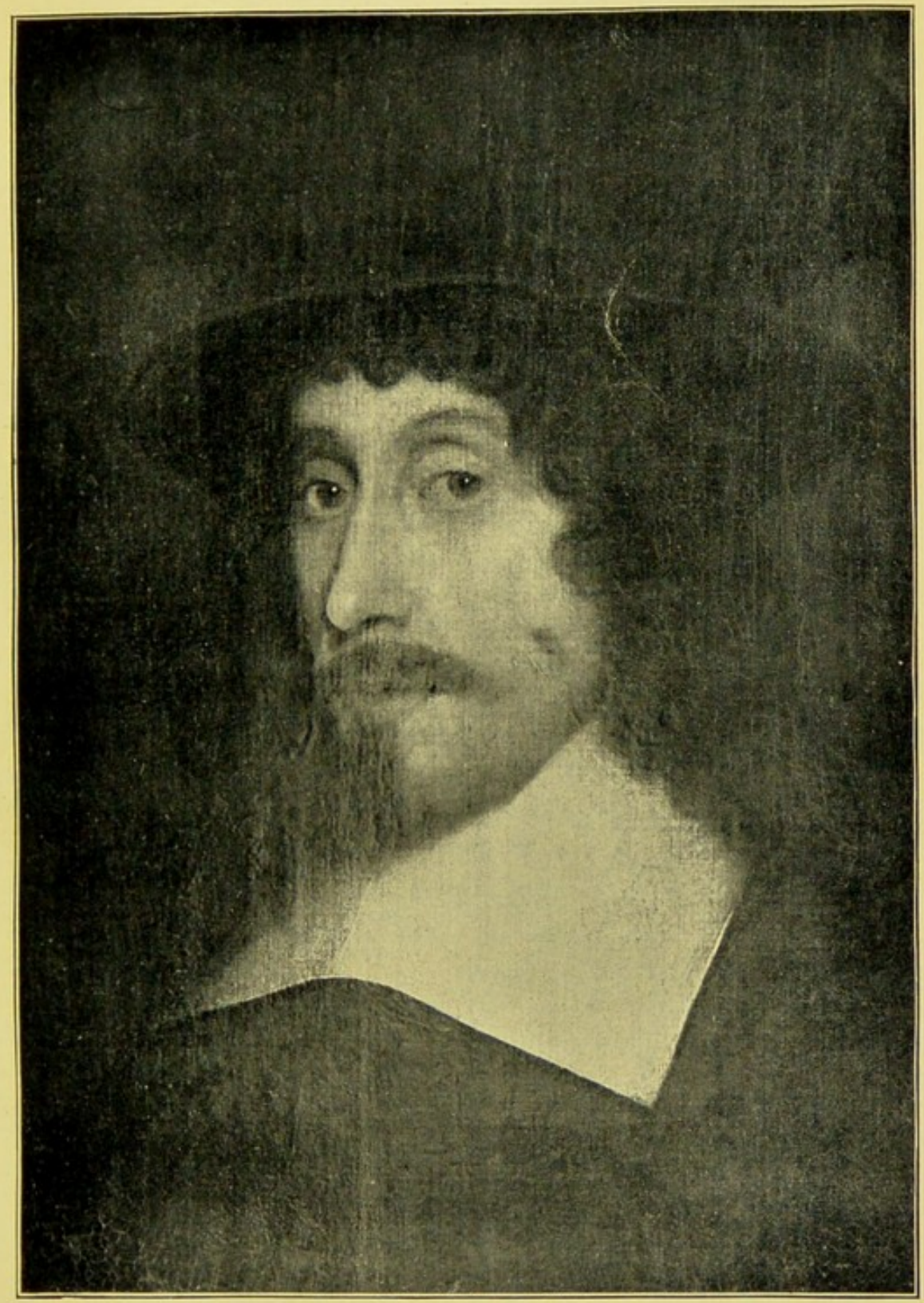
After Dr. Emilie's untimely death there was a keen competition for his place. A large number of physicians presented themselves as candidates, including such eminent names as Dr. Barwick, Dr. Collins, and others. At the court held November 20th, 1657, after "a free and fair election," as our annals record, the choice of the governors fell upon one of the most distinguished men on our roll, Dr. Thomas

Wharton. Every student knows the name of Wharton's duct, and this notable discovery in anatomy was only one of the services rendered to science and medicine by our eminent physician. Dr. Wharton was born in 1617 at Winstone, Durham, and educated first at Pembroke College, Cambridge, afterwards at Trinity College, Oxford. On the outbreak of the Civil War he removed to London, and studied under Dr. John Bathurst, physician to Oliver Cromwell. When Oxford was taken by the Parliamentary party he returned to the University, and was *created* Doctor of Medicine May 7th, 1647, in virtue of letters of recommendation from Sir Thomas Fairfax, the great Parliamentary general.

To receive a degree by *creation* meant exemption from the ordinary exercises or examinations. This may seem to be a strange method of obtaining a medical degree, but at that time there were several similar instances. During the Civil Wars continuous study was impossible, and Oxford especially was, during the Royalist occupation, more "a place of arms" than a place of learning. Hence there were learned persons well deserving degrees who had not gone through the prescribed studies and exercises. For such a way of admission was provided by the favour of important persons. Fairfax, belonging to a family renowned in letters, himself a man of culture, and so good a friend to learning that his first care when Oxford surrendered to him was to place a guard over the Bodleian Library, was the sort of patron likely to recognise scientific promise. The recommendation was equally creditable to the general and to the young physician. Sydenham also owed his degree to an exercise of political influence by the Earl of Pembroke, equally wise and still more important in its results. After the Restoration, a large number of Royalists who had been prevented from completing their studies at the Universities obtained degrees on similar terms.

Returning to London, Dr. Wharton became in due course Fellow of the College of Physicians (December 23rd, 1650), but, as we see, waited some years before he was elected to St. Thomas's.

It will not be necessary to dwell on Dr. Wharton's life, but I may say that he was chiefly known in Anatomy by his



THOMAS WHARTON, M D.

researches on the glands published in a little book, 'Adenographia,' of which I show you a copy. It was of great importance in its day. The great Boerhaave, of Leyden, speaks of Wharton as "a most eminent anatomist, of the greatest authority in that science, a man of integrity and of the highest repute; not a great reasoner, but relying exclusively on the dissecting knife." Dr. Wharton acquired a large and important practice in London, and was among the few physicians who remained at his post during the Great Plague of 1665, when all the wealthier part of the population sought safety in flight. He was partly induced to remain because King Charles II specially requested him to take charge of his plague-stricken soldiers, who were brought to St. Thomas's, with the promise of a future reward which was never received. He was promised the place of physician to the king, but when a vacancy occurred some one else was appointed, and all that Dr. Wharton got was an augmentation to his coat-of-arms, for which he had to pay a fee of £10 to Heralds' College.

About Dr. Wharton I am able to quote a very special and interesting source of information. While in practice in London it was his custom to keep copies of his letters, or many of them, in a small note-book which has been preserved in the family since his time. This book has been placed in my hands by the kindness of the Right Hon. J. Wharton, M.P., its present possessor, with permission to make extracts from it.

The letters are various. Some of them are letters of advice to patients containing elaborate directions, and also prescriptions which are for the most part undecipherable. Some have reference to property, and are addressed to Dr. Wharton's agent at Old Park, Durham, an estate which the doctor bought (says Dr. Munk) in 1670. There are also some very interesting letters to his son Thomas at Cambridge, illustrating the University life of the period. Thomas, I may say, rewarded the anxious care and pains bestowed on him by his father, becoming in his turn a good physician and Fellow of the College. Of *his* son the same might be said.

But I think the most interesting letter in the volume,

and one of some historical importance, is a long one addressed to a lady who wanted to make her son a physician, and asked Dr. Wharton's advice. This advice, as you will see, is most discouraging, and might be summed up in the single word "Don't;" still more briefly in the single letter N (*negatur*), which he affixed to the question propounded at the head of his letter. The whole profession was going to rack and ruin;—better try anything rather than physic, and so forth. One seems to hear something of the same kind even in these days; probably similar laments were uttered in the last generation, and will be perhaps in generations yet to come; "so it always was, so it still shall be."

In spite of Dr. Wharton's gloomy forebodings, however, the state of trade, when once the ill effects of the Great Fire were got over, was most prosperous. Never, we are told, did wealth increase more rapidly in England than in those years; and no doubt all professions, that of physic included, got some share of the gold which was circulating. Dr. Wharton himself had no reason to complain, for he must have made a large fortune. Nevertheless it is easy to understand and enter into the mood of mind in which he composed the following letter:

Letter on Physic as a Profession.

"To Mrs. Church.

"*An Medicina aliis studiis utilior?* N.

"To your desired answer to this letter, dated May 9 instant, I shall returne you directly the same I did Mr. Chancelor Burnell to his letter dated November 4, 1672, wherein he desired my care and directions in the placing your son James, that he might have an insight of both chirurgery and anatomy, because, as he then writes, he intends your son for the profession of phisick. In answer to that very letter I wrote to this purpose, that at present I had a younge student with me, that had been 6 or 7 yeares at Oxford, of very good parts and naturall abilities, and

graduated and had taught my son these three yeares, now fitt for the University: that this younge student had acquired excellently in phisick, anatomy, surgery, botany, &c.: yet for all that I designed to dissuade him from the embracing phisick for his livelihood. Because now there was more apparent cause of its ruine and destruction than ever, by the swarmes of quackes, mountebanks, chymists, apothecaries, surgeons, and especially this new upturned brood of *virtuosi*, who are most likely by their Jesuitisme and policy, English books, experiments and receipts in phisick, to fill all families of note in England with their stuff, to overthrow all our old settled and approved practice of phisick, especially in London: which is now miserably impoverished by its burning and building and desertion of trade, that they have scarce money for their present subsistance, little for phisick and phisitians, and like to have less hereafter. Soe that every one out of necessity and good husbandry must become theire owne phisitians and make their owne phisick. For all our ladies and gentlewomen keeps and stores up receipt-books and closetts of medicines fitted for most occasions. Besides, Phisick is too much overstocked with students graduated from the University. For I doe really believe it will easily appear that now there is in England 400 for one phisitian that was formerly: for that it is impossible but that theire owne multitude must shortly ruine the profession without the plotts and envy of theire enemies. He that begins the practice of phisick must resolve to be a perpetuall slave and servant to the meanest and basest all the dayes of his life, and if he neglect one instant and committ one error, or speak the least word amisse, his fame and name is lost for ever to him; and if his patient dye, hath killed him for certain, by the view of the people. Upon the Phisitian is imposed taxes, poles, great charges for houses and servants and entertainments, more in this age than ever formerly; —Coaches, Jacks and charges expected,—feastings. He is never called to any but miserable patients, where the apothecary or surgeon or chymist have been tampering soe that commonly the phisitian is brought only to take away the scandall of killing him to himself. The phisitian is made

that common jeare of the hunt, neglected, contemned, and reproached upon all occasions; and, which is worst, they will one reproach and scandalize another for his ill practize, which is very certaine and evident to all practizers. For generally the phisitians are covetous, ignorant, impudent, and drunken, and for by that means he ruins himselfe and his profession. The universities have a great share in all these ill wayes by theire first bringing up and binding their younge students. For they have lost the old and sound Aristotle's learning, and spend all their time in the new-fangled fopperies of Cartes, Gassendi, Boyle, Hobbs, Regius, &c. If the phisitian dine abroad, misse his houres usuall morning, noones, and nights, or rather all the whole day, with slavish attendance, he then certainly looses his patient, that brings the waters, and becomes reproached thereby: if sent for, and comes not presently, another comes, and he is neglected long after of the family and all their relations with scandall of neglect. If your phisitian venture his life upon attendance on his owne acquaintance in the dreadful time of the plague, in the conclusion they rewarde him with saying he did his duty, as they served me in this Citty of London, where I got nothing soe much as the fugitive phisitians, but the King's gratious thanks for attending his soldiers in St. Thomas's Hospital all the time 1665. The phisitian old and crasy shall be called out of his bedd in London in winter nights to visit his patient, and with small reward; but in summer or winter, when that patient comes to London and is sick he shall undeservedly call another phisitian to his attendance, and neglect the former that attended in the winter nights in the country. Then I considered in your letter how the Divinity had in it far greater hopes and opportunities of preferment, and a better settled way of perpetuity and continuance of supportance for younger students by being chaplains, vicars, curates through all England, to which they did quickly attaine; but phisick was a tedious, long, and chargeable study, and 10 or 12 years at least after all time and charge of taking a Dr. of Phisick's degree, before any Dr. could hope to live by the benefitt of his profession. I then alsoe considered the cōmon and civill lawes, which farr exceede physick in certainty both of

honour and riches to the carefull and industrious students of them.

"Mr. Church, D. Oct. 2-72, to my last letter returned that he still continued his intentions for your son for phisick, and thereby to endeavour his maintenance by country practice. I returned answer by letter dated Nov. 2, 1672, that what I had writt last to him was absolutely from my sense of the finall decay of the profession of phisick : but if he continued soe still resolved, I would afford your sonn the best entertainment I then could for dyet and lodging for 3 or 4 months, that he might have opportunity in London to see our constant practice in our Hospitalls—both of phisick and surgery, and be acquainted with the Apothecaries' art and medecines, their gardens of phisicall plants, and with the most materiall books for practice of both. But now the improvement must wholly arise from himselfe, as he finds occasion by his owne practice, and thereupon carefully reading and extracting and constantly and exactly noting for his private use and memory what he shall read upon every disease, and thereby learne a readiness to comprehend and put any case to any clever phisitian to obtaine his counsell and experience upon the care of his case. Now this practice, if industriously followed, will really bring him into the right way and method of the practice of the art of phisick. And this way—I mean this way of study and improvement of himselfe by his owne industry I am now informing, suggesting, and insinuating upon your son's capacity. For after he fully understands this course of study and practize mentioned, he must apply himselfe into the country and imediately put himselfe into dayly practice and exercise and curing poor patients. For reading alone is good for just nothing without the constant association of practice and bringing all he reades to the use and profitt of the sick by his owne contrivement, judgement, industry, and constant diligence, ever altering and framing and suiting his medicins proper to the present case ; soe Practice without constant study, reading and examining what hath been done on like occasions by able, renowned and famous old practizers of phisick, will be successless ; but both judiciously joined together may produce an happy practice both to the phisitian

and patients, by God's constant blessing thereupon, which shall be heartily desired by

"Your reall friend and servant,

"TH. WHARTON.

"*May* 15, 1673."

Dr. Wharton died at his house in Aldersgate Street 14th November, 1673, in his sixtieth year, and was buried in St. Michael's Bassishaw, in the City of London. The church is now about to be or actually is pulled down, and the bones of those buried there have already been removed to the new St. Pancras Cemetery. The tablet placed there to his memory will, I hope, be preserved.

His portrait, by Vandyck, is in the College of Physicians, having been presented by Dr. George Wharton, his grandson, in 1729. Through the kindness of Mr. Cobb, who has taken great pains in photographing the original, a copy adorns this volume.

A week after Dr. Wharton's death, November 21st, 1673, a Court of Governors was held to appoint his successor, and there were several candidates, some of them very eminent men. The choice of the Governors fell upon Dr. Richard Torlesse, and the selection was not, apparently, a happy one. For some reason which we do not clearly know, Torlesse was dismissed from his office in the year 1683 by the Royal Commissioners who then administered the Hospital.

About these Commissioners a word must be said.

Charles II, in pursuance of the policy which he originated, and which his successor continued, of making the House of Commons subservient to his will, was trying to get all the municipal corporations under his control, and revoked the charters of several of them by an exercise of arbitrary power. This fate overtook the City of London in 1683. The government of the City and the management of its property were handed over to the Royal Commissioners. Along with the City property were included the Royal Hospitals, St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas's, of which the Lord Mayor and Corporation were the official Governors. The rule of the Commissioners in St. Thomas's lasted till the Revolution of 1688, but they do not seem to have left behind

them any record of their proceedings. At least none such is to be found in the Hospital Court books. Consequently we cannot say why Dr. Torlesse was ejected by them. Whether it was on political grounds or whether for some dereliction of duty it is impossible to say.

However, the physician appointed in place of Dr. Torlesse was an eminent man, Dr. William Briggs. I have no time to say much of him. He was born in 1642, the son of Augustine Briggs, Member for Norwich in several parliaments, and afterwards knighted. Another son was Professor at Gresham College and an eminent mathematician. Our physician was educated at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, studying also at Montpellier and elsewhere on the Continent. He became Physician in Ordinary to King William III, and died September 4th, 1704.

Dr. Briggs was one of the first English physicians who devoted himself to diseases of the eye. He made minute researches on the anatomy of the organ, and also propounded new views on the theory of vision, which were partly adopted by Sir Isaac Newton, and I believe are still held to have been important in the history of the science of optics. He was altogether a credit to St. Thomas's, but unfortunately did not hold his post as physician very long, for, strange to say, Dr. Torlesse came back again. It happened in this wise : after the Revolution of 1688, when James II was expelled, something had to be done to counteract the effects of his unconstitutional proceedings. Accordingly an Act of Parliament was passed declaring all the acts of the Commissioners before mentioned and of other similar bodies illegal. Torlesse, therefore, claimed to be reinstated, as having been illegally dismissed from his post as physician. The Court of Aldermen, which had resumed the government of the Hospital, wanted to retain Dr. Briggs ; but the case being argued before Lord Chief Justice Holt in June, 1689, he decided, without considering the reasons for Dr. Torlesse's dismissal, that the act was illegal, that Dr. Briggs had no right to the place, and Torlesse must be reinstated.

So that whether there had or had not been good grounds for originally dismissing Torlesse, he now came back and

held office for fourteen years longer; but his relations with the Governors do not seem to have been happy, and he was finally deprived of his office in 1703. On this occasion we do know why he was dismissed. It was a question of the money paid for the support of the King's soldiers admitted into the Hospital. Torlesse and his surgical colleague claimed that the profit accrued to them personally, and not to the Hospital; at all events, they kept the money. Of this the Hospital Governors claimed restitution, and ultimately their right prevailed, so that Torlesse not only lost his place, but was condemned to reimburse a large sum of money; in consequence of which he fell, it is said, into difficulties, and died in great poverty.

But so far as St. Thomas's was concerned, the Hospital was a gainer by Torlesse's dismissal, for the physician elected in his place was one of our great glories—Dr. Richard Mead.

The condition of the medical side of the Hospital at the close of the seventeenth century had evidently not been satisfactory. With Dr. Torlesse as the only physician for almost the whole period of thirty years, little reputation could accrue to the Hospital, and I can find no clear evidence of there being any medical pupils. The surgical staff, on the other hand, had a high reputation.

Ferne, Molins, and other surgeons of great eminence were on the staff even before the advent of Cheselden; but from the election of Mead we find the medical reputation of St. Thomas's growing till it rivalled or equalled its surgical fame.

Dr. Richard Mead, the most eminent physician in the age of Queen Anne and the first two Georges, was born at Stepney, 11th August, 1673, the son of the Rev. Matthew Mead, a divine who at the Restoration of Charles II was in the enjoyment of a City benefice, but was driven out by the Act of Uniformity, as he belonged to the Puritan party, and refused to conform to the altered rule in the Church. More fortunate than many of his Nonconformist brethren, Matthew Mead was a man of good property, and when he settled at Stepney in charge of a Nonconformist congregation was able to give his son a good education. The

RICHARD MEAD, M.D.

English universities being closed to him, the youth was sent to Holland, where he first studied classics and philosophy at Utrecht, and afterwards, for three years, medicine at the celebrated school of Leyden. Thus Mead's exclusion from the English universities was favorable rather than otherwise to his professional education. After completing his studies he travelled in Italy in comfortable circumstances, and acquired a taste for and knowledge of the fine arts which he never lost. He graduated at Padua 16th August, 1695, and returning to England, settled in practice at Stepney, without at first belonging to the College of Physicians. In 1702 he published his first medical work, on 'A Mechanical Account of Poisons.' By this he gained much reputation, and was in the next year elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

His scientific reputation doubtless contributed to his election at St. Thomas's in the same year. He was also chosen as Reader in Anatomy to the College of Surgeons.

After his election at St. Thomas's, Mead practised in the City, first in Crutched Friars, afterwards in Austin Friars. On the death in 1714 of Radcliffe, who had been the most popular physician of Queen Anne's time, Mead removed to his house in Bloomsbury Square, then a centre of fashion, and resigned his post at the Hospital. Later, when at the height of his reputation and popularity, he occupied the fine old mansion in Great Ormond Street which in our time has become the Hospital for Sick Children, and where some vestiges of ancient grandeur may still be traced. On the accession of George II he was appointed Physician to the King. He died 16th February, 1754, in his eighty-first year.

Mead's character was so many-sided, his life was so full of prosperity and magnificence, his medical reputation so brilliant, and he was so emphatically the representative physician of his age, that it is difficult to do him justice in the time at my disposal; but there are several good accounts of him to which you can refer, such as Dr. Norman Moore's memoir in the 'Dictionary of National Biography,' and, as perhaps the most readable, one in the little work called 'Lives of British Physicians.' His life being therefore so well written already, I shall confine myself to a few points.

First, Mead's connection with St. Thomas's Hospital. He was Physician from 1703 to 1714; and numerous references in his writings make it evident that he did his duty thoroughly, and investigated his cases with great care. He made valuable clinical observations, though not any great discovery in medicine, and introduced one valuable practical method which is still in use.

He observed that in cases of ascites, when the fluid was removed by tapping, the patients sometimes suffered from fatal syncope. He concluded that this must be due to the sudden loss of pressure, and accordingly ordered a strong bandage to be placed around the abdomen, and gradually tightened as the fluid was withdrawn. The operation, it is said, which was before often attended by fatal accidents, became safe. This is of course the method we now use every day in the wards. Let us call it Mead's method.

Also he was the first to show that the mortality from measles, which is said to have been at that time very great, was due to pneumonia, and by treatment based on this principle he greatly reduced the mortality. We might quote other instances of sound clinical observation. Mead also attached great importance to post-mortem examinations, though the information conveyed by them in those days must often have been ambiguous. In 1714, when Radcliffe died, Mead's increased position and residence far from the Hospital compelled him to give up his appointment at St. Thomas's. The Governors received his resignation with many expressions of regret, and at once presented him with a Governor's staff—an honour at that time seldom conferred upon retiring physicians or surgeons, if indeed it was ever before.

Dr. Mead showed his interest in the Hospital by subsequently attending the Courts as a Governor. It was also largely owing to him that Guy's Hospital was founded, for he persuaded the bookseller Guy, who was also a benefactor of St. Thomas's, to devote his large fortune to that object. Mead was a Governor of St. Bartholomew's, and I think also of Guy's Hospital, and among the first supporters of the Foundling Hospital.

Let us now consider Mead's relations to society. Socially

he occupied a position such as no English physician ever held before or since, and such as probably none will ever hold again. Physicians in his time were rarer birds than now, they wore finer plumage and lived in grander nests,—at least judged by the standard of the day. A great physician was a public character in a sense in which no physician is now, or, indeed, could be; especially when professional etiquette expects that the good doctor should avoid rather than court publicity. Mead, however, even among physicians, stood alone—the one great man of the day. His social influence was shown in the case of Dr. Freind. This eminent physician, who was intimate with Mead though of the opposite party, being a Tory while Mead was a Whig, was committed to the Tower for an imprudent speech in Parliament. While he was in durance Mead took charge of his practice, visited him, and made great efforts for his release, but in vain. At length it happened that Sir Robert Walpole, the minister who was responsible for Freind's imprisonment, was ill, and sent for Mead. This was the physician's opportunity. He attended the minister, but positively refused to write a prescription for him till Walpole had signed an order to liberate Dr. Freind from the Tower. Has the like of this ever happened since? Has there been any physician of whom such a story would be even credible?

Mead's private practice was probably more brilliant and lucrative, in proportion to the value of money at the time, than that of any other physician we know of. It was an age in which wealth was rapidly increasing throughout the country. There were two classes of very remunerative patients, the Court and aristocracy at the west end of the town, the City merchants and bankers (who then lived in the City) at the other. Conveniently situated between the two, Mead reaped a large harvest from both classes.

A third class of society, distinct from either, the literary world—the wits and scholars—were not less devoted to Mead. Among them he had his closest friends, his most faithful patients, his warmest admirers. Pope has in one line immortalised our two great St. Thomas's names:

"I'll do what Mead and Cheselden advise."

Young (the author of "Night Thoughts") has—

"Alive by miracle! or what is one, by Mead."

Mead must have made a great deal of money, and had the spending of it in his lifetime. In expenditure he was magnificent; no other word will suit. No one seems to have better exemplified a quality which the modern student wonders to find enumerated by Aristotle among the virtues, *μεγαλοπρεπεία*, the art of great expenditure; "a mean," says Aristotle, "between vulgar ostentation on the one hand and niggardliness on the other." Modern language has no other name for what, whether a virtue or not, must certainly be a difficult art. But let us be comforted; few of us are likely to know how difficult it is.

Look, however, at Mead's portrait, and you will understand something of the art of magnificence. How grand, dignified, sublime is everything about him! Compare a modern physician in evening dress—who could be found to sustain the comparison?

Without exaggeration, Mead's way of spending was charitable, generous, munificent, showing an intelligent appreciation of the higher ends of expenditure, though we can quite imagine that his heirs may have wished he had spent a little less. He was hospitable to all classes, from the highest downwards, perhaps preferring those who were not likely to ask him again. His mansion in Great Ormond Street was a social link between the Court and the City, and there every notable foreign visitor found himself in the best society of England. Mead filled with great dignity the office, then important, though now almost obsolete, of a literary patron. He assisted the publication of many works of the highest value in letters and learning. The number of books dedicated to him is some indication of his liberality, for in those days a dedication generally implied a handsome subscription or donation from the person thus honoured to the dedicator. Among them were works of great importance, such as the *Opus Majus* of Roger Bacon, published for the first time under the editorial care of Jebb, to which it is probable that Mead contributed material support.

He collected a magnificent library, a gallery of sculpture,

and museums of coins and antiquities which were freely open to all who could appreciate them.

Something must be said about Mead's own writings. He wrote several books, copies of most of which are on the table to-night. You will ask, what is their scientific value? To answer this we must try and define Mead's place in medical history. He belonged in the main to what is called the Iatro-mechanical or Iatro-mathematic School, though, as he borrowed from other schools also, he might almost be called an eclectic. The great object of his school was to explain disease and also its treatment on scientific principles. Mead kept himself well up in the science of the day, and applied it to elucidate medical problems. His first book was 'A Mechanical Account of Poisons,' in which he tried to explain the action of poisons on the principles of the mechanical philosophy of Bellini. In another work, '*De Imperio Solis et Lunæ*' ('On the Power of the Sun and Moon in Disease'), he showed that he was led away by the glamour of Newton's great discoveries, and thought Astronomy was going to explain everything. We can understand what books of this kind are like, because much of our modern medical literature consists of scientific explanations of morbid phenomena. Such literature is popular and edifying so long as its scientific basis remains stable. But when science shifts its ground, as it will do, and the former so-called facts are facts no longer, then the explanations founded on them become obsolete, and the books are out of date. Hence we find no great satisfaction in these writings of Mead's, though it should be said he writes like a strong man; his thought is keen and logical, his style lucid. In later years he brought out some 'Medical Observations,' drawn from his own experience, which approach more the clinical method of Sydenham, and show that he did not carry his mathematics into the sick room. Mead's most popular work was his 'Discourse on Pestilential Contagion,' written for a special occasion in 1721, when a terrible outbreak of that disease in the south of France spread a panic through Europe, and not least in England. To allay the public alarm the Secretary of State, Mr. Craggs, applied to Mead for advice as to how the plague was to be

kept out. The reply was the pamphlet above referred to, which went through several editions in a short time. Mead's scheme of prevention was an excessively rigorous system of quarantine, such as could hardly have been enforced. It was not, of course, the writer's fault that he had no practical knowledge of the disease, but independently of this, one cannot find any originality in the 'Discourse on the Plague,' as it was afterwards entitled. This pamphlet was in English, but most of Mead's works were first published in Latin, though afterwards translated into the vernacular.

Another subject which greatly interested Mead was the antiquarian and historical side of medicine. He wrote a learned and curious dissertation on the diseases mentioned in the Bible, 'Medica Sacra;' and in his Harveian Oration discussed 'Medals struck in Honour of Ancient Physicians.' In fact, it would be difficult to say in what aspect or department of medicine he was not interested.

Such was Richard Mead, the most eminent physician in the annals of St. Thomas's, and one who, though no great original genius, will always be a name in the history of English medicine. Why do we speak so highly of him?

I do not ask you to admire Mead because he was the most popular physician of the day, or because he made the largest income. Wealth and popularity are excellent things, but we ask in the end, what use did a man make of such splendid gifts of fortune? and on what did his popularity rest?

What kind of physician was Mead? It is very difficult to judge what practice was like in past times, but we must conclude that Mead was a good practical physician. He possessed every kind of training and knowledge that Europe could give him. He was evidently a wise and sagacious adviser. His character commanded the respect and secured the obedience of his patients. He was honest and fearless, with great confidence in himself, but incapable of deluding his patients with false pretences. So far as one can judge, his treatment was very successful.

Finally we ask, what kind of *man* was Mead really, apart from his position, his magnificence, his learning? First, no doubt he was a genuine, upright, honorable man, faith-

ful to his friends, affectionate to his family, benevolent to all in need. Nothing mean, false, ungenerous, was ever laid to his charge. His motto was *Non sibi, sed toti* ("Not for yourself, but for all"), and he lived up to it.

Now if we want a little shadow to bring out these high lights and make our picture less monotonous, we can find some, but it is of no very damaging kind. Mead had a temper; he was proud, and also somewhat choleric. Like many, or perhaps most men noted for munificence, he liked to be in a position of superiority. He had some quarrels. One with Dr. Woodward, a Professor of Gresham College and notoriously a man of strife, is said to have ended in a duel, but the accounts of it differ in several particulars, and I will leave you to read of it elsewhere. Another story illustrates Mead's character better. Among contemporary physicians a very favourite one was Dr. Cheyne, author of many popular medical works, which being not only written in English, but purposely adapted to attract the attention of the lay public, gave him then, as they would now, a doubtful reputation in his own profession. One of Mead's patients, a clergyman, whom, as his custom was, he attended gratuitously, had been reading Dr. Cheyne's works, and ventured to quote something from them in criticism of Mead's opinion. You may imagine the indignation of the magnificent Mead on having Dr. Cheyne thrown in his teeth. He forgot himself so far as to use about Dr. Cheyne and all his works language stronger than clerical ears are accustomed to listen to, and even departed from his usual habits in accepting a fee from the reverend patient (though he afterwards returned him half of it).

This was his weak side; it were well if nothing worse could ever be said of any one.

Mead's features are known to us by several portraits. The fine engraving which Mr. Cobb has been so good as to photograph for us is one of the best. The marble bust by Weeks in our hall is modelled from the original in the College of Physicians by Roubiliac, and from other likenesses.

With this great name we close our account of St. Thomas's physicians for the present.

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