

## **James Macartney : a memoir / by Alexander Macalister.**

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Dr Macartney.

For some time past the literary and scientific circles of this City have felt great interest in the result of an investigation which the conduct of the highly respectable Professor of Medicine in the University of Dublin was undergoing before the Board of Fellows. The investigation alluded to furnishes another instance, in addition to those continually occurring, of the deplorable fanaticism that has seized upon the minds of many individuals, who, one would suppose, should be secure, by reason of their habits and acquirements, from the influence of such contagion. It appears that certain persons, amongst whom, if our information be correct, are some Protestant Clergymen strongly imbued with methodism, proceeding on a suspicion produced by the ravings of a delirious person, who is known to hold opinions inconsonant with the doctrines of revealed religion, resolved upon a very serious and responsible measure - that of arraigning Dr Macartney on charges of having inculcated materialism in his lectures, and of demonstrating in a manner and words that were indelicate. If there be one man more than another in society, whose character, personally and professionally, should have protected him from such an attack as was thus made on his honourable reputation, that man is Dr Macartney. - If there be a member of the "silent sister", who redeems in some measure her ill-fame, that member is Dr Macartney. He is a Gentleman of high character and spotless conduct. He is distinguished for his attainments in literature and general science; and, contrary to the habits of most other officers of the College, he has extended his reputation far beyond its walls. Dr Macartney, is, we are told, the contributor of many of the most valuable articles in the modern Cyclopaedias, and is eminent in other countries for his profound knowledge of his peculiar profession.


Notwithstanding these strong assurances that Dr Macartney could not be guilty of the imputations which were cast upon him, a grave and formal arraignment of him was made before the Board of Fellows which, of course, terminated in his full and honourable acquittal.

We rejoice sincerely at this result, although we have not the honour of being in the most remote degree acquainted personally with Doctor Macartney, nor any more than by the opinions of the public, which we have heard generally expressed with regard to his merits - we cannot refrain from censuring, in the most unqualified manner, the persons who caused this investigation, without having previously to their adoption of such a severe proceeding, as regarded the learned individual, satisfied themselves that their course of conduct was sanctioned by proofs stronger than, as they now appear, the suggestions of their own whimsical fanaticism.

( The Morning Register. December 27, 1825. Dublin.)

Don. K. K. K. K. K.





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1823

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# JAMES MACARTNEY

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HON. LL.D. CAMBRIDGE, F.R.S.  
PROFESSOR OF ANATOMY AND  
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## P R E F A C E

**D**URING my student days the name of Macartney was frequently used by my teachers as the authority for many of those unwritten statements which are so peculiarly characteristic of the Dublin School of Medicine ; and I felt a natural curiosity to ascertain what manner of man he was who had bequeathed such a heritage of traditional lore.

When, in after years, it was my lot to succeed to the Professorship which he had held, and when, still later, I followed his museum from Dublin to Cambridge, and taught from the specimens which his hands had made, the Macartney teaching and the Macartney traditions became to me realities of peculiar interest.

It is a good thing, in the high pressure of our present-day life, to be reminded of the gradual

processes whereby our progress has been attained and of the pioneers by whose labours we now profit. And this man was essentially a pioneer. He was the first man in Britain who taught systematic comparative anatomy to medical students and gave us the first English text-book on the subject; he was the first systematic lecturer on pathology, the first teacher of physiological psychology, and one of the foremost reformers in practical surgery.

My memoir must needs lack the charm of personal recollection, as Macartney died the year before I was born. But I have known many of his personal friends and pupils, and have gleaned from them enough to make, in my own mind, a vivid image of his personality.

Through the good offices of my friend Professor E. Perceval Wright, I have obtained access to his papers, and I have there found so much that seems of interest, both to the general public and to the members of his own profession, that I deemed a sketch of his life and work to be worthy of publication. The man who made the reputation of the Dublin Medical School, whose single-hearted devotion to science exposed him to

persecution, is surely worthy of a small niche in the temple of biographic fame, and yet he has not been so much as mentioned in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

I am indebted to several members of the Macartney family for much information which I have embodied in the memoir, and to Miss Carlile for the loan of the Professor's imperfect autobiography, which, however, only covers a part of his life; also to the late Rev. J. Elliott of Armagh for additional information.

For all details of his life I have taken his diaries, letters, and notes, and the letters of his friends. I have endeavoured faithfully to represent him and his opinions, without drawing on my imagination in any particulars; so that whenever the story diverges from the traditions which may still be current in Trinity College, my version has been taken from the written and printed documents, the letters from the Registrar, or Macartney's own notes. The first chapter is prefixed, in order that the position which he occupied in the history of the Dublin School of Medicine should be made clear.

Before his time the Dublin Medical School was

small and obscure, attracting no students from outside the limits of Ireland. It was Macartney's reputation which raised it to the distinguished position that it has ever since maintained.

ALEXANDER MACALISTER.

TORRISDALE, CAMBRIDGE.

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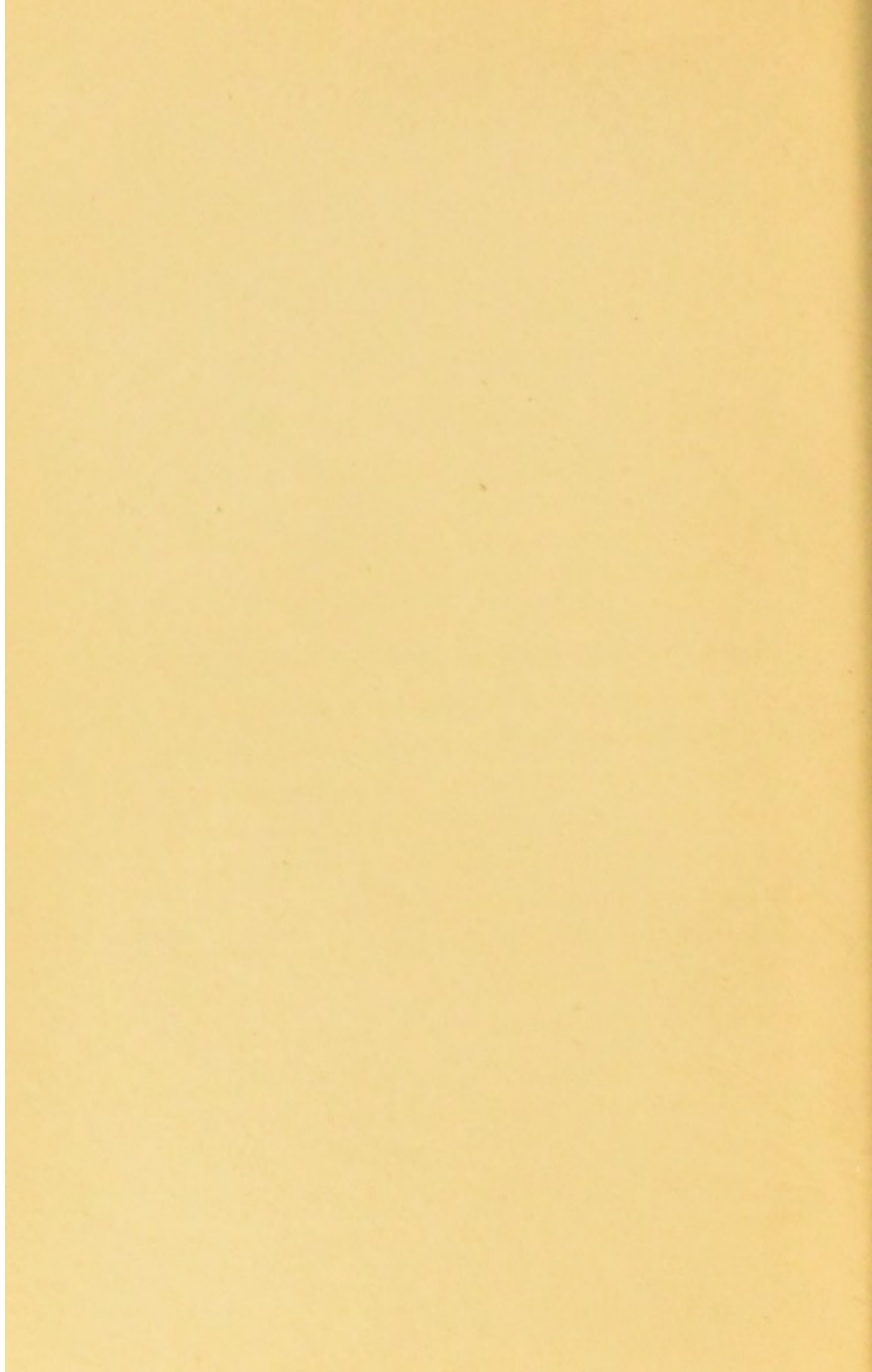
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A

Rise and Progress of the Dublin School  
of Medicine





## RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE DUBLIN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

THE history of the Irish people has ever been a history of strife. The successive waves of immigration which collectively contributed to form the population of Ireland have never blended into a homogeneous nationality to the same degree as the equally dissimilar constituents of the population in the neighbouring island have done; and although the several component races have long since become indistinguishable, yet the relics of the spirit of tribal independence and hostility can be recognised not only in the legends of the genealogists and chroniclers, but also among the living people at the present day.

In a country the annals of which are so largely made up of stories of internal feuds, from the Tain-bo-Cuailgne down to the report of the most recent agrarian emeute, the growth of a native

system of military surgery must have been an early necessity ; and indeed, even as far back as the period of the mythical Tuatha de Danaan chieftains we read of the marvellous skill of those who practised the art of healing. When in the battle of Magh-tuireadh (Moytura), B.C. 674, Nial, the King of the Tuatha de Danaan, lost his hand, we are told by O'Clery that the stump of the injured arm was dressed, and immediately healed by the remedies of Diancecht.<sup>1</sup> The lost member was replaced by a silver hand, made by Credne, the smith, and this was so cunningly devised that Miach, the skilful son of Diancecht, infused into it feeling and motion, the earliest case of the well-known phenomenon of referred sensation attributed to lost parts after amputation.

Medicine in ancient Ireland was not a science of the schools. Cormac mac Art, in the third century, is said to have founded a college at Tara, but we have no record of a faculty therein for medical teaching (O'Flaherty's *Ogygia*, II. 239). The practice of physic was confined to certain families who were hereditary physicians, dependent

<sup>1</sup> Diancecht is said, in Cormac's glossary, to be derived from *Dia na-h ice*, the god of healing.

on the great tribal leaders and under their protection. For example, the O'Hickeys were physicians to the O'Briens of Thomond, the O'Lees to the O'Flahertys of Connaught, the O'Sheils to the Mac Coghlan and Mac Mahons of Oriel, and the Donlevys to the O'Neills. The names Hickey and Lee, which are not uncommon in Ireland, are derived from their profession, and signify "healer," or "physician." In the Brehon laws the physicians were ranked with the smiths, but they often held posts of honour and prominence; thus Mac Liag was secretary as well as physician to Brian Boroimhe, the conqueror of the Danes at Clontarf in 1014 A.D.

Among those who constituted this medical caste the traditional knowledge derived from the experience of a long line of medical ancestry was supplemented, in later years, by the study of Irish translations of Latin works on Medicine. In the library of the Royal Irish Academy there are twenty-eight of these Irish medical manuscripts, many of which are curious and interesting. It is much to be regretted that hitherto these manuscripts have not been analysed by any scholar qualified for the task on both the linguistic and the medical sides. The only attempt at the

scientific treatment of an Irish medical manuscript has been the essay by Dr. Norman Moore "On the History of Medicine in Ireland" (*St. Bartholomew's Hospital Reports*, 1875, p. 145); but this only deals with the few manuscripts in the British Museum.

For the most part these manuscripts are dull reading, as they are little else than translations of the Latin versions of Galen, Hippocrates, Avicenna, and the other medical classics. Here and there one meets with acute critical remarks tinged with a certain amount of local colour, especially when dealing with diseases which were prevalent in Ireland or when references are made to native simples used as remedies for their treatment; but they contain no trace of real scientific knowledge on the part of these medical scribes. However, in this respect they resemble the mediæval works of other European countries.<sup>1</sup>

In the early days of English rule in Ireland

<sup>1</sup> Some of these physicians seem to have been peripatetic exercisers of their art, for in the margin of the manuscript of one of the O'Sheils, now in the library of the Royal Irish Academy, there is a note written in Irish: "May the Great God bring us both out of this strange country in which we are in the land of Connaught—in Coillaghy I am this night Laus Deo."

the health of the inhabitants within the pale was cared for by the brethren of several religious orders, by a few imported physicians resident in Dublin, and by the members of the Guild of St. Mary Magdalene, to whom, as barber-surgeons, a charter was granted by King Henry VI., in 1446—just one year before the outbreak of a terrible epidemic of typhus fever, which ravaged the closely built and undrained city of Dublin.

The first attempt to found an university in Dublin was made by John Leche, Archbishop of Dublin, 1311. He obtained from Pope Clement V., then at Avignon, a bull for that purpose, in which the Pope sets forth the benefits such an university is fitted to confer on the people, and ordains that, as no general university exists in Ireland, Scotland, Man, or Norway, and as these lands are surrounded by the sea, so that no access or passage is to be had from them to any university but through great dangers, a *studium generale* in every science and faculty be founded in Dublin, to continue for perpetual times.<sup>1</sup>

The illness and death of Leche in the following year hindered the carrying out of this scheme ;

<sup>1</sup> This bull was burnt, but an abstract is contained in Archbishop Alan's register.

and the next Archbishop, Alexander de Bicknor, had his hands so full of other work, owing to local manifestation of disaffection, that for seven years he was unable to take any steps in the matter. We have a curious comment on the state of things in the letter sent to the Archbishops of Dublin and Cashel, in 1317, by Pope John XXII.: "ut comprimant clericos et regulares, qui populum Hibernicum contra Regem Angliae excitant" (*Theiner*, p. 194); and in the epistle from the same Pope in the next year to King Edward of England: "ut Hibernos amanter tractare velit, nec a suis vexari sinat in damnum donationis Henrico regi de terra Hiberniae ab Hadriano IV. factae" (*ib.*, p. 201). Truly history repeats itself.

In 1318 de Bicknor founded, under the sanction of Pope John XXII., an university in St. Patrick's Cathedral, but this was only a school of canon law officered by Dominican and Minorite friars, with a Lectureship on Divinity founded by King Edward III. This poor shadow of an university, after lingering nearly a hundred and fifty years, died of starvation about the middle of the fifteenth century.

A charter was granted by Edward IV. to found an university at Drogheda, giving power

to educate and to grant degrees in all the sciences and faculties as they are in the University of "Oxenford." The preamble states that this was granted because Ireland has no university or place of study. This project was, however, never realised, but its failure stimulated the religious confraternities in Dublin to petition Pope Sixtus IV. for powers to revive the university there. However, although some amount of teaching was provided by the funds supplied by Archbishop Fitzsimon, in 1496, yet no true university was established at that time.

University education was thus never effectually provided for Ireland until 1591, in which year Queen Elizabeth founded the University of Dublin. Fifteen years before, she had granted a new charter to the barber-surgeons, but this body had no organised system for the teaching of the medical side of their craft to their apprentices.

Shortly after the organisation of the University one of its Fellows is referred to as a "Physitian," for whom £40 was annually granted by Government. Down to the year 1616, however, only one person graduated in medicine in the University. In the statutes framed by Bishop Bedell in 1628 it was ordained that one of the fellows of Trinity



College should be a professor of medicine ; but there is no record of the nature of the instruction to be given by him. In the statutes of Sir W. Temple, which are practically identical with those of Cambridge at that date, it was ordained that each candidate for a medical degree must have been present at three "Anatomies"—that is, at the dissection of three bodies.

The early practice of anatomy took place in secret in private houses, and it is not until late in the seventeenth century that we have a record of a public dissection under the auspices of the newly founded College of Physicians in St. Andrew's Hall. Upon this occasion a sum of four shillings and sixpence was paid for a soldier who guarded the place, three shillings and tenpence "for drink for the same,"—the whole expense of the proceeding being £2 4s. 10d. (Belcher, *Memoir of Sir P. Dun*).

That other dissections took place at this time we learn from the letters of Sir Thomas Molyneux to his brother William (*Dublin University Magazine*, XVIII., p. 749), and from other sources. The College of Physicians was entitled to receive annually the bodies of six executed criminals, but there was no systematic instruction in anatomy,

and the whole medical department of the University was poor in the extreme. In 1687 King James II. renewed the charter to the barber-chirurgeons, apothecaries, and periwig-makers; but although readers in anatomy are therein referred to, no such teachers were appointed.

The real founder of the Irish medical school was a Scottish physician, Sir Patrick Dun, a cadet of an ancient Forfarshire family, born at Aberdeen in 1642. He had settled in Dublin at the period of the Restoration, and was appointed Physician to the State and to the Lord-Lieutenant in 1676. Taking the side of King William in 1688, he became Surgeon-General to the Army in Ireland, and for his services in this capacity he was knighted by the Lords Justices the Earls of Mountrath and Drogheda in 1696. When residing in Dublin he endeavoured to stimulate the University to take a deeper interest in its school of medicine; and in 1698, at his recommendation, Dr. William Patterson was appointed by the College of Physicians to deliver a course of lessons on Anatomy. On Patterson's resignation, in 1701, Dr. John Purcell was nominated to succeed him, and lectured in St. Andrew's Hall until 1710. Purcell was an

acute physician, and published two small works, *A Treatise of Vapours, or Hysteric Fits*, and *A Treatise on Colic*.

In 1704 Sir Patrick Dun executed a deed whereby he declared his intention of providing for "one or two professors of physick to read publick lectures and to make publick Anatomical dissections of the several parts of human bodys or bodys of other animals," etc. This provision was carried out by his will, which was executed in 1713 and proved in the following year.

1710 As a result of the proposed provision for teaching, the Board of Trinity College, in 1705, commenced the building of the first medical school in Ireland; and in furtherance of their new-born zeal for the advancement of medicine the Senate ordained that "every candidate Bachelor of Physick should be examined in all parts of Anatomy relating to the *Œconomia Animalis*."

The new building was a small, plain structure of red brick, and stood close to what is now the south-eastern angle of the library of Trinity College, in the open space at the north end of the wall between the Fellows' Garden and the College park. On the ground-floor was a small anatomy-room, constructed to accommodate about

twenty-five students. There was also a chemical laboratory of still smaller dimensions, and some out-offices. On the first floor there were four rooms—a lecture-room seated for about sixty men, a small anatomical museum, and two little rooms for the use of the Professors.

This new school was opened in August, 1711, and Dr. Richard Hoyle was appointed Lecturer on Anatomy by the Board of Trinity College. He obtained a grant of £60 to purchase the nucleus of a museum, to which his demonstrator Green contributed a number of dissections. Hoyle retired from his office in 1715, and was succeeded by Bryan Robinson, who for some unknown reason was dismissed from his office by the Board in 1717, Hoyle being reinstated. Robinson subsequently became a distinguished physician, wrote on more than one branch of science, and was thrice elected President of the College of Physicians. Hoyle died in 1730, and was succeeded by Thomas Madden, the grandson of that Thomas Madden who was comptroller to the Earl of Strafford. He in turn was followed, in 1734, by Francis Foreside, who was afterwards transferred to the Professorship of Physic.

The indifferent quality of the material for anatomical teaching attracted the notice of Dean Swift, and at his recommendation the Earl of Shelburne purchased and presented to the University, in 1739, a large collection of anatomical models in wax. These were made in Paris by Professor Denoué on a basis of real bones, and were reputed to be the product of forty years' work. After various vicissitudes of fortune the broken remains of these models are now consigned to the cellars of the present museum!

Upon Foreside's promotion Robert Robinson was elected to succeed him, but like his earlier namesake he was dismissed from his office after twenty years' service because he espoused the cause of the College of Physicians in a dispute between that body and Trinity College. The Board then appointed his demonstrator George Cleghorn to the office of Lecturer on anatomy and chirurgery.

Cleghorn was a remarkable man. His father was a small farmer at Granton, in Scotland, and George's early life was one of straitened circumstances. He studied anatomy under the first Monro, and was one of the founders of

the Royal Medical Society of Edinburgh. On completing his studies he was appointed Surgeon to the 22nd Regiment of Foot, and was stationed in Minorca for thirteen years. Here he made use of his opportunities of observation, and published subsequently an interesting work on that island. He accompanied his regiment to Ireland in 1749, but left the Service in that year, and proceeded to London to renew his studies in anatomy under John Hunter.

Having returned to Dublin in 1750, he found the anatomical school there in a disorganised condition. Robinson had begun his work with some enthusiasm, but had found much difficulty in obtaining bodies for dissection. The neighbouring graveyard of St. Andrew's had been a convenient source of supply, owing to the complaisancy of the sexton; but this was discovered and put an end to in 1742. The sexton having absconded (for obvious reasons), Robinson's zeal for anatomy had flagged, and he had devoted himself to the safer and more lucrative paths of private medical practice. In this year, also, he was appointed State Physician at a fee of £200 per annum.

The University anatomy class had therefore

become extremely small. Cleghorn commenced a course of private lectures on Anatomy in 1751, and attracted thereto nearly all the medical students in Dublin; whereupon Robinson wisely entered into treaty with him and appointed him as demonstrator in 1753.<sup>1</sup>

A curious incident in the last year of Robinson's professorship was the dissection of the giant Corney Magrath. The poor giant, in spite of his stature and big frame, was dying of consumption at the age of twenty-three, and Cleghorn was anxious to secure his body for examination. When it was reported in college that Magrath had died, Robinson addressed his class thus: "Gentlemen, I have been told that some of you in your zeal have contemplated carrying off the body. I most earnestly beg you not to think of such a thing: but if you should be so carried away with your desire for knowledge that thus against my expressed wish you persist in doing so, I would have you to remember that if you take only the body, there is no law whereby you can be touched, but if you take so much as

<sup>1</sup> For other particulars of Robinson see my sketch of *The History of Anatomy in Ireland* (*Dublin Medical Journal*, 1884).

a rag or a stocking with it, it is a hanging matter." The late Dr. Beatty used to tell the story, as he had often heard it told by his father, how that while the giant was being "waked" in his lodging over a public-house in Anglesea Street, four students in disguise joined the party and ordered up unlimited whisky, to which they added laudanum; so when those who should have "waked" were sound asleep, the students at a concerted signal were joined by a large reinforcement of their fellows, who carried a large door, on which impromptu bier they placed the body, covering it with their gowns, and hastened away in triumph to Trinity.

Next morning, when the theft was discovered, the giant's friends indignantly applied to the Provost for a restitution of the body, and Dr. Robinson was sent for. "My dear sir," he said to the Provost, "such was the zeal of the young men that they commenced the dissection at once, and it is now far advanced." The Provost accordingly compounded liberally with the friends. Dr. Beatty's father, then a student, was in the square when Dr. Robinson came from the Provost's, and he observed the old gentleman stopping every now and then on his way to the



anatomy-room and chuckling to himself, "Divil a knife's in him yet!"

The friends, however, were satisfied, and so Robinson was enabled to give, as *Faulkner's Journal* informs us, a public demonstration on the body of the giant.<sup>1</sup>

Cleghorn, on his appointment as Lecturer, introduced the novelty of lecturing in English instead of Latin. As he was a real anatomist in a sense that none of his predecessors had been, the class increased in numbers until it taxed to the utmost the capacities of the lecture-room.

The stimulus given to practical work by Cleghorn was not confined to the University. Cleghorn had been a member of the first Board of Surgical Examiners created by the Irish Parliament in 1765. The surgeons in Dublin, long hampered by their original connection with the periwig-makers, had before this commenced an agitation for a separate charter, which they succeeded in obtaining in 1784, and they speedily set to work to found a school of anatomy and

<sup>1</sup> An interesting account of the giant, whose skeleton shows the characteristics of Acromegaly, has recently been published by my able successor Professor Cunningham.

surgery. The School of Physic Act, passed by the Irish Parliament in 1785, converted the anatomical lectureship into a "Professorship of Anatomy and Chirurgery," and the two institutions, the old and the new, acted and reacted on each other in healthy competition. Cleghorn had appointed his nephew William as his assistant, but he died in 1783, whereupon George appointed his son James to the demonstratorship. This office he held until 1789, when, on his father's death, he was appointed to the professorship. It is worthy of remark that the two Cleghorns were the only demonstrators who have been promoted to the higher office during the hundred and eighty years since the lectureship was founded.

James Cleghorn's appointment was unfortunate for the University: he was an indifferent teacher, too well off to be careful of his work, in excellent practice, not very robust in health, and rather indolent in habit. The class began to fall away in numbers, more especially as in 1789 the new school of the College of Surgeons was opened in a disused charity school in Mercer Street. This was a living centre of activity, and drew off the majority of the students from the

University, so much so that in 1797 only one student matriculated in medicine in the latter, while the College of Surgeons had over a hundred registered pupils.

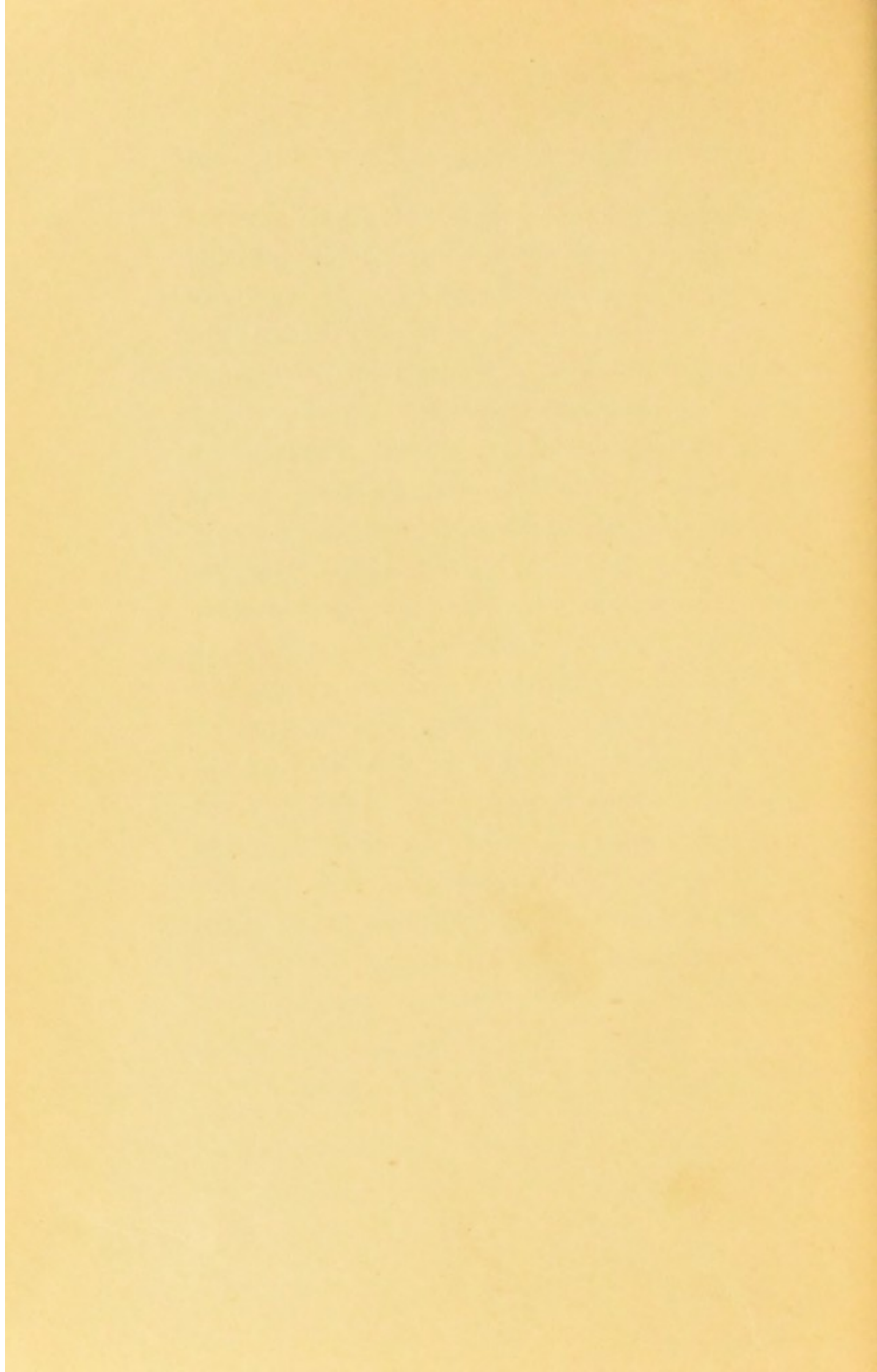
One of the most active men in the new organisation was William Hartigan, an old pupil of Cleghorn's, who, in co-operation with Halahan, lectured on anatomy there from 1789 to 1798. He was an able man and a successful surgeon, of courtly manners, and fonder of social life than of professional work. He was remarkable for his fondness for cats, and often carried kittens in his overcoat pockets. His brother-in-law was the well-known *soi-disant* Turk, Achmet Borumborad, who introduced public baths into Dublin, and of whom Sir Jonah Barrington relates some amusing stories.

Hartigan attracted many apprentices, and among the number was James Macartney, destined to be the greatest anatomical and surgical teacher in Ireland; probably, after Hunter, the greatest medical teacher in Britain.

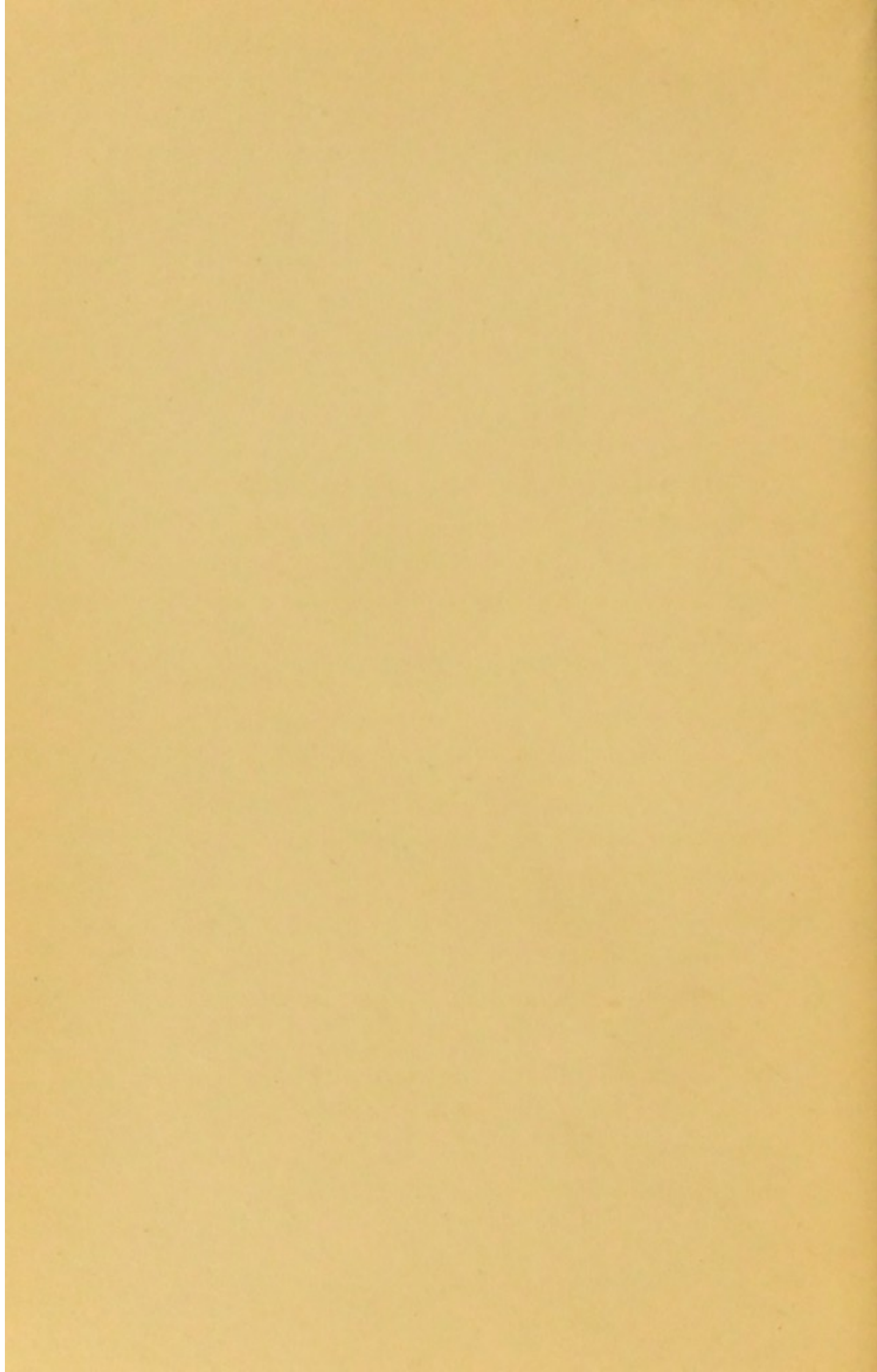
After Dease's tragic death<sup>1</sup> Hartigan became

<sup>1</sup> See Cameron's *History of the College of Surgeons*, 1886, p. 313; for another version of the story see Madden's *United Irishmen*, ii. p. 149.

Professor of Surgery in the new school, and retained this office until he was appointed by the younger Cleghorn as his *locum tenens* in the University in 1802. This gave a little temporary fillip to the University school, the students increasing from seventeen to seventy-eight. James Cleghorn had been appointed in that year State Physician on the death of Robert Emmet, the father of the ill-fated hero of the 1803 rebellion, and resigned his professorship in 1806, whereupon Hartigan was elected into the office. A greater than Hartigan, Abraham Colles, had sought the post, but was defeated, and now threw all his energies into the work of the rival school. In consequence, the numbers again began to diminish, and the University medical school had fallen, at the period at which our history opens, into a condition of feebleness and disorganisation. The class-roll in 1805 has on it only thirty-five names, of whom only five studied practical anatomy.



1770—1793. Early Years



### 1770—1793. EARLY YEARS

THE name "Macartney" is the patronymic of a sept descended from Donoch Cairtneach, son of Donald, Prince of Desmond. Migrating from Ireland in the twelfth century, this family entered Scotland, and having been driven out of Argyll by the Campbells, Macdonalds, and Macalisters, they took refuge in Galloway, where there are still territorial traces of the name.

A branch of this family crossed the North Channel and settled in Antrim in the seventeenth century. One member of this branch, Andrew Macartney by name, left his home, on account of a family quarrel, in 1727 and took up his residence in Armagh, being the first to introduce the linen industry into that city. His second son, James, was an idle, dreamy man of literary tastes, well read in the classics, and averse to the more prosaic paths of business. He purchased the townland of Ballyrea in that county and



lived as a gentleman farmer, marrying, in 1760, Miss Mary Maxwell, the daughter of a Presbyterian minister in Armagh.

The name of this gentleman—the Rev. John Maxwell—is still remembered with respect as that of a scholar and man of taste. He was a man of strong personality and of remarkable administrative ability, and a prominent leader on the Unitarian side in the doctrinal controversies which then divided the Presbyterian Church in Ulster. To his influence much of the growth and importance of the New Light party, as the Unitarians called themselves, were due, and he was chosen Moderator of the Presbyterian Synod in 1753. His name occurs frequently in the ecclesiastical records of the time, and he was instrumental in procuring the separation of the presbytery of Armagh from that of Dromore, where the Old Light, or orthodox, party was in the majority.

Mr. Maxwell was highly esteemed even by his political and polemical adversaries. He was an intimate friend and correspondent of Dr. Francis Hutchinson, the Professor of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow, and was on terms of close personal intimacy with Primate Stone, and co-operated

with that astute prelate in many of his political undertakings.<sup>1</sup> Through this intimacy Maxwell obtained some grants of land on very favourable terms.

He had married Miss Rose Carson, of Strabane, and died in 1763, leaving two sons and three daughters; of these, Mrs. Macartney was the eldest. She was, as a girl, handsome, of pleasing manners, and of an intensely affectionate and anxious disposition. She had been her father's favourite and close companion, and had been educated by him in Latin, Greek, and English literature.

Her husband had been attracted to her by her cultured manners and conversation, but they were otherwise not very equally matched. James Macartney, though nominally a Presbyterian, associated himself with no particular Church, and rarely attended any public worship. He made Sunday a literal day of rest, and spent the greater part of it in bed. In his later years he became intensely irritable in temper, and

<sup>1</sup> Stone is characterised by Macnevin as "an unscrupulous ecclesiastic devoted to the maintenance of the English interest against the Irish people; his measures were arbitrary and his power overweening."

ultimately refused to allow any of his children to leave the house for more than a day. He was upright and independent in character, sternly unforgiving and unconciliatory, reserved and undemonstrative.

Their family consisted of four sons and two daughters; of these, both the eldest son and the eldest daughter died young.

The subject of this memoir was the youngest child. He was born on March 8th, 1770, in the city of Armagh, where his parents were then residing. As a child he was delicate in body, but intelligent and promising. It is recorded of him that in his fifth year, when a public fast had been proclaimed for the success of the English arms in America, he most conscientiously abstained from his dinner, and when later in the evening his sister tempted him with a cake and made him eat it, he felt for the first time the accusing stings of conscience, and fell on his knees to pray for forgiveness. At the age of eight years he suffered from a violent attack of strumous ophthalmia, which rendered him practically blind for nearly a year. His recollection of this period of suffering and the barbarous measures used in his treatment, consisting of blisters, issues, and setons, led him

afterwards to take a deep interest in the progress of ophthalmic surgery.

It was not until his ninth year that he had sufficiently recovered his eyesight to learn his letters, but his education was again interrupted by an attack of smallpox, fortunately in a mild form, and leaving behind it no ill effects.

The years 1778-9 were eventful in the history of Ireland. England was engaged in conflict with her revolted American colonies. France had declared her sympathy in their favour, and the shores of Ireland were left at the mercy of any privateer who might wish to plunder. The descent of Thurot on Carrickfergus in 1760 had alarmed the Irish people, who again and again applied to the executive for assistance and defence; this, however, they could not give. The people of Belfast, disappointed by this refusal of the Government to protect them, and alarmed by the depredations of Paul Jones the pirate in 1778, at last resolved to defend themselves, and, actuated by a zealous and patriotic spirit, they assembled in thousands to organise themselves into a body of Irish volunteers. By September, 1779, nearly four thousand were enrolled in the three north-eastern counties.

The volunteer movement became intensely popular in Armagh in the year 1778, and Macartney's relative, Samuel Maxwell, was one of the chief organisers. The Armagh corps was consolidated into a regiment under the command of the Earl of Charlemont, who afterwards became the Commander-in-Chief of the whole organisation.

The spirit of soldiering was in the air, and even boys were induced to enter the service in order to swell the muster-rolls of the corps. Among these James Macartney, when in his tenth year, was enrolled in 1780. He was rather tall for his age, and attended the parades in a full suit of uniform. "This was an influential event in my life," he writes. "I entered into this new pursuit with the greatest zeal, became a pattern of military discipline, and performed my exercises so well that if I had been a little taller I would have been appointed fogleman to the corps.

"I was greatly flattered by the attention which I received from all who were interested in that armament. When Lord Charlemont and his family came into the country, attended by Grattan and other leaders of that time, I always went to them after dinner. The ladies kissed and

caressed me, and Grattan on one occasion carried me round the room on his shoulder.

“These were the days when Erin was great, glorious, and free. The Catholics were not emancipated by law, but by what was much better, the sense of justice of the Protestants. They were taken into the volunteer companies, although subject to the penal statute against carrying arms. They then first enjoyed something like equality, and acquired the love of freedom.”<sup>1</sup>

Hitherto he had received no primary education except the little teaching in the alphabet which his mother had given him. He was able to read, but nothing more, and his literature had not risen above the level of fairy tales. In his twelfth year he was sent to a writing school, but made very little progress in that art. At the same time he was entered at the endowed Classical School of Armagh, then under the mastership of Dr. Grüber White. Here he began the study

<sup>1</sup> It looked well on paper to say that three hundred thousand had been enrolled as volunteers, but the Armagh corps, of which Macartney was a member, and the Limavady battalion, which my grandfather, Colonel Boyle, commanded, were not the only corps which included boys under fifteen years of age.

of Latin and made rapid progress. This new diversion checked his boyish military ardour, but his education was again interrupted, for, having been struck by a snowball in the eye, he was compelled to remain at home for several months and was unable to resume his work until the middle of the next year. He was then sent to a private school kept by a Mr. Dogherty, but from this, again, he was soon removed, and finished his education, such as it was, at home, under the private tuition of Dogherty's son.

Arithmetic he did not begin until his fifteenth year, and other branches of mathematics he tried later, but could not pursue for want of aptitude in dealing with the relations of abstract terms.

This short and chequered school education finally ended in his sixteenth year, and he entered upon a life of careless idleness, spending his time in gardening, mechanical work, carpentering, and reading. This period of his boyhood was a lonely one, as the family did not associate with any of their neighbours, owing to his father's peculiarity. He was an imaginative boy and lived in an ideal world of his own. He gained

some knowledge of music from the bandmasters of regiments quartered in Armagh, and spent much time in practising. This revived his military ardour and he pleaded with his father for permission to enter the army, but this was sternly refused.

The family numbers had been reduced in 1782 by the death of his elder sister; in 1786 his eldest brother died, and his remaining sister eloped with Dr. Atkinson. These events increased the sourness of his father's temper. The death of his mother in 1788 caused a final break-up of the home circle. Her death was a great blow to young James, as all his sympathies had been with her, not with his father. In the following year he left home, his father having at last consented to his entering the office of his cousins Andrew and Hugh Carlile, who were linen-merchants at Newry. Into this new occupation he threw himself with his accustomed energy, and he soon became a useful man of business.

Hitherto his interest in political matters had been only connected with the pageantry of volunteering; but the events of this year were such as could not fail to influence a thoughtful young man. I give them in his own words:—



“In the previous winter the seeds of religious dissension were sown in the neighbourhood. At a dance in the neighbourhood of Hamiltonbawn, a dispute arose between a Protestant and a Catholic as to which of them a girl had promised to dance with first. The Protestant said, ‘She should not dance with that Papist.’ This led to a general engagement between the two sects at the moment, in which the Catholic party was routed. At the next fair the Catholics mustered strongly, and the Protestants were defeated. In order to revenge themselves, the Protestants formed a society called the ‘Peep-of-Day Boys,’ who went by night to the houses of the Catholics and deprived them of arms. The Catholics could not complain of the robbery, because it was contrary to law for them to possess arms, so they formed a counter-association under the name ‘Defenders,’ and frequent and bloody conflicts took place between these factions.”

In 1790 Macartney's father died of apoplexy, and the three surviving brothers returned home and lived together, holding all their property in common. James undertook the farming of Rosebrook and Ballyrea. The former property, which had belonged to the Maxwells, had been

purchased by the elder Macartney a few years previously. In this occupation James spent the two succeeding years. His father had never been fully reconciled to the marriage of his sister with Dr. Atkinson, and he had left her only a slender provision by his will. The brothers agreed, however, to add as much again to her portion, on the suggestion of James.

In 1792 "the dissensions between Catholics and Protestants, produced first by the 'Peep-of-Day, Boys,' who were for the most part Presbyterians, led to the formation of Societies of United Irishmen, in order to obtain redress of abuses in the Irish Government." James Macartney, who had returned in this year to Newry, warmly espoused their cause, and was speedily enrolled among the United Irishmen. When he returned to Armagh in 1793 he set about organising a branch of the society there. "At first, these societies were convivial and social, but in process of time they became associated all over the country by a secret test, and the members were bound together for the purposes of rebellion."

While in Newry he became the superintendent of a Sunday school, and "printed a foolish story

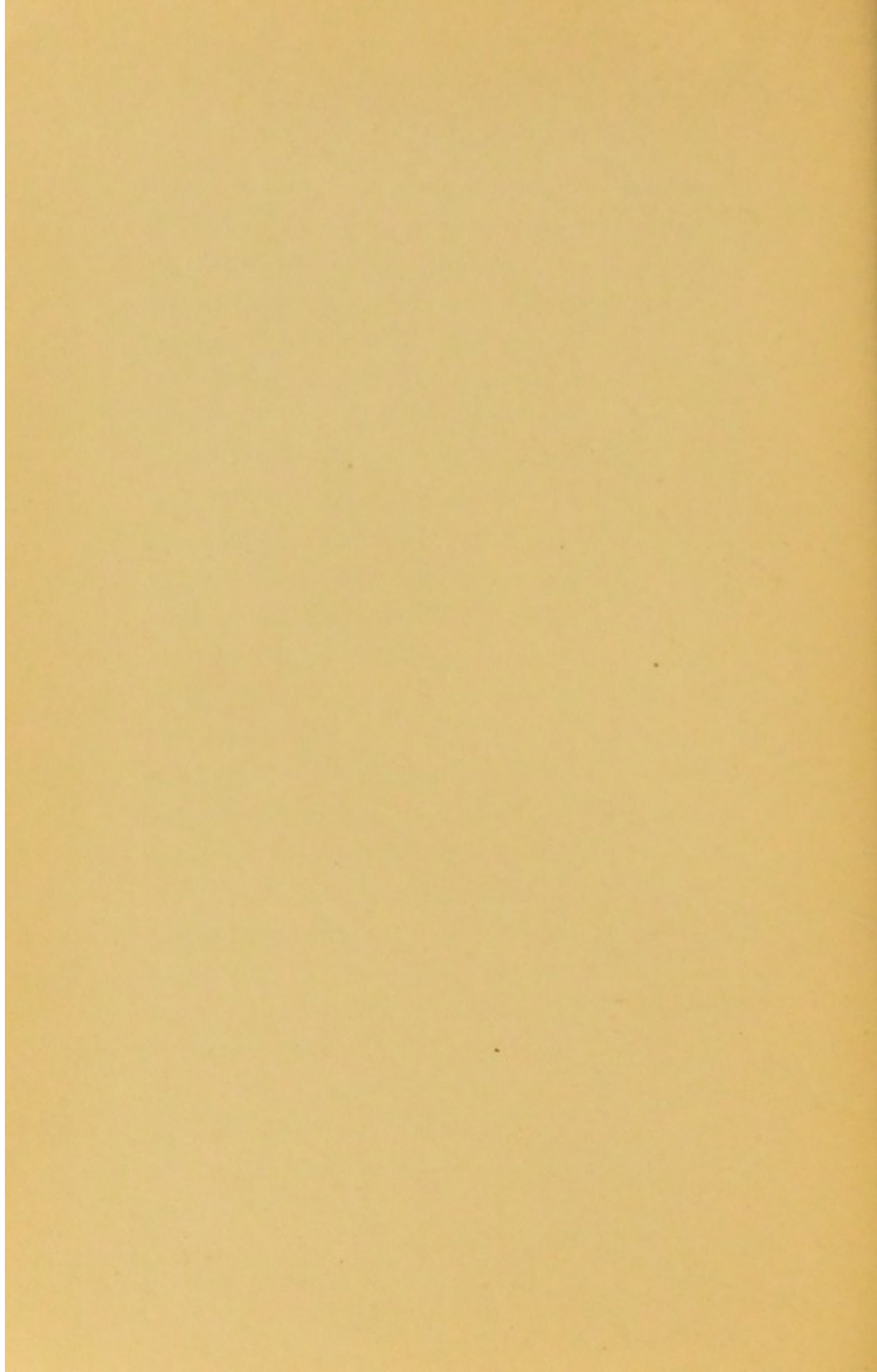
for the use of the children, my first and worst attempt at authorship.”<sup>1</sup>

He organised a company of “National Guards” in Newry, which, in defiance of an act of Parliament, he drilled at night in the Market House. When the Government issued a renewed proclamation against such organisations, the corps deserted, but Macartney openly carried his gun through the town. “It was my opinion that we should have resisted the proclamation by force, and I still think that a disarmed nation is in a state of slavery.”

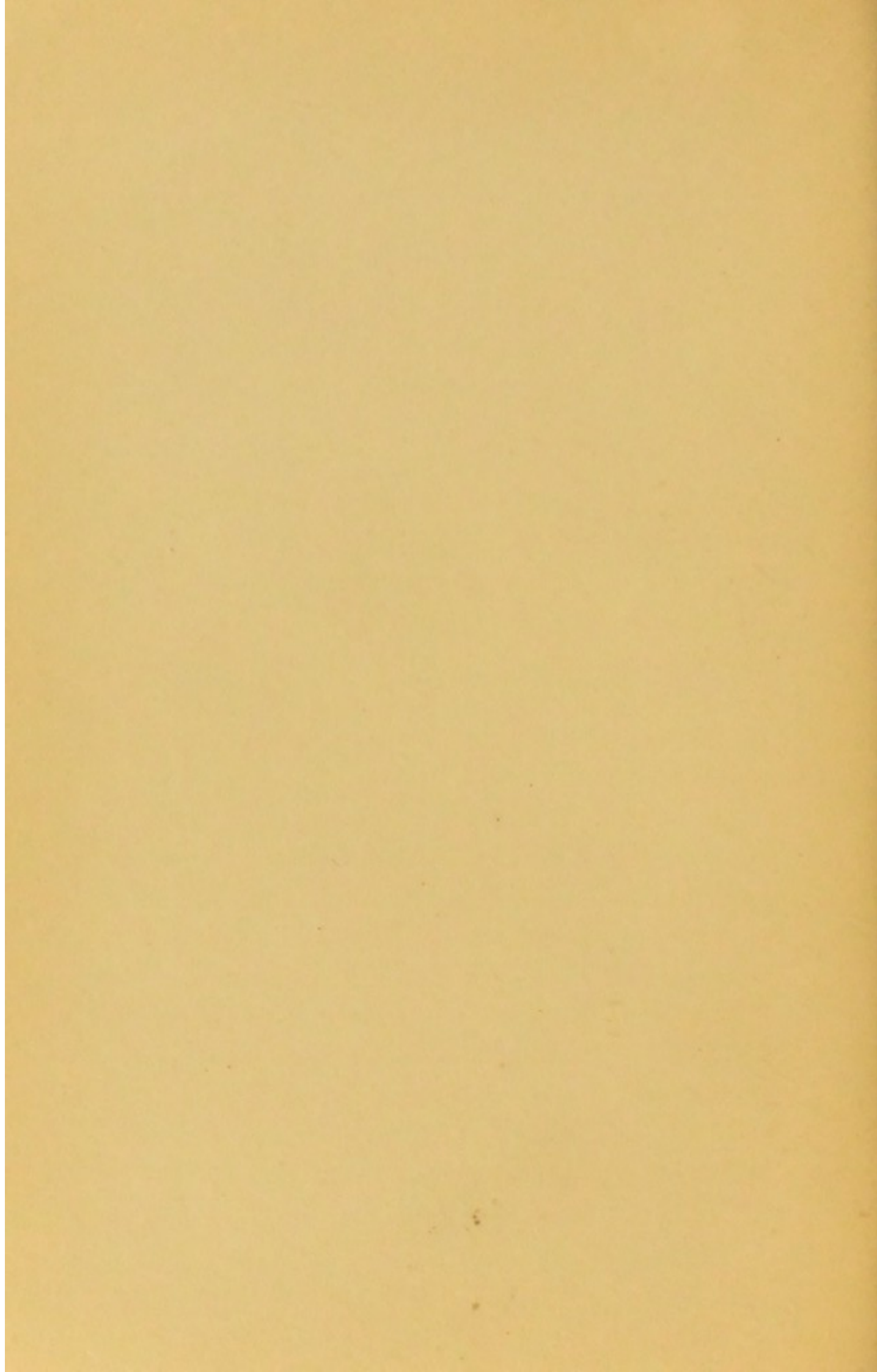
An event happened during the period of his stay in Newry which greatly affected his after life. “Miss Ekenhead had been pointed out to me as being placed in very peculiar circumstances; she was supposed to have had an attachment to Mr. Montgomery, who had died deranged. This was sufficient to engage my sympathy, and led to my seeking her acquaintance. She was very handsome and much admired. I soon became her friend, and met at her house Miss Ritchey, since Mrs. O'Donnell, who was handsome and sensible, and considered high-

<sup>1</sup> I have not succeeded in obtaining any further particulars of this publication.

principled. She had a grave manner, but a very warm disposition, and was in rather dependent circumstances. I became much interested in her, and I believed that she was partial to me. On one occasion I was on the very point of declaring an attachment to her when I was interrupted by her uncle coming into the room. What slight circumstances rule our fate! After this I began to turn my attention more particularly to Miss Ekenhead. My first proposal was refused, but with expressions of friendship, and our intimacy continued. After several months I again renewed my addresses, but with the same result. I now gave up all thoughts of marriage for the time, and returned to live at Rosebrook, where my attention was directed to surgery, not from any taste for the profession, but having experienced the inconvenience of a compassionate disposition, which with me amounted to infirmity, I thought surgery would harden my heart, as it did others. In this I have been disappointed."



1794—1802. Politics and Medical Study



1794—1802. POLITICS AND MEDICAL  
STUDY

IN furtherance of his determination to study surgery, Macartney moved to Dublin in 1794. He was induced to go thither as his cousin, Robert Maxwell, was there at the time preparing for the examination at the Apothecaries' Hall, and he was not sorry to leave Armagh, where his political position had become rather distressing to him.

The United Irishmen had up to this year been an open society, meeting in public for the promotion of reform; but under the pressure of the Irish Government it became in 1794 a secret society, and its members were bound together by oath. Concurrently with this change the spirit of the organisation also underwent a considerable modification, and its aims became more distinctly revolutionary.

With these developments he had not much



sympathy, and he objected on principle to the secrecy and to the oath. When he was pressed to take it he refused, and on this account his relations to some of the younger, hot-brained members in Ulster were rather strained. Many of the prominent men were very young and impulsive. Young Teeling was only seventeen years old when he was commander of the Down Defenders. On the whole, therefore, Macartney thought the time had come when it was desirable to change the sphere of his work.

On coming to Dublin he went to board with the Rev. Mr. Sandys, and set to work to coach his cousin for the apothecaries' examination and to brush up his own classics as a preliminary to joining the ranks of Dublin medical students. He soon changed his residence when he discovered the character of his host, as he desired to avoid having his name mixed up with the scandals which ended in the action for *crim. con.* brought against Sandys by the famous John Philpot Curran.

He had several friends in Dublin and soon extended the number. Dr. MacNevin was then living on Ormond Quay, Lawless was the Professor of Anatomy and Physiology in the College

of Surgeons' school, and Wolfe Tone, whom he had known very well in the North, was then in Dublin. Tone introduced him to John Sheares, with whom he had much sympathy in opinions, although he was not prepared to go to the same lengths in admiration of the French school of philosophy. With these friends he went many times to informal meetings in the room over the Eagle Tavern in Exchequer Street and to the Strugglers in Cook Street, known rendezvous of the United Irishmen. These political relations, however, did not distract him from the main object of his Dublin residence; so, when able to pass the examination in classics required before being indentured, he bound himself apprentice to Professor Hartigan, and as he was now twenty-four years old he had his indentures antedated by a full year. They bear date February 10th, 1793, but they were really signed in March, 1794.

He began his studies in anatomy in the school of the College of Surgeons, and within the first three months of his work earned the reputation of being the best man of his year and a neat and careful dissector. He prepared and mounted a skeleton with his own hands within his first

year, and, although he had put the collar bones with the wrong edge foremost, the mistake was not detected by the anatomists of the College of Surgeons, by whom the work was highly commended. He soon, however, noticed it himself and rectified the blunder. He entered the chemistry class in the University of Dublin under the instruction of Professor Percival, but he had no other connection with the medical school of Trinity College, which seemed at that time to be moribund.

While thus engaged in Dublin during this year, he was much attracted by a very handsome girl, a Miss Singer. "I might have proposed for her if she had not been so extremely thin. From the thread-paper figure she grew into one of the most bulky women I ever saw. How little people can tell what their wives may become in person, temper, or principles!"

During the Christmas recess of 1794 he returned to Newry, but the work had so told on his appearance that he seemed pale and emaciated. When he met Miss Ekenhead she fancied that her refusal had been the cause of his ill-health, so out of pity to him she, through the good offices of their mutual friend Miss Pollock, reminded

him of his proposal to her, and offered him encouragement if he had formed no new attachment. "I had not totally conquered my former predilection, which, like sleeping embers, was easily rekindled. I felt also that I would contribute to her happiness by giving her a home of her own, in place of living with her brother's wife."

Macartney returned to Dublin in January, 1795, to find that the political situation was becoming much more acute. He had not formally joined the Dublin United Irishmen, as he consistently objected to the oath, but in this respect they were much less particular than were their Armagh brethren. Arthur O'Connor—who, with Lord Edward Fitzgerald, formed the Leinster Directory in 1796-97—never took any oath. Tone and Drennan vouched for Macartney's sincerity, as did his friend Dr. James Reynolds, whom he afterwards visited when confined in Kilmainham. The only members who were not quite frank with him were the brothers Sheares, who, he says, gave him the impression of being the most "bloody-minded" of the whole body.

It was well known that the councils of the Leinster executive were divided, and Macartney,

although not regularly a member of council yet, was often present at private discussions. Hamilton Rowan and Bagenal Harvey were both old acquaintances, and they had a high estimate of Macartney's judgment, which was exercised on the side of caution. It was said that 500,000 persons had enrolled themselves as United Irishmen, of whom 300,000 had taken the oath, but Macartney, remembering his own enrolment as a volunteer at ten years of age, was a little doubtful as to the actual fighting strength of the organisation, and urged secrecy, caution, and the avoidance of any public display. The Sheares were suspicious and by no means cordial, and Tone was displeased ; so he thought it wise to withdraw himself from the perilous toils of rebellion which were so nearly woven round him, and he left Dublin for Armagh in the summer of 1795. He records in his diary that he had done but little work during the latter half of the preceding session.

Many of his friends and relatives in the North were strong supporters of the Government. "Little" Atkinson, the perpetual High Constable of Belfast, and Dr. Atkinson were both great friends of Colonels Lake and Barber, who were in command of the King's troops ; and his name-

sake and distant relative, the Rev. Dr. Macartney, of Antrim, who was an active magistrate at the time, earned by his zeal for the Government the praise of Lord Camden that "the salvation of the country was due to him."<sup>1</sup>

His departure from Dublin to Armagh was hastened this summer on account of the marriage of his brother Andrew to Miss Donnelly, which took place in July; and on August 10th, 1795, he was himself married to Miss Ekenhead. They spent the honeymoon at Bryansford and returned to Dublin in October, 1795.

His marriage completed his detachment from politics; and he threw himself with all his energies into his medical studies. Having learned as much as his Dublin teachers could impart, and being dissatisfied with the means of instruction which the provincial school afforded and desirous of profiting by the larger opportunities offered in the metropolis, he determined to finish

<sup>1</sup> It was this Macartney who caused the arrest of William Orr at the bedside of his dying father. It is reported that at Orr's trial the judge appealed to him thus, "Mr. Macartney, if you can lay your hand on your heart and say that you don't think the evidence is sufficient to convict the man, I will recommend his Excellency to respite him." But Mr. Macartney refused to do so and Orr was executed.

his studies in London. To this his master, Hartigan, made no objection. Accordingly he and his wife left Dublin for Bristol early in 1796. He brought with him his books and some dissections of nerves and arteries. These were all seized by the Custom House officers; the books were weighed and duty paid on them by weight, and he had to pay a certain *ad valorem* duty on the preparations before they were released.

Their first stay was at the Hot Wells at Bath, where they made acquaintance with Sir George Strickland and his family, a friendship kept up through life. After a short excursion into Wales they proceeded to London, where he took lodgings in Bolton Street and attended lectures by Cruikshank, Baillie, Wilson and Pearson. The last named lectured at a very early hour. "I have gone to them in frost and fog before the lamps were extinguished in the morning." In January, 1797, he went to lodge in St. George's Fields to be near Guy's Hospital, where he became dresser to Mr. Lucas. This district at that time was crowded with French refugees of all classes, and the Macartneys made the acquaintance of an old marquis whom they used often to see

bringing home a bit of fish or meat on a skewer to cook for his dinner.

During the three years that followed he was busily engaged in pursuing his studies under the many distinguished teachers then in London—Abernethy, Cline, Cruikshank, and Sir Astley Cooper, with all of whom he kept up afterwards a close intimacy, as well as with Jones, Farre, Sir M. Tierney, and many others.

To perfect himself in the elementary sciences, which he had but scant opportunity of learning in Dublin, he attended Thomas Young's lectures on Natural Philosophy, Humphry Davy on Chemistry, Shaw on Zoology, and Haighton on Physiology. Later on he attended Smith's lectures on Botany. His studies were thus eclectic and scattered in point of locality: he was now at Great Windmill Street, now at Guy's, now at St. Thomas's, now at St. Bartholomew's.

The work of these three years was constant and unremitting; he had to unlearn much of the crudity of his Dublin teaching as well as to advance to the level of the times. Being a man of more than usual discrimination, he had carefully analysed and appraised the instruction which he received; thus in one notebook he has



transcribed a series of "Opinions Peculiar to Mr. Dease,<sup>1</sup> Advanced in his Course, 1796." Some of these are certainly very startling, and were evidently recorded with incredulity. For instance, "the brain is an inorganic mass, devoid of sensibility and irritability, secreted by the arteries of the pia mater, and consequently incapable of inflammation": that polypi in the nose, like other animals, have their infancy, maturity, and death!<sup>2</sup>

Coming from teaching such as this, there is little wonder that he became enthusiastic about the instruction of his new masters. He took copious notes of most of these London lectures, which he subsequently transcribed; and on the basis of these notes, together with the addition of abundant new matter derived from his own observation, his own surgical lectures in later years were compiled.

The state of Dublin surgery may be illustrated by a case which he quotes in his notebook of a

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Dease was Professor of Surgery in the College of Surgeons, Dublin, and President of that college in the year 1789.

<sup>2</sup> It will scarcely be credited, but is literally true, that I have heard a clinical physician of no mean name gravely stating to his class in Dublin that the reason endocardial

young woman who had received a severe wound in her forearm from a piece of glass. The bleeding was profuse, and the surgeons were in doubt as to its source, so they determined to cut the Gordian knot by amputating the arm above the elbow. Macartney recognised from the position of the wound that the bleeding came from the radial artery and pointed this out, counselling them to ligature that vessel. This was done, and the hæmorrhage ceased. This directed his attention to the landmarks for arteries, and when demonstrating at St. Bartholomew's he used to impress these on his class, and to give them confidence he tied the femoral artery blindfold, and on another occasion ligatured that vessel successfully with his back to the subject.

In Dublin he had done but little practical work in medicine or surgery, having only attended the General Dispensary and the Lock Hospital. He now began his clinical and hospital work on a systematic basis. In one book he commenced writing notes of cases, in another the records of

disease was more frequent on the left side of the heart than on the right was that "the acid chyle of the thoracic duct entered the circulation after the blood had left the right, and before it entered the left, side of the heart."

autopsies. These books he kept up until a late period in his life; the last entry in his *post-mortem* book dates from 1830. Not content with the study of the diseases of humanity, he attended a course by Coleman on veterinary surgery.<sup>1</sup> In one of his notebooks he records a series of observations on comparative pathology, and he commenced a collection of observations on the diseases of plants.

Though he was as yet unqualified, the high standard of his knowledge in anatomy attracted the attention of Abernethy, by whom he was appointed to demonstrate in the school of St. Bartholomew's in 1798,<sup>2</sup> the year in which his apprenticeship expired. He received from

<sup>1</sup> In his diary he records his daily work and makes occasional notes regarding current events. These notes are of a very heterogeneous character. In the diary for 1798, after giving an account of his agreement with Abernethy, he goes on in the same line to say: "Mr. O'Hanlon was engaged in the courtship of Miss Smyth; an elopement was agreed on, and I agreed to meet her and conduct her to the carriage in which Mrs. M. and he were waiting. We then proceeded to church, and they spent their honeymoon in my house."

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Norman Moore tells me that there are no records of the school of that date, so I have only Macartney's notebooks and letters and Abernethy's letters as my authorities. In a paper on medical education written thirty years later he said: "When I was a teacher in London, I extended the

Abernethy £50 a year, and continued to teach anatomy until the beginning of 1800. While thus engaged he projected a work on surgical and topographical anatomy. For this he made a large number of drawings, and others were executed by his friend King, which were engraved by Johnston, of St. Paul's Churchyard. The letterpress, however, was never completed, and in the course of time the drawings and plates were lost. The relinquishing of this scheme was due in the first instance to his having heard that an acquaintance, Alexander Walker, had a similar work in progress; but this, apparently, was never published.

The work of teaching and study in which he was engaged was heavy, and he dissected so constantly that he seriously injured his health for the time. He became so weak he could only walk with the support of a stick. On this account he went alone to Wales and there spent

plan of anatomical demonstration to embrace the whole of the anatomy of the body instead of confining them (*sic*) to the viscera and the account of the muscles, joints, arteries, and veins, which had been all that were formerly demonstrated in the dissecting-rooms in London"—that is, he claims to have been the first London teacher of topographical anatomy in place of systematic,

three months in 1799, returning to London perfectly well and able to resume his demonstrations. He was deeply immersed in studies when he heard of the outbreak of the Irish rebellion, which deeply affected him, but in the midst of his many occupations he could not take any part in it. He considered that the Irish party had changed their ground and that the religious element had been allowed too much to enter into it, so, except in exerting himself to provide for the safety of some of his fugitive friends, he took no part in the matter.

At the beginning of the year 1800 he made an ineffectual attempt to obtain an appointment in the great museum which John Hunter had formed, and which had been purchased by the nation. There was a rumour that a Lecturer on Comparative Anatomy was about to be appointed. He called on Sir Everard Home, who promised to use his influence to obtain for him the post, but no assistant other than Mr. Clift was then appointed, and Sir Everard himself was appointed Lecturer shortly afterwards.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Macartney had never any confidence in Home, and more than once expresses his opinion that he was little more than a scientific impostor. In an answer to a reviewer

On February 6th, 1800, he became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, passed the examination at a day's notice, and immediately afterwards was appointed Lecturer on Comparative Anatomy in the medical school of St. Bartholomew's. He commenced his first course of lectures one month after obtaining his diploma, in March, 1800.

If not the first course of lectures on comparative anatomy ever delivered in Britain to medical students, it was at least the first truly systematic and comprehensive one. Abernethy had largely introduced illustrations from comparative anatomy into his human anatomy course, but had not attempted to divide the subjects, while Barclay's first course on comparative anatomy in Edinburgh, the quaint notice of which is before me as I write, did not begin until two months later, on May 7th, 1800.

Macartney's lectures were no mere prelections on zoology, such as those which Shaw delivered; his theme was much wider, as he taught from the standpoint of comparative physiology, not of

of Home's work on the stomach of the dormouse, he says: "I trust that those who know me will not dishonour me by even a comparison with him as an anatomist."

descriptive zootomy. Beginning with introductory lectures on classification of animals and plants, he passed in review, in successive lectures, the different functions of living beings and the organs whereby these functions are performed, throughout the animal kingdom. The first series was on the vital functions, digestion, circulation, etc., and in speaking of individual parts he specially emphasised their development, as far as this was then known. The second series was on the functions of animal life, those discharged by the brain and organs of sense; and in connection with these he delivered several lectures on psychology, human and comparative, treating of the likenesses and differences of animal and human perceptions, the gradations of the faculties, the nature of instinct, etc. The course concluded with four lectures on the laws of disease in plants and animals, considered as a department of comparative physiology.

These lectures were attended, even in the first year, by large numbers of students, and as their fame became more widely spread the attendance increased in succeeding sessions, and senior men were attracted to the classroom. Macartney was no orator, although he had an easy, flowing,

conversational style. At first he read his lectures, but this practice he afterwards discontinued. He had at this time a rather strong provincial accent, which he never quite lost, but his enunciation was clear and he was a thorough enthusiast. He believed in the importance of his theme and was able to infect his class with his own enthusiasm. He knew also the power he could exercise over his pupils, and possessed almost unrivalled ability in illustrating his lectures. He was an elegant draughtsman and an exceedingly cunning manipulator, his dissections and preparations impressing all those who were competent to judge. Years afterwards, Parkinson, the author of *Original Remains of a Former World*, wrote that having attended these lectures closely, with a view of being thereby assisted in his researches as to the organic remains of a past world, he would gladly bear witness, not only to the knowledge displayed by the lecturer, but also to the excellence of the mode of teaching and the beauty of the preparations by which he illustrated his lectures. Sir Charles Bell, already a distinguished man, although eight years Macartney's junior, says in a letter to Dr. Graves in 1813 that he had always noticed in the preparations



which he made "that elegance and nicety which I wish to see altogether dedicated to the improvement of our art," and "in the lectures which he delivered in London he had resolution to prefer minuteness and accuracy, to the credit, more easily obtained by addressing himself to the ignorant, and treating of popular topics" (*sic*).

Shortly after he had commenced his lectures at St. Bartholomew's he wrote to Abernethy, who was then lecturing on anatomy and surgery, offering to continue services as a Demonstrator of Human Anatomy. I have no record of Abernethy's reply, but it cannot have been favourable, as the demonstrations were not given, and for some cause or other from this time forward his relations to Abernethy, as well as to some other members of the staff, seem to have been a little strained. Macartney knew his own value, and had a large share of the Ulster self-assertion, and this on many occasions in after life brought him into not a few contentions. The first direct collision with the staff arose on account of his anatomical preparations. He had made, partly at his own expense, partly at that of the institution, a set of preparations to illustrate his lectures. These he regarded

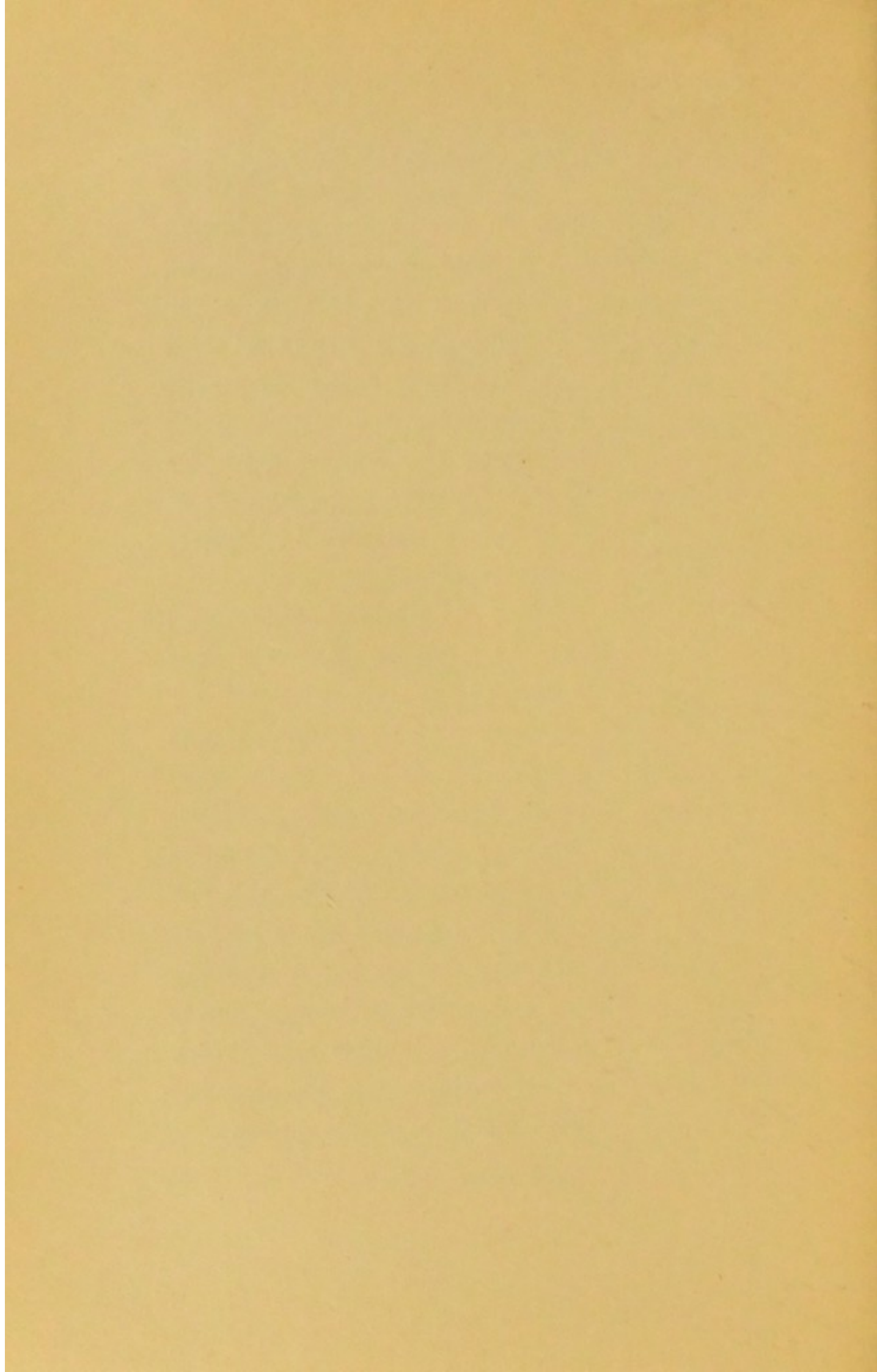
as his own property, although for his convenience they were placed in the hospital museum. The authorities, however, regarded them as gifts to the hospital and dealt with them as such. Macartney's claim to ownership was submitted to the arbitration of the senior surgeon, Sir Charles Blick, who decided against him, but laid down no ruling with regard to new preparations. Macartney at once began to form a duplicate set of specimens. These were even finer than the first set, and were made solely at his own expense. Again the question of proprietorship in these new specimens was raised, but their claim upon them he refused to admit; and on May 22nd, 1803, he writes, saying, "I shall not part with the absolute and uncontrolled property of those preparations that I have latterly made at my own expense, nor shall I *of myself* discontinue my lectures at the hospital." These repeated attempts to coerce him he believed to arise from "the jealousy of an individual with whom the proposition had its origin." "I consider that the devotion of my time and exertions to the advancement of the school for several years past gives me a claim to the attention of the medical gentlemen of

the establishment at least equal to that of Mr. Abernethy."

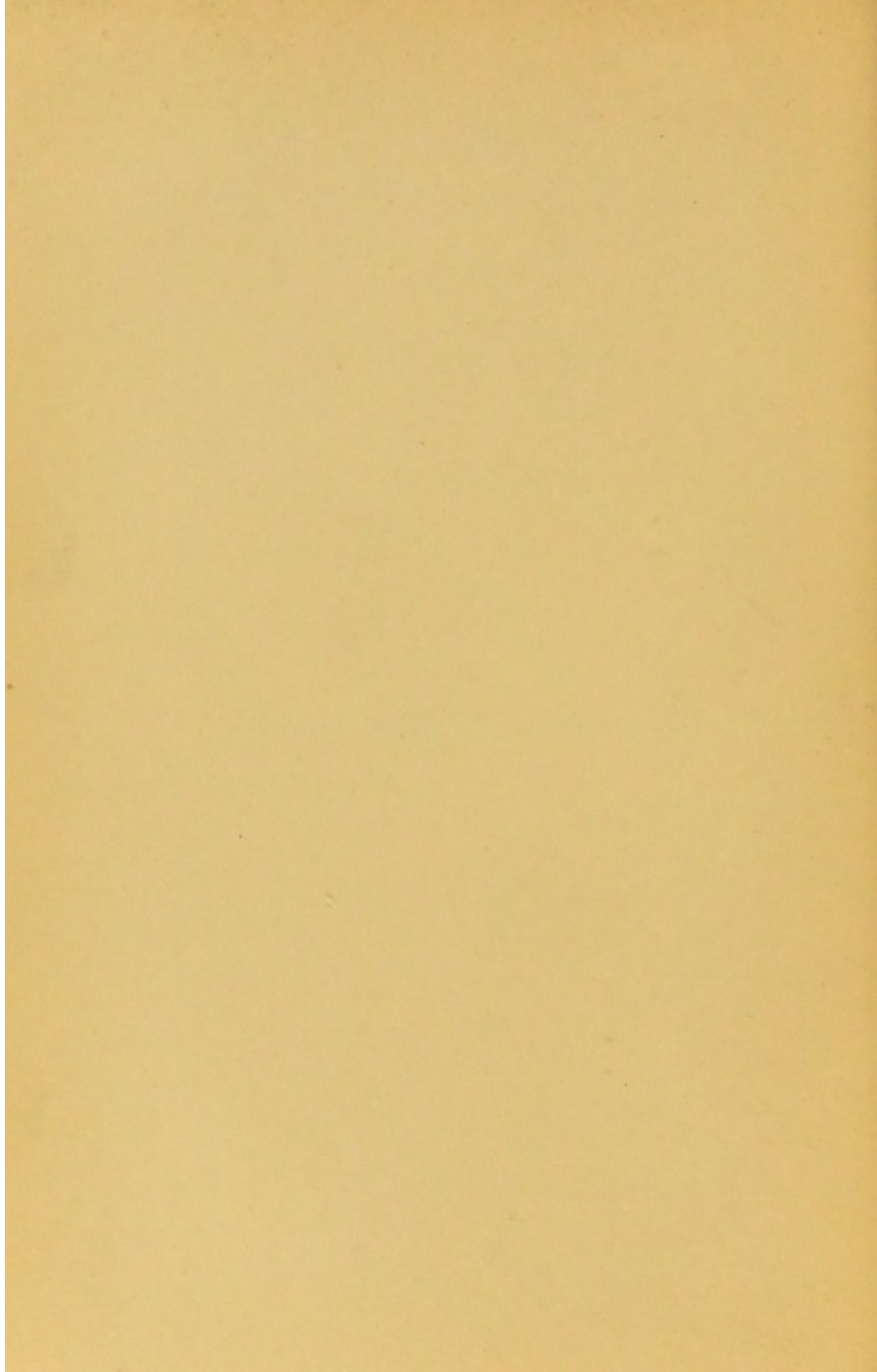
During the first year of his lectureship, Macartney found that there was no work in English which could be recommended as a text-book for the use of his students, and he contemplated the supply of this want. Meantime, there appeared the first volume of the great course of lectures by Cuvier on comparative anatomy, and he at once saw that in it there was just such a work as he had desired, ready to his hand. He therefore conceived the project of editing an English translation of it. Accordingly he entered into treaty for this purpose with Debrett to publish in English the volumes as they appeared. The actual work of translation was done by William Ross ; but every word was very closely supervised by Macartney, who in some places altered the nomenclature and corrected some errors which existed in the French text. The firm of Longmans purchased the work from Debrett's assignees and furthered its progress by obtaining from Paris advanced sheets of the second volume. Two volumes were published by them in 1802, the first treating of the organs of motion, the second of the organs of sensation.

The whole work in French was published in five volumes, each containing an annual course, and appeared in the years 1800 to 1805, edited by Dumeril and Duvernoy, but no more than these two volumes were translated, as the enterprise met with but little encouragement, and although Macartney was desirous, not only to finish the work, but to translate Cuvier's larger treatise on natural history, he could not get a publisher to undertake so great a venture.

Upon the completion of the editorial supervision of this work, Macartney spent the summer of 1802 at Shanklin, in the Isle of Wight, one of the first of a long series of summer excursions, the diaries kept during which are, if not the most instructive, certainly the most amusing of his many records. He had many strange domestic experiences while preparing his specimens. For quiet he took lodgings in a small house next to one which had been long shut up, but while working late at night he was visited by swarms of rats which used to run in droves around him over his table, seemingly quite indifferent to his presence. Finally they caused him to shift his quarters.



1803—1812. Military Service



## 1803—1812. MILITARY SERVICE

THE bankruptcy of his brother-in-law, John Ekenhead, for whom he had become surety, was a serious addition to the many cares of his student life. Macartney endeavoured, but in vain, to disentangle his relative's affairs, which had become almost inextricably confused. In consequence of this it became necessary to retrench a little and to fit himself as speedily as possible for some more remunerative work. For many months he sat up through the whole of every second night engaged in his anatomical work, usually commencing his dissection when the household retired for the night, and as there was no immediate prospect of any new appointment in London, he took a cottage at Shanklin, in the Isle of Wight. Here he passed the summers of 1801 and 1802 in quiet study, his privacy being only disturbed by his having to act as surgeon both to the smugglers and Revenue



officers, who had more than one severe conflict near his house. Lawrence had succeeded him as Demonstrator at Bartholomew's, but he still held his Lectureship in Comparative Anatomy and went to London annually to deliver his course every spring.

While in town lecturing in 1803 Mr. Crowther called upon him and offered him an appointment as surgeon to the Royal Radnor Militia then recently embodied. He accepted office, and his commission was issued by Thomas Harley, Lord Lieutenant of the county, and bears date May 25th, 1803.

On finishing his lectures in 1803 he immediately entered upon the duties of this office, which were not onerous. The Radnors were successively quartered at Canterbury, Margate, Hythe, Sheerness (considered the worst quarters in England), Swansea, Bristol, Lydd, Dublin, and Athlone during the succeeding nine years, but each year he obtained leave from Sir David Dundas to absent himself during the time of his lectures in London. He thoroughly enjoyed his military life, and in his journal often refers to the gossip of the mess-room, where he was a great favourite among his brother-officers. His work in the

military hospital gave him opportunities of seeing new forms of disease and making new pathological observations, while he continued, as opportunity permitted, his researches in comparative anatomy that he had begun during his residence at the seaside; and he was thus able to improve his lectures from year to year and to add to his reputation as a teacher and observer. In his *post-mortem* book he has entered numerous records of autopsies made on men of many regiments and branches of the service.

In February, 1804, Mr. (afterwards Sir) Charles Bell, who was then at the height of his fame as a teacher of anatomy in Edinburgh, wrote to Longmans, the publishers, concerning him:—

“In confidence, and as a friend, will you tell Mr. Macartney that I am inquiring for a colleague in my lectures, and that, as the best and least equivocal compliment I can pay him, I would prefer him to any I know of.

“If lecturing in Edinburgh could in any circumstance be made agreeable, I conceive that I could hold out inducements to him on the present occasion. It is probable, however, that his course of life is already fixed; and if so,

he will, no doubt, feel the propriety of allowing this proposal to go no further."

This flattering proposal he did not see his way to entertain, but at once and very courteously he declined it, and continued his London lectures and his military service.

While serving in Kent he took the opportunity which the residence by the seaside afforded to study the causation of the phosphorescence of the sea, and made many original observations on animal luminosity. Having collected his experiences and collated the literature of the subject, he sent up the record of these observations to the Royal Society, at the same time writing to his former teacher, Sir Humphry Davy, respecting the experiments on the influence of certain gases on luminous animals which Davy had made many years before. Davy wrote to him on May 21st, 1804:—

"In the experiments which I made on the glow-worm I did not find that it shone brighter in oxygen gas, nor in oxygenated muriatic acid gas, nor was its light sensibly diminished in hydrogene (*sic*) gas. The opinions which I gave in Dr. Beddoes's communications were formed in very early youth, before I had had much

opportunity of reading or of making experiments.

“I am still inclined to think it very probable that there is no specific fluid of heat, but Dr. Herschel's experiments must give a new direction to our opinions, and I am most inclined to believe that light is not a constituent element of bodies, *i.e.*, not chemically united with them but an affection of a peculiar ethereal matter found generally in the universe or only loosely adhering to, or interposed amongst, bodies.

“But facts are more important than fancies. I am very glad that you are to give us some new facts, and I expect much pleasure from hearing your paper read.”

It was in those days not easy to identify the species of the *medusæ* and *ctenophora*, on whose luminosity he was experimenting, and in order to obtain aid in this respect, in the autumn of 1804 he wrote to Dr. Shaw, who helped him by sending to him some pen-and-ink sketches of the commoner forms.

His paper was read before the Royal Society, but was not published. After the meeting, Sir H. Davy wrote to him stating that while it contained many curious observations and much

important information, yet that there was too much of quotation and of the history of the subject, which it was contrary to the rules of the Society to publish. He asked him, therefore, to rewrite the paper, weeding it of such redundant matter as did not touch the points at issue.

Although on the receipt of this letter he set to work to revise his observations and recast his paper, it was not until May 17th, 1810, that the revision was completed. The paper was then again sent up and accepted, and is published at length in the *Philosophical Transactions*, vol. c, p. 258, with two plates. When engaged in making this revision, he had the advantage of examining the drawings of those animals which Sir Joseph Banks had seen in the Southern Ocean during Captain Cook's voyage. Three of his English jellyfishes from Herne Bay, which he could not identify, he describes as new species under the names *Medusa scintillans* and *lucida*, and *Beröe fulgens*. These names have been superseded as our knowledge of the zoology and life history of these animals has enormously increased, but on the whole, considering its date and the state of zoology at the time, the paper

is one which well deserved its place in the *Philosophical Transactions*.

While engaged in making the dissections for the illustration of his London lectures in 1805, he projected and commenced a small work on the methods of preparing anatomical specimens. He offered the copyright to Mr. John Scott, of Skinner Street, agreeing to sell it to him for ten guineas a sheet, provided the price of the whole did not exceed ninety guineas. Other avocations interfered with the completion of the work, and the manuscript was laid by; and although in the part written there is much that is of value, and very much which at that time was quite new, yet it remains in a condition too fragmentary to be of much utility. A few extracts from it were subsequently read by him as a paper at the meeting of the British Association in 1836.

At this time his mind was full of projects. He had made a large number of observations on proportional measurements of the body and on surgical landmarks, and contemplated the publication of a manual of surgical anatomy, but was dissuaded from doing so on finding that his acquaintance and former fellow-student, Alexander Walker, had been working along the same lines

and had begun to prepare a work on the same subject.

Owing to the discouragements which he had met with in his work at St. Bartholomew's, Mr. Macartney meditated resigning his lectureship and devoting himself wholly to the practice of medicine, so, on hearing of a probable vacancy on the staff of a London hospital in 1806, he wrote to Sir C. Bell, who had then settled in London, for his help to get this hospital appointment. Bell wrote to a friend:—

“My only difficulty in expressing my sense of Mr. Macartney's professional character arises from the doubt how far I may be considered as capable of fully appreciating it.

“He is a man of that activity of mind, that expertness in anatomical pursuits, and one who has so benefited by his extensive opportunities in the hospital practice, that he must be a valuable man in a situation like this for which he is a candidate.

“His abilities and industry have been especially shown in the subject of his lectures; and a regard for science must weaken our desire of his success in the present instance, as from what I know of Mr. Macartney the interest of those

committed to his charge will prevent him from attending to those subjects in which the profession at large is so much interested. I wish I could convey the strong sense I have (looking upon the economy of hospitals in general) that an extensive connection of the physicians and surgeons with the liberal and enlightened part of the profession, as making them amenable to them, is the only guard of the sick poor."

(Signed), CHARLES BELL.

London, February, 1806.

His application proved unsuccessful from his not having been an apprentice of any member of the hospital staff,<sup>1</sup> so he still continued in his military work. His brother Matthew's death in 1806 added something to his income, as Andrew, his surviving brother, handed over to him half of Matthew's landed property. The roads about Dublin were not of the safest, and Andrew, when bringing over the deed of gift of this land, was attacked by a band of robbers on the road between Dublin and the Pigeon House, from whence the Holyhead packet sailed, and only escaped with many wounds.

<sup>1</sup> Macilwain's *Life of Abernethy*, p. 297.



"This year I gave a second course of lectures in Mr. Lambert's drawing-room before breakfast, at the request of Brodie and a dozen Scotchmen. Charles Bell promised to attend, but did not. In this class I had Gordon, McGlashan, Veitch," etc. In this course he developed the idea of the archetypal organisation of vertebrates and of an archetypal skeleton.

Military duty brought him to Milford in 1810, and he marched with his regiment from thence to Hastings. The journal of this expedition is the first complete portion of his diary which remains. It is written in a staccato manner worthy of Alfred Jingle. At Haverfordwest, for example, he records: "Baggage arrived in great rain; rascality of the Mayor; search for my box; impudence of the chambermaid." The route was by Cardiff, Chepstow, Bristol, Bath, Salisbury, Stockbridge, where he records: "Embarrassment about beds; slept on sofa; bad dinner; excellent claret; admirable race and course; several sporting people of rank, free from that insolent, puppyish appearance of the young men of London and Bristol." They then proceeded by Winchester, Petersfield, Chichester, Arundel, and Brighton to Eastbourne and

Hastings. The whole march took from June 25th to July 18th.

In revising his annual course of lectures for St. Bartholomew's, he had gradually been led to extend and alter their scope, developing them largely in the morphological and pathological direction. In accordance with these actual changes he proposed to change the title of the course to one more relevant to this development of his plan, calling them Lectures on the Forms and Laws of Life. To this the medical officers objected, and they wrote to him "that the proposed alteration in the title of his lectures would not be proper." He received this letter on November 9th, 1810, and on the conclusion of the course in the spring of 1811 he finally severed his connection with the medical school of St. Bartholomew's. Many fragments of notes of the successive revision of these lectures survive containing observations, records of dissections, and descriptions of specimens, some of which are even yet worthy of publication, and they testify to the great pains which he took in the preparation of his lectures and in the verification of his statements.

In January, 1811, he forwarded to the Royal

Society a curious paper entitled *Experiments and Observations on Vital Temperature*. This was a record of a very large number of observations on eggs, rabbits, etc., under different conditions, with a view of proving that animal temperature is not entirely dependent on respiration, that the evolution of heat is the result of all vital processes, and that animal heat is dissipated more slowly than artificially induced heat. The paper, though really an original one, was refused publication and relegated "to the archives of the Society"!

In the following month, however, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, and in March, 1811, he sent to the Society a paper, *On the Appendix to the Small Intestines in Birds*, which was printed *in extenso* in the *Philosophical Transactions*, vol. ci. for 1811, p. 257.

The transportation of the Radnor Militia to Ireland in 1811 was a change the results of which were destined to be of the greatest importance to his subsequent career. The regiment was ordered to Athlone, and on August 23rd he set sail from Pile in the *Lord Nelson* brig and landed at the Poolbeg lighthouse in Dublin Bay on Monday the 26th. He had not been in Dublin

since 1796, and it is interesting to read the records of his second impressions after his long sojourn in England. Things seem to have become sadly dwarfed: "Trinity College less magnificent than it seemed in my recollection."

"Anatomical collections, instead of being improved, are falling to decay; Kirby, with a class of one hundred pupils, has not ten preparations."

He found his old master Hartigan seriously ill with heart disease and unable to do his work, the lectures being delivered by a deputy. "Dublin has none of the characters of a great town, except the wretchedness of the poorer classes. Long lines of quays, with the appearance of scarcely any trade." He went to Donnybrook Fair, but it must have been an exceptionally sober time, for he saw only one man and woman drunk.

From Dublin they marched to Kildare, which he describes as a most desolate town; the inn a perfect hovel. Going to see the tower, he remarks that while in brogue and habiliments the keeper seems *Hibernior Hibernis*, yet he was a native of Manchester!

They passed on by Monasterevan to Portarlington, "a singular town, consisting almost entirely

of large, good houses, in which are several schools ; there are even large schools for poor children. More the appearance of preservation and neatness than most towns in Ireland. The country around neat and as well cultivated as England. The obelisk in Lord Portarlington's grounds commands a fine prospect. No military quartered here on account of the boarding schools. All eyes at the windows on our marching in. Schools contain many beautiful and interesting girls. Kindness of the poor inhabitants to our sick."

Geashill, Tullamore, Moate, and Athlone are then described with similar terseness and in the same graphic style.

Previous to his departure from England he had undertaken to write a series of articles on different branches of comparative anatomy and the allied subjects for Rees's *Cyclopædia*. Although the first volume of this great work—which was projected by Abraham Rees as a universal dictionary of all branches of science, art, and literature—was not published until 1819, yet Macartney had prepared all his papers for it before he left England. As, however, he was in Ireland while the work was passing through the press, there was much trouble in the pre-

paration and introduction of the plates, and hence his articles have the serious disadvantage of being imperfectly, or not at all, illustrated. The principal articles from his pen are "The Anatomy of Birds," "The Anatomy of Mammals," "Egg," "Incubation," "Hair," "Feathers," "Comparative Anatomy," "Beasts," "Branches," "Buds," "Bulbs," "Vegetable Anatomy," "Bezoar," "Classification of Animals," "Anatomy of Fishes," "Evolution of Light by Living Animals."

These articles are memorials of his erudition, and although in the paragraphs of a cyclopædia little of novelty or of original research is to be expected, yet these papers are exceptional, and show a practical knowledge of the descriptive anatomy of the animals referred to which was unique at the time, and which is scarcely surpassed by any one at the present day. In one of the standard descriptive works of a later day, that of Professor Owen on *The Anatomy of Vertebrates*, the author says, in speaking of the vascular system of birds: "I adopt with little modification the words of Macartney, by whom it was first and best described." Other observers, such as Barkow, have confirmed many of the most singular facts mentioned in Macartney's

article; and our highest living authority on birds, Professor Newton, in his article, "Ornithology" in *The Encyclopædia Britannica*, bears testimony to the value of the work of "the accurate Macartney."

He had severed his connection with St. Bartholomew's in 1811, and in the following year his military service came to an end, as the Radnor Militia was disembodied. Being thus quite freed from all official duty, he remained in Ireland, visiting his friends at Newry and Armagh, and finally he took up his residence at Leixlip, about twelve miles from Dublin, awaiting the event of a probable vacancy in the Professorship of Anatomy and Chirurgery in the Dublin University, as Hartigan was evidently failing fast.

In the summer of 1812 he took an extended tour on horseback in the North of Ireland. Among the entries in his diary on this occasion we find him anathematising the inn at Antrim as "the worst in Ireland; the host and hostess extremely insolent, and the waiter lame, lazy, and totally incapable." Visiting Shane's Castle he got himself weighed, and records his weight as 10 stone 10 lb.

At Ballymena he met a man who gave him

“in Scripture language a learned account of all the sects in that part of the country.” At Clough Mills on Sunday “so great was the respect for the Sabbath day that I was in danger of passing the night on the road, had I not met with a man named Andrew O’Neil, who was a dealer in horses, and by that means had lost the prejudices of the place. His hospitality was so disinterested that I could not help suspecting him, notwithstanding his manners were remarkably frank. I here proved the comforts and inconveniences of an Irish cabin, dirty to an extreme degree, and the bed was so damp that I preferred sitting up by the kitchen fire.”

Proceeding thence to Ballycastle, he says of the natives :—

“The people who profess Roman Catholicism here feel themselves the dominant sect, and will not permit the Orangemen to commit any outrages. To this cause may be chiefly attributed the easy civility and independent manner to be observed here, which did not exist in other parts of the country, where religious animosities, Protestant tyranny, and Catholic submission, render the manners of some people one meets insolent, and of others servile.”



From thence he rode to the Giant's Causeway, the geology of which he examined with a critical eye, speculating on the hexagonal jointing of the columns. He made two ineffectual attempts to cross the rope bridge at Carrick-a-rede, but became so giddy that he desisted. Returning by Dunseverick to Moss-side, he tells us:—

“The family at Moss-side inn was somewhat amusing. They considered it an essential part of their duty to give me their company. My bedroom was the best apartment in the house; it was therefore cleared when I rose, and the whole family assembled in it to breakfast, to which I was invited; and when my bill was made out, I was consulted as to what I thought should be charged.”

From thence he went to Lord Macartney's house at Lissanoure and gives a sketch of its contents, noting that “the portrait of the Empress of Russia is by far the best painting I ever saw.” He does not seem to have known the great ambassador, his namesake, but speaks of the courtesy of the family, who “moved from one room to another to accommodate me in seeing the house.”

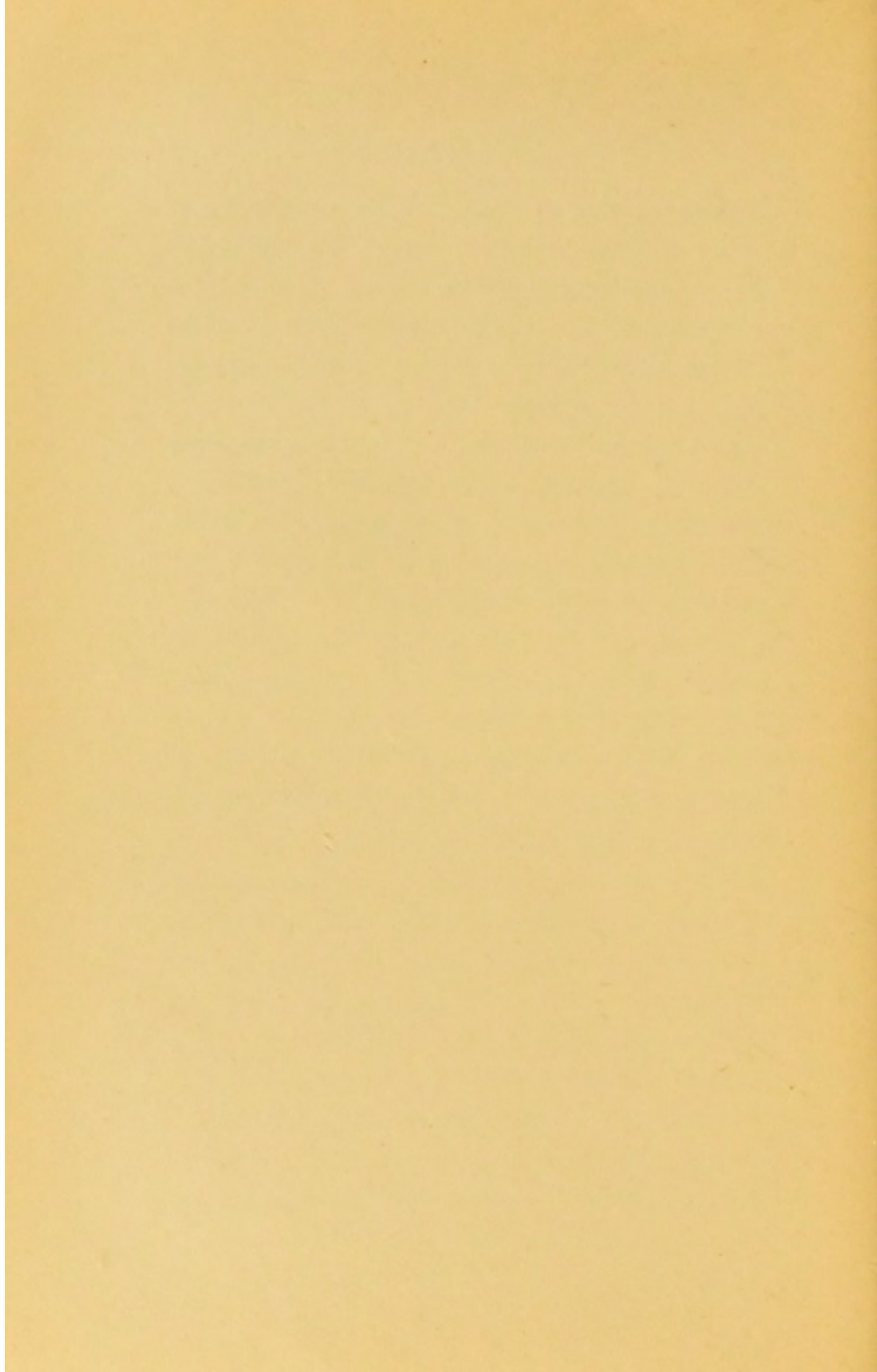
His next halting-place was at the Moravian

settlement at Gracehill, and he was very much struck with the manners and organisation of that body.

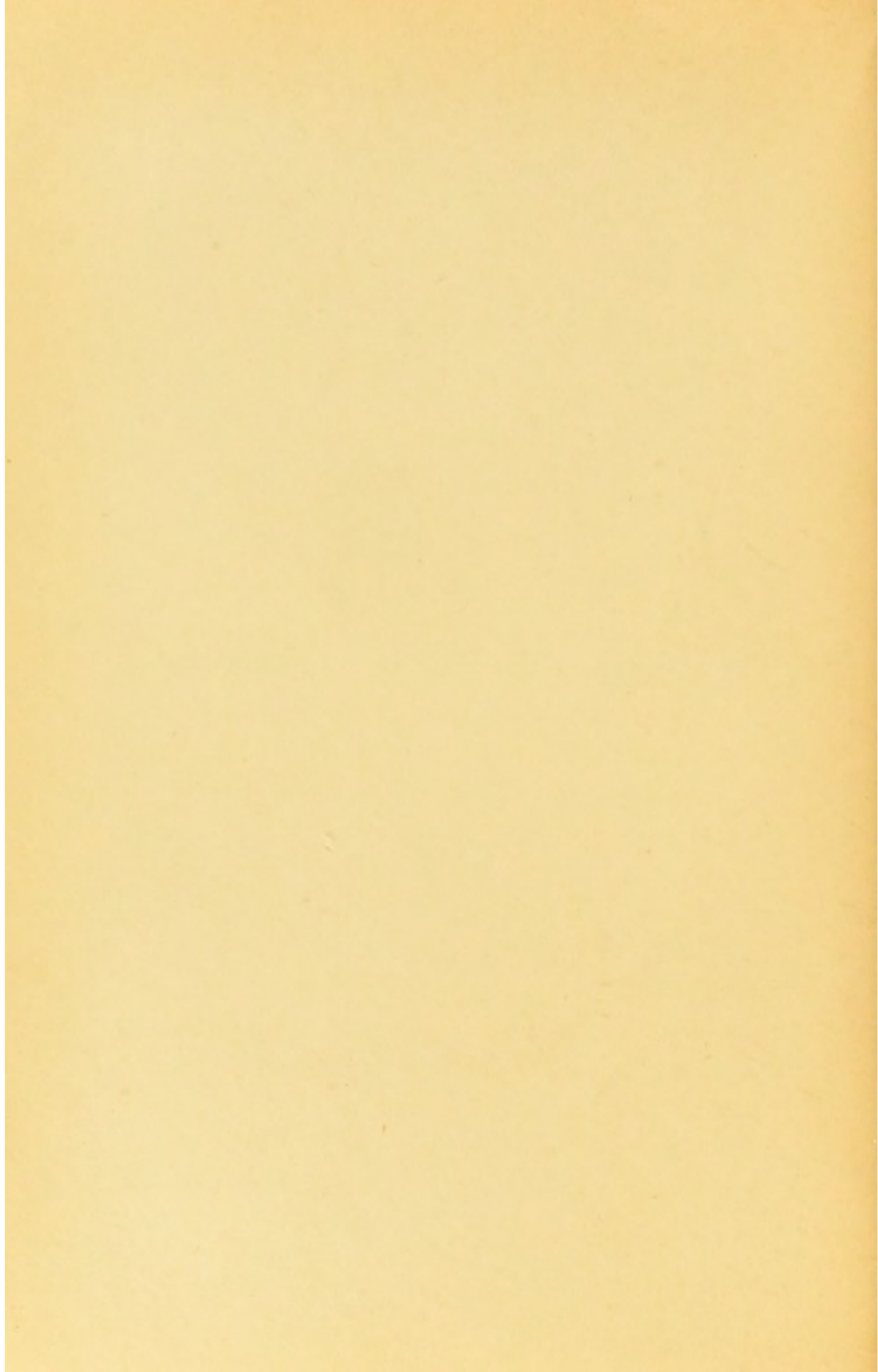
“One of the first things that struck my eye was a girl dancing under the shade of a tree in the midst of the rain. No sight could be so unexpected in a Moravian settlement, where this amusement is forbidden. The girl was at the school, and having no opportunity of acquiring this accomplishment there, she was using all occasions for self-instruction, to which the prohibition was an additional stimulus. Spent the evening and indeed part of the next day in learning the rules and customs of the Moravian society. Information is not at first given readily, supposing it asked from idle curiosity and for the purpose of ridicule, but when satisfied that this is not the case, no people take more pains to explain to strangers their peculiar institutions than the Moravians do. The people at the inn supplied me with their books—one is a history of the society from its establishment with all its persecutions. The other is a form of prayers and hymns which are a mixture of the Methodist and Presbyterian styles of composition. There is something very peculiar in the character

of this sect, although their rules and conduct have been much misrepresented. They formerly suffered a good deal of persecution, which on some occasions they resisted openly by force of arms, although more disposed to tolerate others, and one of their rules is to abstain from all political wars. They are, however, extremely alive to bad usage in their persons. I found all the inhabitants of the inn very civil, but provoked by the least censure or appearance of discontent on the part of their guests, even when they themselves were to blame. The ostler was quite abusive to my host of Moss-side. He arrived there the next morning and merely had complained of his horse having been neglected, which he certainly was. In short, all the Moravians displayed, in their look and manner, the appearance of an irascible character, but not a vindictive one. Their community of goods is only to a certain extent. There is a common stock in every society. It is like the property of a corporation; the Moravians might be called a confederation of many corporate bodies held together by religious principles. The common property usually consists of a farm of lands with the tenements of their place of residence, public

schools, an inn, and mere shops, their house of public worship, and their houses for the single brothers and single sisters. These form a fund which instead of requiring contributions from the members of the Society produces profits which are carried to the common stock of all the Moravian societies in different parts of the world, which stock is expended in sending out missionaries and assisting poorer or small societies at home. The affairs of each society, both temporal and spiritual, are under the direction of a clergyman nominated by the chiefs of society, or bishops. This clergyman is himself subject to the control and inspection of a committee of his own society. He is not, also, allowed to possess or use any of the common property, but oversees the management of it in other hands."



1813—1815. The Dublin Professorship



1813—1815

### THE DUBLIN PROFESSORSHIP

THE medical school of Trinity College had fallen, while its chair of anatomy was filled by Hartigan, into a state of low vitality. The dingy, dusty and decaying Anatomy House, with its lecture class of seventeen and its dissecting class of three, contrasted very unfavourably with the prosperous school which Macartney had left at St. Bartholomew's.

But there were possibilities of improvement in the place. The prospect of being appointed to the Professorship of Anatomy was attractive. For a man of his tastes it appeared to be a congenial and desirable sphere for future work. He was therefore not long in coming to the decision that he would remain in Ireland and seek this office which, it was evident, would soon become vacant, instead of returning to England,



as he had at first intended, to look for some equally congenial position.

During the damp autumn of 1812 both he and his wife were seriously indisposed at their home at Leixlip, twelve miles from Dublin. While thus temporarily isolated he planned his campaign of candidature for the University chair when it should become vacant. Out of consideration for the feelings of his old master, he forbore communicating his intention to any one, even although it was publicly known that no hopes were entertained of Hartigan's recovery, and that already other men were busy canvassing.

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On December 5th, 1812, Professor Hartigan died, and Macartney felt that all need of keeping his intended candidature concealed was at an end. Accordingly he wrote to his old teachers and other friends in London for testimonials, and openly declared himself as in the field for the chair.

Notice of the vacancy was officially communicated to the Board of Trinity College on December 19th; and May 3rd, 1813, was appointed as the date of the election. The lectures during the preceding session had been given by Dr. Samuel Wilmot, the Demonstrator, who was

invited by the Board to continue the course until the election, but on the understanding that his being *locum tenens* should not give him any preferential claim to the professorship.

A reasonable time having elapsed, Macartney wrote to Mrs. Hartigan, asking for information as to the emoluments of the professorship, and soliciting her influence on his behalf. To this she replied that her husband, before his death, had urged Dr. Wilmot to canvass for the appointment, and had spoken to the electors in his favour. Wilmot had been his demonstrator since 1802, and had now promised that, if he should be appointed, the whole of the salary for the public course of lectures should be handed over to Mrs. Hartigan during her life.

Mrs. Hartigan also said that for the last three or four years the emoluments had lessened very much, "as so many of the College lads from whom the salary is levied generally went into the Army or took to surgery before the second year expired, as it is from pupils of that long standing that the Professor is paid. The exertions of the College of Surgeons to draw all the pupils they could to their school, as also the number of junior lecturers, reduce our income very

much, and these three last years they did not produce altogether above one hundred pounds per annum. If I were to advise you as a friend, it would be never to wear out your lungs for such a paltry sum. I am convinced it shortened my dear H——'s life, and it was not my fault that he did not resign it years back."

Upon mature consideration he determined not to take the not altogether disinterested advice of the lady, and increased his efforts to ensure his success.

Four other candidates were in the field—Sir Thomas Moriarty, Peter Edward McLoughlin, Richard Ryan, and Samuel Wilmot—but none of these had shown any peculiar fitness for the office, nor had they collectively done one tithe of the amount of anatomical work which Macartney could claim to have accomplished.

His London friends responded warmly and sent letters to the Rev. Dr. Graves, the Registrar, speaking of him in the highest terms. "I believe," said Sir Astley Cooper, "that if he be elected to the situation of Professor of Anatomy, he will be found fully qualified to perform the duties of the office with credit to himself and advantage to the public." Matthew Baillie,

William Hunter's nephew and successor at Great Windmill Street, also spoke of him in very laudatory terms. Sir Benjamin Brodie wrote that he knew of "few whose acquirements in these subjects can be supposed to be equal to his." Sir Humphry Davy, Sir Everard Home, and Sir William Blizard also testified in his favour. Charles Bell bore witness that "Mr. Macartney has given such repeated proofs of his love of anatomical pursuits, by his exertions when there was no promise of reward before him, that he appears to present himself as a candidate on the present occasion with particular grace." Leigh Thomas, Parkinson the palæontologist, Babington, of Guy's, and others wrote in the most favourable manner of his London work.

The most active and extraordinary exertions were made to bias the electors in their decision "by those influenced by feelings of friendship to particular candidates, prejudice against talent, or hatred of all innovations likely to disturb the smooth stream of place-jobbing" (Jacob, in the *Weekly Register*, May 1st, 1824). Some endeavoured to raise against him the objection that he was an Englishman, others that he was not a medical graduate, others that he was not

on Wilmot 1776 on Phipps  
Macartney the provost & the 5 remaining Bursars  
Reg. vol VI p 96

a member of the Church of England, others that he was not a graduate in arts. To minimise these objections he applied for and obtained the degree of M.D. from the University of St. Andrews in May, 1813, while the election was pending.

The electors were the Provost, the Rev. Thomas Elrington, an ecclesiastic of moderate ability best known as the editor of a school Euclid; the Vice-Provost, the Rev. John Barrett, (the "Jacky Barrett" of Charles O'Malley), and the hero of many college stories of greater or lesser authenticity; Francis Hodgkinson, a lawyer; Whitley Stokes, an able member of a distinguished family; Robert Phipps, Registrar of the Board; George Miller, a former schoolmaster; Thomas Prior, and William Davenport. Of these the Provost was strongly in favour of Wilmot, Stokes and Davenport were equally strong in support of Macartney, while the College of Physicians had expressed their desire that McLoughlin should be chosen.

Macartney's testimonials were such as no Board could venture to ignore, and although, in deference to the College of Physicians, the election was postponed until June 21st, yet on

that date he was duly, though not unanimously, appointed to the chair.

The result of the election of Macartney was regarded with much satisfaction by his professional friends. Sir Joseph Banks, then President of the Royal Society, wrote on August 13th congratulating him, and other friends tendered their greetings on the occasion.

Shortly after the election he crossed to England, and spent three months in attendance on the Ophthalmic Hospital in London noting cases. He also visited and made memoranda respecting the private museums of some of the leading London surgeons—Langstaff, Bell, Farre, etc.—and he occupied his spare time in revising his articles for Rees's *Cyclopædia*. His thirst for information on all subjects is illustrated abundantly in the miscellaneous nature of the memoranda in his notebook. He is now attending and adversely criticising Spurzheim's lectures on phrenology; now spending long hours in a menagerie examining the animals; at another time inspecting and experimenting on the psychic condition of the children in a deaf and dumb asylum; and again recording the information given to him about cetaceans by the captain of a whaler.

In November, 1813, he entered upon the duties of his new office, and on the 1st of that month he delivered his introductory lecture, taking for his subject the importance of anatomy in medical study.

The work of the professorship was threefold: first, the delivery of a public course of twelve lectures open to all students; second, the giving of a systematic course of lectures during the winter session on five days in the week; and, third, the superintendence of the practical work in the dissecting-room. Fifty-three students entered their names this year for the systematic lectures, and twenty-one for the practical work. These were large numbers for the University, wherein hitherto the largest class on record had been ninety-three during the best year of George Cleghorn's *régime*.

As he now required to reside near the College he took a house, No. 3, Harcourt Street, but as this was small and inconvenient he moved to No. 10, Leeson Street, and finally to No. 31, Upper Merrion Street, where he resided until his death.

One of his first tasks was the restoration and arrangement of the University anatomical museum, the number of actual specimens in which was

considerably under a hundred ; others which had been prepared in the course of the century during which the professorship was in existence having been destroyed for want of care. As he brought with him the second series of preparations which he had made in London, he began at once to set these out as material aids to his teaching.

The professorship carried with it the office of Clinical Physician to Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, in consequence of which Macartney's name was inserted without his sanction—indeed, without his knowledge—in the list of practising physicians in the Dublin Directory. This was contrary to the trades-union usage of the College of Physicians, and was the beginning of a series of heartburnings and professional misunderstandings which served so greatly to embitter his later life. On discovering this inadvertence, Macartney wrote to the President of the College of Physicians, stating that the insertion of his name had been unauthorised by him ; and he wrote to the editor of the Directory and Almanac, directing him to place his name after those of the members of the College of Physicians. To the former letter he received a formal and rather supercilious reply, that the College had taken no cognisance of the



list. His letter was misconstrued as a declaration of his intention not to engage in private practice, so, finding this impression to be prevalent, he wrote to the Registrar of the College in 1814, stating that he had never entertained such an idea, which would not only be injurious to his interests, but incompatible with his duties as a clinical teacher in the School of Physic.

He was not long in discovering that he occupied a very embarrassing position in relation to his colleagues at the hospital. By the rule of the College of Physicians, no Fellow could call into consultation any but a brother Fellow of the College; hence none of his colleagues on the hospital staff could ask his aid, or call him into consultation even concerning a hospital case. Had they wished to be on perfectly friendly terms, this difficulty might have been got over; but they were not willing to abate one jot of the rule, and although he brought the matter very speedily under the notice of the College of Physicians, it was not until four years later that they removed the anomaly by electing him to an honorary Fellowship.

One of the most important of the duties

performed by the Professor of Anatomy was that of taking part in the examinations for the degrees in medicine. In the last century and the early years of the present all these examinations were conducted in Latin. Upon the first occasion in which he participated in these examinations, Macartney noticed that, owing to its being carried on in an unaccustomed tongue, it was necessarily stilted, constrained, and inefficient, and did not serve as a real test of the professional knowledge of the candidate. He called a meeting of his colleagues in the school, and proposed to them that they should hold a private examination before each public trial; that they should conduct this preliminary conference in English, and, according to its results, divide the men into two sets, those whom they should recommend to present themselves for the public Latin examination, and those whom they should privately dissuade from appearing thereat.

When the College of Physicians heard of this proposal they sent to Trinity College a formal protest against this "lowering of the standard of medical education which will be productive of the degradation of the profession." They also threatened to "call for a visitation, in case this

innovation be persisted in." The remonstrance was dated October 15th, 1814.

To this the Professors replied, Macartney acting as spokesman, that they did not intend to allow the Latin examination to degenerate into a mere formality, and they thought that they had the best interests of the profession at heart in their proposal. They were unable to see how the erection of an additional barrier to exclude badly prepared men could be productive of degradation to the profession.

The Latin ceremonial consisted of a fifteen minutes' oral examination on the part of each Professor, with no practical test in addition; but this the College of Physicians thought to be sufficient, provided it was held in Latin, and they wrote to the Board of Trinity College on October 22nd, ordering that the King's Professors should not be present at any examination for medical degrees in which any question may be put, or answer received, in the English language.

In order to understand the relation which then existed, and indeed still exists between the College of Physicians and the University, it is necessary to explain that the former body is

the trustee of Sir Patrick Dun's will, and as such has power to appoint three Professors, who are called King's Professors. The School of Physic Act, the last Act passed by the Irish Parliament in College Green, had united these and the University Professors into a "Complete School of Physic," giving them a conjoint control over the school; but leaving to the College of Physicians the jurisdiction over its Professors. The King's Professors lectured at Dun's Hospital, the University Professors in the Anatomy House. In later times, for convenience, the Board of Trinity College have permitted the King's Professors to lecture in the college, but have the power to eject them, and to appoint University lecturers in their subjects. The College of Physicians, moreover, has never had any direct voice in the discipline, nor interest in the emoluments of the school. It is therefore erroneous to speak of the medical school of Trinity College as being the conjoint property of the two bodies. In case of a difference of opinion, such as this question of the language of the examination, it was competent for the Board to direct the examination to be conducted as they pleased.

The Board, however, were not experts in matters

medical, and they applied to Macartney on one side, and to the College of Physicians on the other, for explanations. Dr. Hill replied on the behalf of the latter that "examinations in English introductory to a learned profession are so absolutely contrary to the conceptions we entertain of literary education as to render it impossible that the Fellows could tolerate them in any case in which they possessed any influence."

Macartney on his part answered that his proceeding was for the good of the school, the welfare of the profession and the interests of the students; that no statute or usage of the University was infringed thereby, nor was the formal Latin examination interfered with; that the preliminary examination was intended to be private; that English was used in the art schools as the language of all but the formal degree examinations; that he intended the preliminary examination to be for the most part practical, on bones and the dissected body, on plants, on chemicals, and if possible on hospital patients, and was meant as a test of practical knowledge, "thereby to defeat the disgraceful system of grinding which so largely prevailed in Dublin"; and lastly that the result of the private exami-

nation was to be communicated privately to the student in the form of advice to guide him, not as anything authoritative or compulsory in itself.

This triangular contest was finally settled by a compromise, at the instance of Provost Elrington, the Professors agreeing to hold their private preliminary examination also in Latin. This soon became an organised system and we find that in 1820 it had become the custom to withhold the *liceat ad examinandum* from those who failed in their preliminary test.

Meanwhile the anatomical class in the second year had largely increased, exceeding Cleghorn's highest record by five, and the little dissecting-room with its five tables was wholly inadequate in point of size. Macartney intimated this to the Board, and asked for increased accommodation. In his class-roll for 1814 occur the names of Jones Quain, afterwards distinguished as an anatomist; of Jonathan Osborne, afterwards Professor of *Materia Medica*; and of William Hargrave, well known in the earlier days of the Medical Council as the representative of the Irish College of Surgeons. Eleven Army surgeons also attended his lectures during this session.

As an outcome of the renewed life in the school, the students formed in 1814 a Medical Society, of which Macartney was president, treasurer, and librarian. This institution held its meetings in No. 22 College, and was for fourteen years an active organisation. It, however, began to languish during the troubles which beset the Professor in his later years, and it expired shortly after that period, as its management fell into other hands; and although a few feeble efforts had been made to revive it in later times, it was not until 1870 that it really rose into renewed life and activity. Under the new name, University Biological Association, it is, I believe, still an active organisation.

The summer of 1814 was spent chiefly in arranging and adding to his museum. His only holiday was a short excursion to Chester, the principal event of which was seeing three men hanged for burglary. "Two of them were brothers; and the firmness with which they stood on the platform clasping one another's hands, and the clearness with which they spoke, convinced me that it is a less dreadful thing to meet a certain death than a doubtful evil. Uncertainty allows the imagination to be exercised

Hope and fear are sentiments more nearly allied than would at first sight appear."

At the close of his second session of teaching, in May, 1815, the class presented him with an address, testifying to their sense of his exertions on their behalf. The seniors among them had been specially struck with the method which he adopted of teaching surgical anatomy and with his references to pathology, then a subject almost unknown. The address and his reply were published in the *Dublin Morning Post* for May 13th, 1815.

Finding that no notice had been taken by the Board of the memorial in reference to the inadequate accommodation for his class, he carefully examined the College buildings, seeking for some place which could be utilised temporarily for his purposes. The College printing office, an odd little building with a tetrastyle front, which had been erected by Bishop Stearne in 1734, was at this time not only unused, but locked up and falling into decay. On discovering this he wrote to the Board suggesting that it would be a double advantage to fit it up as an Anatomy House: it would save the neglected building from destruction, and would give him

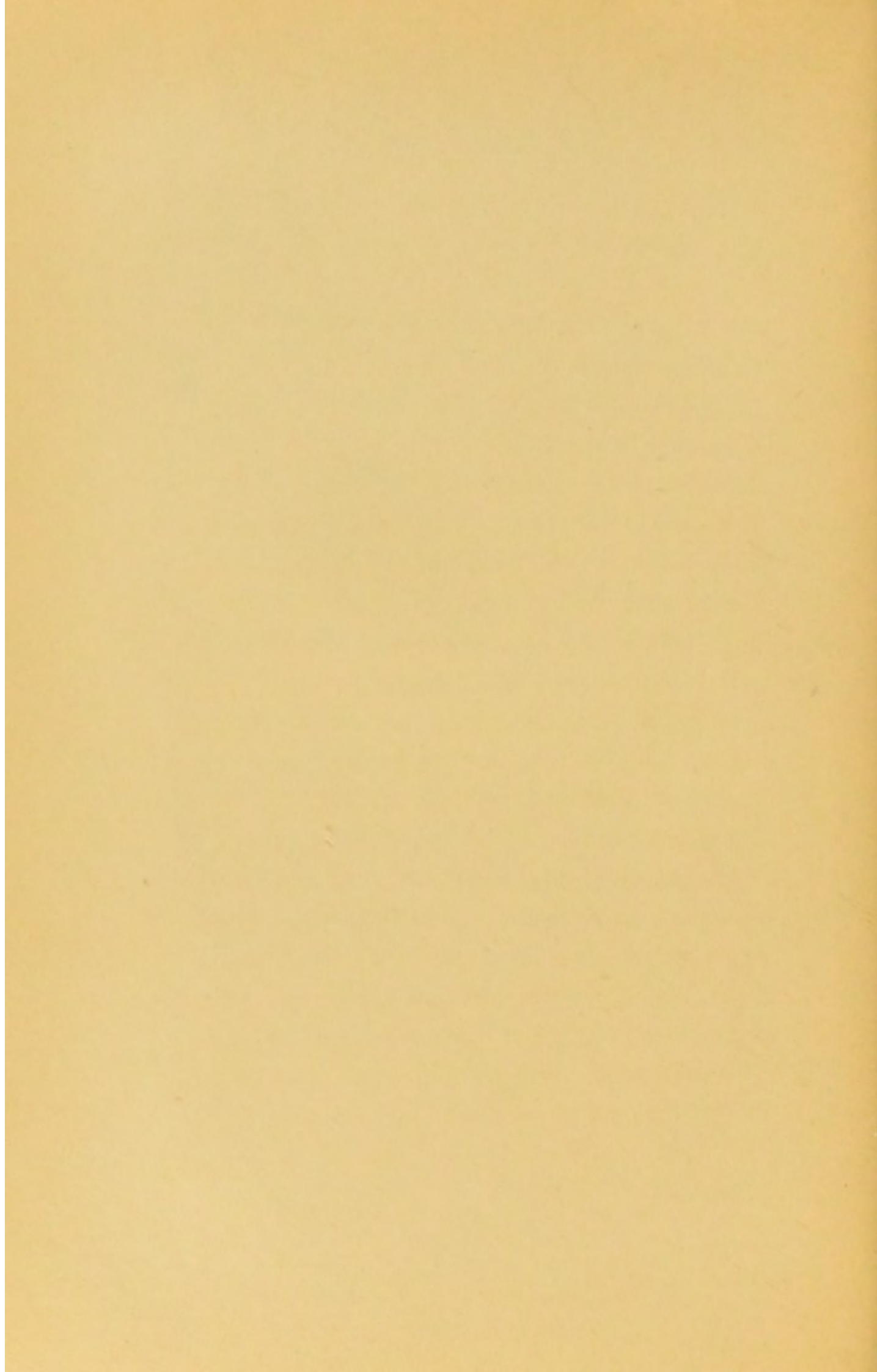


ampler space in the meantime. This, like his memorial, the Board promised to "take into consideration."

Meanwhile, the practical anatomy class, in his third session, overflowed from the dissecting-room into every available spot of the old Anatomy House, so that there was not a spare corner in which the Professor could prepare the specimens for his lectures. The museum also was so full that numbers of the specimens were inaccessible, and many had to be kept in his own house. Added to this were many inconveniences of construction. The place was unprovided with water; every drop required in the building had to be carried in clean and carried out dirty. "I shall not hesitate to say that there is not a public anatomical institution in Europe so unfit for its purpose as the one in Trinity College."

These memorials and remonstrances were passed by with a promise of consideration at some indefinite future time, and with this he was compelled for the present to be content.

1815—1818. Work in the old  
Anatomy House



1815—1818. WORK IN THE OLD  
ANATOMY HOUSE

BEING now permanently settled in Dublin, Professor Macartney began to take a practical interest in the scientific institutions of the city. He had become a member of the Royal Irish Academy in 1812, and was elected (1814) on the Committee of Science of that institution, and on the Committee of Antiquities some years later; he contributed, however, only two communications to the publications of the Academy, one on "Curvature of the Spine" (*Transactions*, vol. xiii.) and the other on "The Minute Structure of the Brain of the Chimpanzee and of two Human Idiots compared with that of the Perfect Brain in Man" (*ibid.*, vol. xix., 1842).

He had been elected a Fellow of the Linnæan Society during the preceding year; but no article of his appears in the publications of that Society.

In the autumn of the eventful year 1815, when released from the work of the session, he made his usual summer tour. He first visited London, and saw many old friends. He notes in his diary conversations with Brodie concerning varicose veins, with Thomson on the different forms of cancer, with Robert Brown, the botanist, on the embryos of scitamineous plants. Crossing to France he met a few former acquaintances, such as Edwards, the physiologist, and Orfila, the toxicologist, and made many new ones. He enters in his diary from day to day in his peculiar fragmentary style the new scraps of information which he has collected, and the novelties which he has observed in the museums, in the hospitals, or in the medical and veterinary schools. For instance : " Beclard has amputated at the shoulder without a flap successfully. Edwards views all gradations of colour as being regular, and extended to the solids and fluids in negro, Europeans, and albinos. His theory of hard and soft utterances of the consonants ingenious, and accounts for the formation of many words in *b*, *p* and *d*, *th* in *their*, etc. The accent in French over the second syllable from the beginning, in Latin and English on the third from the end

of the word. Edwards has employed a mixture of oil and ether to the skin to refrigerate. Edwards has two cases of *hydrocephalus internus*, used leeches freely, attributes much effect to complete vesication; visited one of them with him. The sister had an expression of anguish on her face. The proceedings of family on this visit confirmed me in the opinion of taking the friends into consultations. Breschet has communicated hydrophobia by inoculation from the human subject to the dog and from one dog to another," etc.

He attended a meeting of the Institute, and heard several interesting papers—Laplace on the doctrine of probabilities applied to natural philosophy, Cuvier on the vitelline sac, Decandolle on smut in wheat, and Gay-Lussac on prussic acid. He visited the Hôtel Dieu, and there made the acquaintance of Dupuytren, whom he describes as "an active sensible man, who did his work with great regularity." At Baron Larrey's Hospital he saw a man who had a fistulous opening into the pericardium, through which the naked heart could be touched. "This had resulted from a gunshot wound received during the campaign in Belgium. The man was

recovering and the passage had become much narrowed."

Several days were spent at the Jardin des Plantes, where he visited Cuvier's private rooms—"wretched places, his own workshop being like a hayloft, and very disorderly." He was treated with great kindness and attention by de Blainville, who showed him through the museum, where he saw many specimens which were new to him. In turn he was able to give de Blainville information as to some of his new methods, and to discuss with him several of his own observations which de Blainville did not seem to know—for example, the presence of temporary external gills in embryo sharks, which Macartney had noticed in 1803 while at Herne Bay.

After a prolonged sojourn he left Paris and proceeded by Douai and Valenciennes to Brussels. Three months had scarcely elapsed since the Battle of Waterloo, and the hospitals were still full of the wounded. These he visited diligently during his stay, and made many acquaintances among the surgeons of different nationalities there assembled. Among other records he has collated the information received from them as

to the requirements for medical graduation in different countries. Langenbeck, of Göttingen, was in charge of one of the Prussian military hospitals in which there were three hundred patients, and from him and the other surgeons, English and Belgian, he obtained statistics of the operations performed after the battle, and the relative successes of primary and secondary amputations.<sup>1</sup> He visited the medical schools in Brussels and the other Belgian universities, and did not return to Ireland until the week before the commencement of the new session.

The experience thus gained of the provisions for medical education elsewhere served to intensify his dissatisfaction with the miserable accommodation provided for him in Trinity College. Accordingly, at an early period in the ensuing session he renewed his importunities to the Board for more room. Finding that they hesitated to expend a large amount on the school, he suggested an application to Govern-

<sup>1</sup> According to a table supplied to him and signed by Deputy-Inspector-General McNeil, the English surgeons performed 146 amputations on the field at Waterloo, and of these 40 were followed by fatal results. Within the succeeding three months they performed secondary amputations on 225 patients, of whom 106 died.



ment for aid in building a proper medical school. "I do not desire," he writes, "that the College should spend a large sum of money on a decorated building. I only ask that kind of accommodation which I am ready to prove to the Board is necessary for carrying on the business of the school with credit to the University and to the teacher." He proposed to undertake the negotiations with the Government for aid in the matter; but the University, which has never been desirous of inviting Government inquiry or interference with its finances, declined his offer.

As a temporary expedient, a wooden shed was built adjoining the school, to which the "waxworks," for which Macartney had a great contempt, were removed. This temporarily relieved the tension of the museum, and enabled him to put up those additional preparations which he needed to complete his teaching apparatus. His lecture-room was so small and so badly constructed that he had not only to repeat each of his daily lectures twice over, but in each lecture he had to show and describe his specimens twice, as only half of the class could see them at one time.

With these cares, with his hospital duties, and

with a small amount of consultation practice, chiefly among his military friends, he was for the present fully occupied. His correspondence was extensive and varied, and many of the letters from Bell, Cooper, Orfila, Brodie, Edwards, and others are of considerable interest.

In 1816 the class was larger than in the preceding year, and among the names on the roll are those of Vaughan-Thomson, afterwards distinguished for his researches on the crustacea, and Robert Harrison, who in time became Macartney's successor. The latter, however, was not a diligent student,<sup>1</sup> and although he was offered two opportunities of completing his attendances on the course, he failed to do so, therefore Macartney refused him his certificate. The Professor's refusal to grant false certificates of attendance brought him into additional

<sup>1</sup> The Professor's roll is more interesting reading than such documents generally are, as he made comments on the characters of the students which are sometimes more graphic than complimentary. Of one he says: "Acquisitive of other things besides learning"; of another: "Got back his fee, as he told me his father had died, but it was a lie." Of another he notes: "— paid last year to attend this year, but sent another man to represent him, dressed in his great coat," etc. The Dublin students then presented much the same types as those with which I was familiar in later years.

troubles. Hitherto it had been the habit of all Dublin medical teachers to issue certificates of attendance to any one who paid his fees irrespective of regularity, but Macartney would not recognise this slipshod and dishonest system, and rigidly refused to certify for any but those who regularly attended his lectures. In those days text-books were few and bad, consequently the neglect of attendance meant the loss of the opportunity to acquire an amount of information which was irrecoverable. When urged to recognise an authorised minimum of attendances he refused, as he regarded that system as the permission to the student to be ignorant of one-fourth of his work.<sup>1</sup>

He applied to the Board more than once for legislation on the subject, to strengthen his hands in the matter, as those whose certificates he withheld pestered him with repeated applications and threats. In the course of his correspondence he refers to the "liberality" of other teachers, taking money when they can

<sup>1</sup> The practice of the other Professors, as set forth in a notice now before me signed by Dr. Lendrick in 1833, was to issue certificates to those who attended one-half of the lectures delivered.

get it; and he evidently includes most of his own colleagues in the category, as he specially excepts Dr. Allman by name as being "very particular in granting these certificates."

With the other teachers the receipt of the fee was the only real requisite for procuring a certificate; and many of those who have studied in Dublin any time before the seventies can without difficulty recall cases of the issue of certificates of attendance on lectures to persons engaged in occupations which prevented them from making even one appearance in the classroom, and who in some instances scarcely knew the appearance of the certifying lecturer.<sup>1</sup>

On several occasions the attempt was made to coerce Macartney into issuing false certificates

<sup>1</sup> This system prevailed until about twenty-five years ago. When I was demonstrator at the school of the College of Surgeons I knew of many cases of this kind. One man, for example, who afterwards was one of my co-demonstrators, was, during his whole student career, a clerk in the Royal Bank, occupied daily from nine to five, during which hours all the lectures which he was certified as diligently attending took place. Four other fellow-students of mine were similarly occupied, one of whom passed the examination of the College of Surgeons without ever having seen a surgical operation performed! The University of Dublin, however, has for the last thirty years insisted on a *bonâ fide* attendance of three-fourths of each course.

by appealing to the Board; but he was firm, and in all cases held his own position, although the Registrar wrote to express the opinion that such attendance as he required was more than the Board considered necessary. At his instance, rules of attendance were instituted which, after a period of disuse, have been re-enforced in the newer revival of the Trinity College school.

By this strictness he lost many fees. In one year, I find from his memoranda that he refused a hundred and four guineas from students who were late in beginning their work. One man offered him a bribe of ten guineas to allow him to begin his attendance a month too late, but this he indignantly refused.

While the Board thus hesitated about expending money on the much-needed Anatomy House, it is worthy of note that they were not unmindful of natural science, for on May 30th, 1816, they appointed one from their own number, Dr. Whitley Stokes, as Lecturer on Natural History, with a stipend of £800 a year! The only duty associated with this chair was the delivery of twenty-six lectures annually on any branch of the subject, to be chosen by the Professor, at any time convenient to him, and he was entitled to

receive fees for these lectures from any but students in arts. Money was also voted to him from time to time to inspect the museums of natural history in England, to pay an assistant to take charge of the college museum of natural history, and to purchase books. He also received £50 a year as superintendent of the museum. No man could have been worthier of this liberality than Dr. Whitley Stokes, and he held this office from 1816 to 1845, being also for the last fifteen years of his life Regius Professor of Physic. When after thirteen years of vacancy this Natural History Lectureship was reconstituted, the work was increased, and the salary attached was £100! The reconstituted lectureship was given in 1857 to Professor Harrison, Macartney's successor. He held it until his death in 1858, and was succeeded by Dr. (afterwards Professor) Perceval Wright, who resigned it upon his election to the chair of Botany in 1869. Two years after my appointment to the post the lectureship was raised to the rank of a professorship (1871).

It should be explained, however, that the conditions of Dr. Stokes's appointment were peculiar, as the office was intended, not so much

for the fostering of natural science, but to be a compensation for the loss of his senior Fellowship, which he had resigned for conscience' sake, as he had adopted the religious views of the Walkerites.

As zoology did not come within the range of Stokes's natural history, Macartney essayed a course of lectures on comparative anatomy, but he obtained no encouragement, and these lectures were, in consequence, discontinued. During this year also he separated the surgical from the anatomical lectures of his course, and delivered them as concurrent but independent courses. Stokes's first course of natural history lectures in 1817 was on the subject of "The Atmosphere."

Macartney was desirous of increasing his own knowledge of practical surgery, and, having no surgical appointment, he applied to Mr. Peile for the surgeoncy to the new penitentiary which had been opened in Smithfield, but was unsuccessful, as Mr. Harty was appointed thereto.

To the inconvenience arising from want of space in the old anatomy school was added, in 1818, a certain amount of positive danger due to dilapidation from the weather. Rain had

soaked through the broken roof and had rotted the floors of the old house, so that there was reason to fear an accident. He besought the members of the Board to come and see the condition of the place, but this they did not see fit to do.

The refusal of his colleagues at Sir P. Dun's Hospital to call him into consultation over their cases as he was not a Fellow of the Dublin College of Physicians was very irritating, and as he saw no likelihood of this trades-unionism breaking down he determined to bring his claims again under the notice of the College of Physicians, with the hope that he might be elected an honorary Fellow. With this object he wrote to Dr. Gilholy, the President, and in his letter he endeavoured to state his case as fairly as possible :—

“If my being a surgeon should be thought by any one to be an objection to my admission into the College of Physicians, I should beg to remind them that the original Professorship of Surgery in Ireland was an institution belonging to the College of Physicians, and I might add that Dr. Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood while preparing for his lectures on surgery in the College of Physicians of London.”



This application was successful, and towards the close of the year he was elected an honorary Fellow of the College. For this generous conduct of the College of Physicians he was very grateful, more especially as the sister body, the College of Surgeons, at whose school he had studied and whose constitution might naturally be thought to be in closer sympathy with his special work, treated him with a marked illiberality. To gratify certain petty jealousies they had refused to grant him an honorary Fellowship, thinking thereby to exclude his apprentices from being privileged to seek the license of the College. Upon this point Macartney took legal advice, and found that, as he was a Fellow of the London College of Surgeons, his pupils had the right under the charter to present themselves for examination. As, however, he regarded the apprenticeship system as a relic of barbarism, he took as few pupils of this sort as possible, and only claimed the rights which his London Fellowship gave him.

The summer of 1818 was spent in England. He visited the medical institutions of Birmingham, with which he was much pleased, was impressed with the deadness of things medical at Oxford, but notes some rare anatomical books in the

Radcliffe Library. In London he assisted Brodie in making experiments on the vagus nerve in kittens and especially noticed the effect of its division on animal heat. Such division did not affect the process of digestion. These experiments he repeated and extended in Dublin during the following year. He watched with interest also certain experiments on skin transplantation which Carpue performed, and suggests in a note in his diary the practical application of this method which Reverdin has since made. Amongst other surgical novelties in the metropolis he saw Cline using buck's tendons as ligatures, and noted the success of Brodie's method of treating varix. He also visited Mrs. Johnston, of Peter Street, Westminster, upon whom Copeland Hutchinson had performed a rhinoplastic operation, "having made the best new nose yet made."

Having heard that Canova's Hebe was to be seen at Chantrey's studio, he went to see this great work, but was a little disappointed with it, and contrasts it unfavourably with Chantrey's "Sleeping Girl," which was also on view. Macartney had an accurate and critical taste in art, his comments being always just, and often

epigrammatically expressed. When comparing these works with the Elgin marbles he waxes eloquent on the latter—"the best modern works are but the *beau real*, while these embody the *beau ideal*."

Dining with his London friends, he picked up many scraps of gossip. He heard that Sir Astley Cooper made, last year, £21,400, a greater sum than ever was made in one year by any professional man. It was also said that Sir Everard Home was beginning to be found out, and was losing his reputation. This did not surprise him, as he had always had a suspicion that Home was an impostor in matters scientific.

"Cancer ward in Middlesex Hospital, saw different means tried. A quack permitted to apply the warm inside of a newly killed puppy dog to one case." "Dined with Abernethy; he still believes that moderate diet and mild aperients will cure nearly all diseases."

"*Thursday*.—Dined with Brodie. He does not know what the Queen's disease is. Appears to be spasms of the heart, with possibly some water effused. No operation except seton. Met the assistant of Haviland, of Cambridge, there."

“Cooper tells me that catgut ligatures often remain and do not come out with suppuration.”

“Dined with Sir Joseph Banks, saw many new Continental works; a very handsome one of Treviranus on spiders and scorpions. Hear that Meckel's collection at Halle is to be sold.”

“*September 14th.* Medico-Chir. Library; saw Rosenmüller's *Icones* and many other works. Saw a picture of Lambert, the porcupine man; the horny processes are enlarged papillæ, but there are none on his hands and face.” “Visited Brooke's museum. Saw extraordinary skull of Gentoo with consolidated parietal suture, very narrow forehead.”

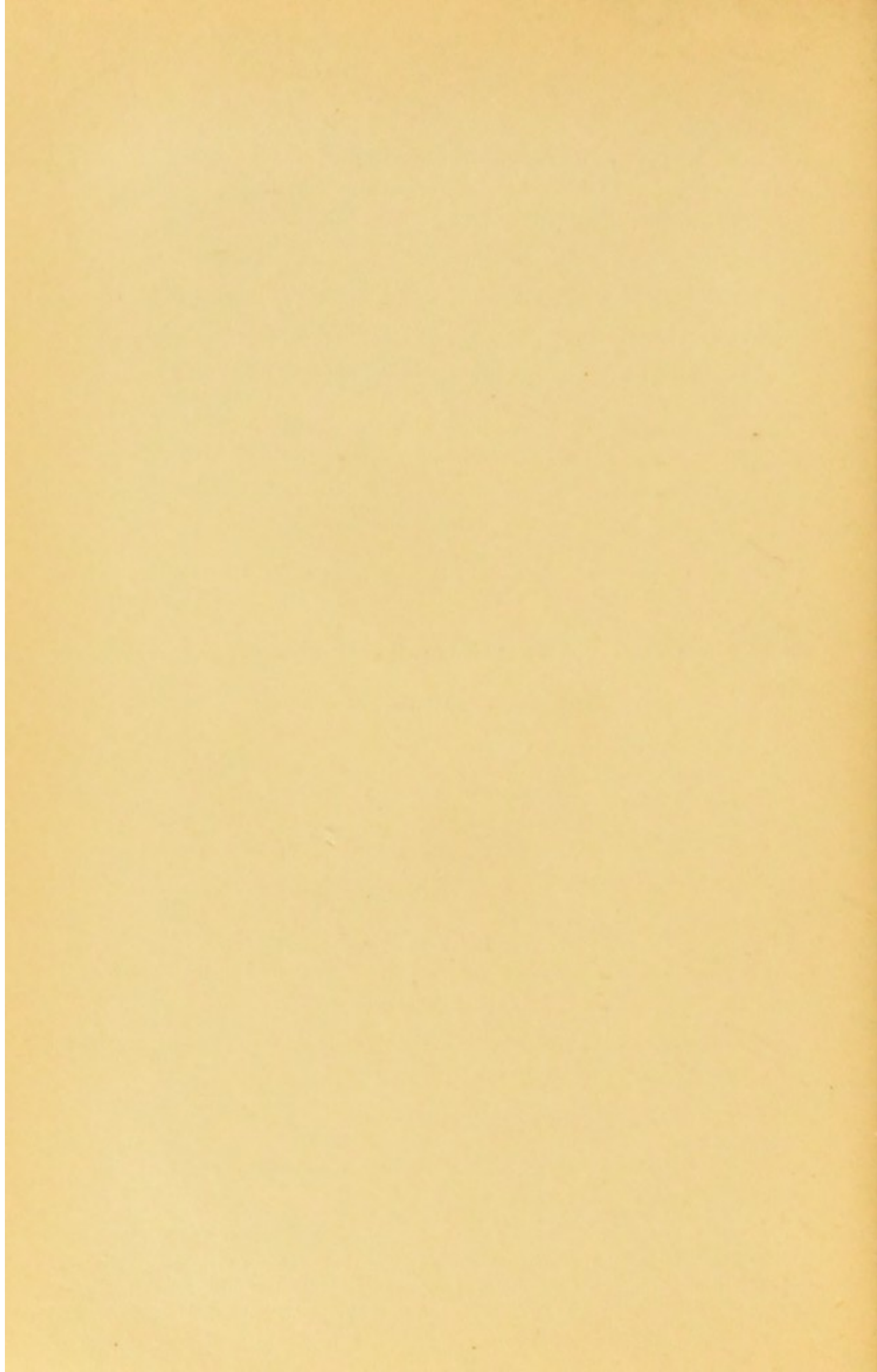
This is the famous scaphocephalic skull, now in the College of Surgeons' collection. Many of the specimens of this museum were afterwards purchased by Professor Clark, and are now in the Cambridge Museum.

He spent a day with J. F. Meckel, of Halle, who was then in London, and obtained from him much information about German universities, which were then for the most part poor and ill provided with teaching appliances.

After his sojourn in London he returned through Wales at a period when a wave of

religious excitement was passing over the Principality. He made some curious notes on the sect of the Jumpers, who were then numerous at Bangor, and of one party he notes that their cries could be heard at a distance of two miles.

1818—1823. The Designing of the New  
Anatomy House



1818—1823. THE DESIGNING OF THE  
NEW ANATOMY HOUSE

THE instruction hitherto given in the Dublin University medical school consisted of the formal prelections of the several Professors. In the winter session of 1818 Macartney inaugurated a new departure by the introduction of an extra course by a specialist. His demonstrator, Arthur Jacob, had, under his supervision, devoted himself to the study of ophthalmic anatomy and surgery; and as the Professor fully realised the importance of this branch of knowledge, he was desirous of giving to his pupils the opportunity of profiting thereby. Accordingly he obtained from the Board permission for Dr. Jacob to deliver to the students of the anatomy class a course of lectures on the construction and diseases of the eye.

From his own early experience Macartney was deeply interested in the study of diseases of the



eye, and in 1814 he had founded a dispensary for cutaneous and ophthalmic disease, the first of the kind ever started in Dublin. In this he took charge of the department for skin diseases, and committed the eye diseases, first to Cross, and afterwards to Jacob. While dissecting the eyes of mammals for his *Cyclopædia* articles, Macartney discovered that the retina was composed of several lamellæ, and in the notes of his anatomical lectures delivered in 1815 he expressly teaches that there are three layers in it. Jacob verified this while working under Macartney, and showed that one of these was a layer separable from the rest of the retina, lying in contact with the choroid. He prepared an elaborate paper describing this lamella (sometimes still called the *Membrana Jacobi*), and his method of exhibiting it. This was communicated to the Royal Society by Macartney and published in the *Philosophical Transactions* for 1819.

As the numbers of students increased year by year, so the discomfort of the old Anatomy House annually grew greater ; and the Professor's appeals to the Board for increased accommodation became more urgent. At length, after five years of frequently repeated petitioning, and when it

had been repeatedly brought under their notice that the floor of the lecture-room was in such a dangerous state that a catastrophe was imminent, they resolved to take the matter into consideration. While they were hesitating, the yielding joists rendered it positively unsafe for the large class to assemble in the lecture-room, and so permission was granted to use the room in No. 22 College as a lecture-room, "on condition that no dead body be brought into it." Here the lectures were delivered in 1820-1, and an architect was instructed to prepare a plan for a new medical school building.

The first difficulty which arose in carrying out this scheme was the choice of a site. Several parts of the College grounds were available. The Provost proposed to make the new building an extension of the old one alongside of the existing Anatomy House, but this would have been insufficient, as the old building was past patching, and rapidly crumbling to decay. Macartney recommended the College authorities to place the building in the College Park between Leinster Street and the place where the new race pavilion has been recently built, with one entrance to the College and one towards the street. This

was unanimously rejected by the Board, the majority of whom desired to move the building as far from the rest of the College as possible. The place finally approved by them was the bowling green, a marshy piece of land at the extreme east end of the College grounds, surrounded by a haha through which a sluggish stream flowed—indeed, field and ditch were at so low a level that at low tide the water in the hollows rose and fell with the tide in the river, as the loose gravel soil of the intervening district allowed of a free percolation.

On two sides of this patch of ground were lanes inhabited by a very low and disreputable population, and much of the refuse matter from these houses found its way directly into the ditch, so that altogether it was an unsavoury and disagreeable neighbourhood. Yet this was ultimately selected by the Board as the site for the building. In such a place the medical school could be practically cut off from the rest of the College, a consummation devoutly wished by some members of the Board. Macartney protested, but in vain. He urged the damp, the unwholesomeness of the place, the liability of an anatomical school to be the object of a popular

disturbance in such an exposed position, and the demoralising influence of the environments; but these protests were of no avail, and after two years' discussion the site was finally chosen in 1822.

This preliminary having been arranged, the Board requested the Professors of Anatomy and Chemistry to furnish a statement as to the rooms required, with particulars as to dimensions and necessary arrangements. Macartney was familiar with the medical lecture-rooms in England and Scotland, as well as with some of those in France and Belgium, and he had prepared sketches of an ideal school such as he desired, with a dissecting-room 104 feet by 20 feet and a lecture-room 30 feet by 30 feet. He proposed that damp should be obviated by raising the building on arches with a clear space beneath. These particulars he sent to Mr. Morrison, the architect, for his guidance in drawing the plans.

In the course of time these plans were submitted to the Board, by whom they were sent to Dr. Macartney. They proved faulty in many ways: the lighting was insufficient, the dissecting-room too short, the seats in the lecture-room improperly placed, with too small a pitch, the museum was

too low to have a gallery, too high to be useful without one, and with too little available wall space, etc. In short, the place had every fault a building of the kind could have, without any countervailing advantage even of external beauty.

The Professor's criticisms were transmitted to the architect, with instructions to modify his plans, and before this was done Macartney wrote urgently and often, pointing out those principles of construction which he thought necessary, as he was desirous that his new Anatomy House should be the most perfect and best planned in Europe.

But he was doomed to bitter disappointment. The recast plans were approved by the Board without being submitted to him, and in them most of the suggestions of the Professor had been ignored. "He is sure to give us worry and to bid us change them again, if they do not please him," said one member of the governing body. So these gentlemen, the majority of whom had never seen the interior of any Anatomy House, even of their own decaying building, and who knew nothing of the requirements of such a place, took upon themselves to adopt plans without submitting them to the only man capable

of forming a judgment on them—the man who was afterwards to use the building. This, however, is not the only instance of this course being pursued in the history of Trinity College.

The seven years for which, under the School of Physic Act, Macartney had been elected had now expired, and he was unanimously re-elected in 1820. During his first term of office he had raised the numbers of students in the school from twenty-five to a hundred and of dissecting pupils from three to sixty-four. He had introduced strict rules requiring compulsory attendance, had raised the standard of the examination, and had introduced for the first time in Britain special courses of lectures on pathology. All this he had done single-handed, hampered by the cold and unsympathetic attitude of the Board, the lukewarmness of his colleagues, the unconcealed jealousy of his professional brethren in Dublin, and the discomforts of an unsuitable and decaying building.

The peculiarity of his method was its practical nature. He was not content with recounting facts; he showed whatever could be shown, and, as new methods or new experiments occurred to his mind or were described to him, he made

memoranda of them on the margin of his lecture notebook to be tried in the next year's course. So each succeeding year his illustrations were fuller, his specimens more numerous. He used vivisection abundantly in his class work, although in this respect he was miserably hampered by insufficient room.

Being desirous of illustrating his lectures on pathology as completely as possible, he sent, in 1814, a circular letter to the chief practitioners throughout the kingdom asking their aid in the formation of a complete collection of specimens of morbid anatomy. To this the responses were few, but the collection grew rapidly, owing to his own indefatigable zeal.

He delivered annually a treble course of lectures : firstly, a public course of twelve lectures, free to all sophister students and graduates in arts ; secondly, a course for medical students who paid a fee, and this course he was compelled to repeat twice daily ; thirdly, a separate course on pathology. Each lecture was carefully planned and written, though not read. He had taken Matthew Baillie as his model teacher, and planned his school on the Windmill Street pattern ; but year by year his strong individuality expressed

itself in the growing perfection of his methods, so that by this time he had improved much on his model, both in the organisation and completeness of his work.

Anatomy he taught topographically rather than systematically, and in this he was likewise a pioneer, as we have it on the testimony of Baillie and Bell that he was the first British teacher who arranged his lectures after this fashion.

With the view to the promotion of a desire for self-improvement among his students, he established a system of class examinations, and projected a scheme of rewards for essays embodying original work done by students. The examinations were practical, not such as could be prepared for by mere cramming, wherein the knowledge of names is substituted for that of things. The system of prize essays failed, however, as it has failed in later times in other hands, for reasons intelligible to any one acquainted with the Dublin students of former days, and the money which was to have been given in prizes was handed over by him to the Medical Society to be expended on books for its library.

In 1820 he crossed to Holyhead in the steamship *Ivanhoe*, the first steamship which went



from Dublin to Holyhead, on her first journey, and noted the peculiarities of the motion, which did not make him sick. The journey lasted ten hours, an improvement on his last crossing by sailing-vessel, which occupied thirty-six hours. When in London he called on Sir Joseph Banks, whom he describes as "fast approaching his end, of which he seems very apprehensive." He dined with Sir M. Tierney, who told him that the King's seizures have always been violent, and required the lancet. He thought the King a strong man, and said that he had bled him contrary to the direction left with the apothecary by Sir Henry Halford. The latter he describes as "a very plain unaffected man."

"Dined with Brodie; in full business; his introductory lecture delivered with a singing voice; he appears to be greatly worn with his business; went to lecture almost without finishing his dinner."

"*Tuesday*.—Dined with the *Pow Wow* Club, founded by Hunter and Fordyce; among those present were: Astley Cooper, Gilbert Blane, James Moore, Dr. Yellowly, Dr. Franklin, Roget, Thomas Wilson, Matthew Tierney, Sir J. Mc-Grigor; Baillie in the chair. My health the only

toast given. Hear Baillie makes about £20,000 in the year."

"*Thursday*—Royal Society ; a very dull meeting ; fell asleep."

From London he took coach to Edinburgh, taking four days on the way, and returned *viâ* Glasgow, having made minute notes on the most remarkable specimens in the different collections in these cities.

At the close of the session in 1822 his pupils entertained him at dinner at the Royal Hotel, College Green. In responding to the toast of his health, Dr. Macartney said that he always felt when among students as a fellow-student, every day showing him how much is to be learned in the science of medicine, and how imperfectly any teacher can discharge the duties committed to him. Dr. Jacob, in speaking later, said : "Allusion has been made to the rising celebrity of the school of medicine and surgery in Dublin, and I shall not hesitate to assert that the cause of that celebrity may be traced to the indefatigable exertions of your guest and preceptor, Dr. Macartney. In stating this, far be it from me to undervalue the labours of our other learned Professors, to whom you are all so much indebted ;

but, gentlemen, the character of every school of medicine in Europe has risen and fallen, and ever will rise and fall, with that of its anatomical instruction, and if Dublin should become the seat of a great school of medicine, the foundation of that school must be dated from 1813, when the heads of the University placed the present Professor in the anatomical chair."

The summer of 1822 was spent by him in the South of England. On his way thither he travelled by coach to Dunmore, and he notes that he saw at Athy a little man, straight and perfect, thirty inches high. He was twenty-five years old, and had been offered £300 and a share in the profits to allow himself to be shown, but had refused. He essayed to cross from Dunmore to Milford, but was driven back by stress of weather. Being a bad sailor he made experiments with different substances upon himself each time that he crossed the Channel in the vain endeavour to cure himself of seasickness. This time he partially succeeded with small and repeated doses of extract of celery, but next day he suffered as much as if he had been sick.

At Milford, George IV. had landed a short time before on his return from Ireland, and the

stone upon which the King had stepped from the boat was adorned in commemoration with two brass footmarks, which Macartney noted were both prints of a right foot. King-worship was carried here to such an extreme that Lord Dynevor had gilt and preserved the bones of the partridge on which George IV. had dined. From thence he went to Bath, London, and Shrewsbury, and returned *viâ* Holyhead to Dublin. In the journals of these excursions the peculiar theological bias so characteristic of Ulster men is usually distinctly marked. He notes each sermon on Sunday, and seeks in each place for the most characteristic preachers. At Bath it is Jay whom he attends, and he describes his discourse on "the Utility of Misfortune" as most ingenious and interesting, while the Moravian preacher in the evening "has a great appearance of hypocrisy; a very long sermon without a word of moral precept." In London he visited Cardinal, the hydrocephalic man, the cast of whose head is in every museum. He was then twenty-seven years of age, and Macartney noted his liveliness and intelligence.

"Saw the dog and monkey on which Bell had divided the portio dura. The monkey cannot

wink on the side on which the nerve was divided, and when excited cannot move that cheek. The dog when tranquil has his nose rather turned to the side on which the nerve has been divided, but when excited it turns to the opposite side. They are strong and healthy, and quite recovered the operation." "Dr. Yellowly showed us that he had the power of keeping his pupil open voluntarily under strong light. It is a great effort, and his sight feels impaired for some time after." "Brodie says he found the heat in the axilla of a person with fractured cervical spine to be 111 degrees immediately after death." "Met Cross" (his former Demonstrator, afterwards settled in Norwich), "who is preparing materials for a book on feigned diseases."

Early in 1823 a tender for £4,000 for the new Anatomy House was accepted, and the first stone of the new building was laid on the 4th of the following July. The plans were, as we have seen, by no means to Macartney's mind, and when he became cognisant of their details he repeatedly besought the Board before it became too late to take precautions against damp and to give him more light. "Surely," he says, "my opinion, after thirty-five years' experience of different anatomical

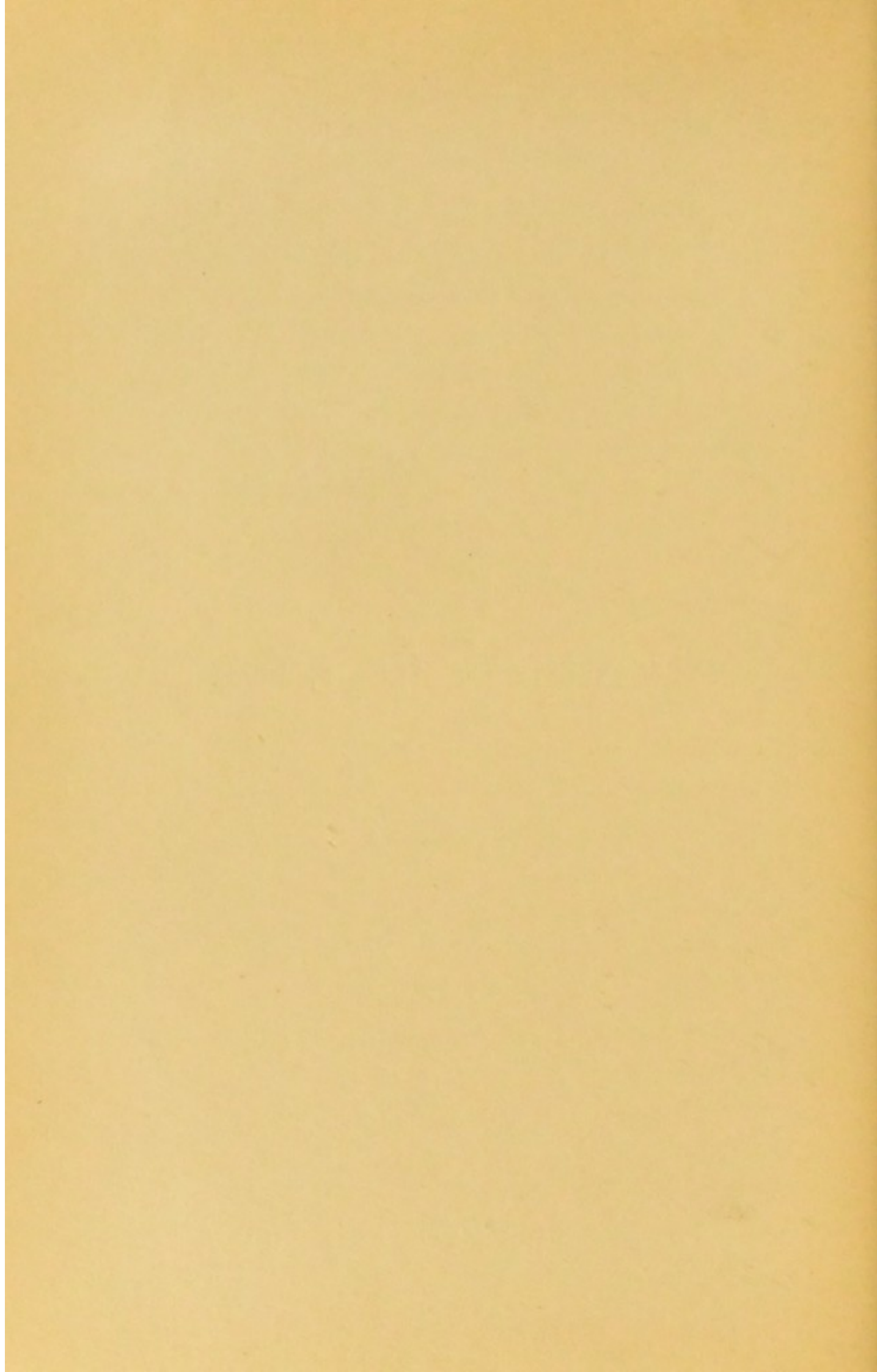
lecture-rooms, ought to have more weight than the opinion of an architect who never saw an anatomical museum or lecture-room." The only reply he obtained was a reference from the Board to the architect, and from the architect back to the Board. Driven thus like a shuttlecock from one to the other, it is little wonder that he became troublesome and angry, seeing the blighting of the hopes he had entertained of having the best class-rooms in Europe—hopes he was so thoroughly competent to realise, had the planning been left to himself. He saw now the prospective utility of the new building seriously imperilled before his eyes.

On April 30th, 1823, his class again held an anniversary dinner. "I cannot refrain," he says in returning thanks, "from expressing the gratification I feel in witnessing an annually increasing zeal for the acquirements of professional knowledge in the anatomical students. Most of you now devote more time to your education, without any compulsory regulation on the subject, than is required in any school in the United Kingdom. I have additional pleasure in knowing that whilst almost every other community in this country has been distracted by religious animosity

and political party, amongst you nothing but good feeling and mutual kindness have prevailed, although I believe that some of you differ from others in matters of opinion as far as the east is from the west. From all sects you derive your emolument, and to persons of all parties you are bound by the nature of your vocation to render the offices of charity."

1823—1825. The New Buildings





### 1823—1825. THE NEW BUILDINGS

I N the autumn of 1823, Macartney, ever interested in philanthropic experiments, paid a visit of inquiry to New Lanark, the town which had been founded in 1806 as a model community by a benevolent but visionary Glasgow manufacturer, David Dale. After Dale's death this organisation was remodelled by his son-in-law, Robert Owen, as a co-operative colony in accordance with the peculiar Socialistic system with which his name has since become associated. Macartney desired to see for himself the practical outcome of these theories, which so strongly appealed to his sympathies.

On his way thither he found Belfast in a ferment of excitement on account of the discovery and arrest of a party of "resurrectionists" from Scotland, who had been long suspected of carrying on an organised export of bodies from Irish graveyards to Edinburgh. They had been

arrested at Carrickfergus, but as they had been careful not to take a shred of clothing with the bodies, they were acquitted, the law not recognising any property in a dead body. All sorts of rumours were, however, afloat of kidnapping and the murder of beggars for anatomical purposes.

Crossing to Greenock, which appeared to him a clean town (!), he drove to Glasgow, whose people he characterises as "the least handsome people I have ever seen." From Glasgow he went by coach to Lanark, picking up by the way all the information he could from his fellow-passengers. "Mr. Todd, a very intelligent man, defended Mr. Owen, but believed him to have been deceived by his own people. He says they are discontented, although they could not be so well anywhere else. The man who was formerly Mr. Dale's head-master and who was latterly in Mr. Owen's employ told him that Mr. Owen was not to be trusted in any transaction, that he told lies and always broke his agreements." At Lanark he found great difficulty in getting a bed, as the Yeomanry were on duty. "They are dining at the County Hall, and many are already drunk."

He reached New Lanark on Saturday and commenced his investigations. The first two workpeople to whom he spoke grumbled at the new system, as it prevented them from seeing and entertaining their friends. Among the visitors there was a Mr. Hunter, "who has lately published the account of his captivity among the North American Indians. He complained of the restraint he felt from wearing clothes, which he said made him feel cold." "Mrs. Owen has a peculiar sect of independents in the village who have no clergyman, any one preaching who likes. She does not go to the kirk." "One way or another New Lanark is the most religious place I have seen."

"*Monday morning.*—Admirable quadrilles;<sup>1</sup> Margaret Bridge came down to dance, although she does not enjoy it now, as she thinks she is remarked from being taller than the rest. Mrs. Owen says she is the most industrious servant in the house, although she was the leader in the dance formerly; both she and Margaret Davidson

<sup>1</sup> Dancing was an important part of the education of the children at New Lanark, see the "Life, Times, and Labours of Robert Owen," by Lloyd Jones, 3rd Ed. p. 97. In this book will be found a good account of the New Lanark colony.

might dance on the stage. The children are more serious while dancing than in learning anything else, and more quiet while the boys and girls are together. They are noticed to be more unsteady on Monday than on any other day. Examinations were held to-day on history, geography, and natural history which show from the rapidity of their answers how momentary the attention is required in recollecting any knowledge taught by visible signs, and how much the dulness of common scholars is mistaken for fixed and continuous attention. The latter is, I believe, impossible in very young people, with whom it should not be attempted. A great secret in education is to adapt the kind of learning to the age and capacity of the child. The dancing-master uses more authority than any of the rest, and appears to have less influence. This may be from the necessity there is for all to attend at the same moment and to act in concert."

"Went to a short lecture to the children by Robert Owen. They gave great attention."  
"The children of both sexes are more orderly when mixed, especially the older ones. Their plays are not like those of other children of the same age, having little plan. Exercise alone

is their object." The recreations also of the young men were gymnastic exercises, and of the girls dancing. "Anna and Jane Owen teach classes of girls from 10 to 12 and from 2 to 4; their pupils are better readers than any of the others."

In his notes, Macartney compares this school with that of Fullenberg, at Hofferel, in Switzerland, "which has been carried on for upwards of twenty years. The boys are from all nations and have the sole regulation of everything in this school, the master merely retaining a veto, which he has not been obliged to use. They have committees for the different branches of their business, as agriculture, gymnastics, study, etc. They are organised in what they call 'circles,' the officers of which are elected and always chosen for their places without partiality. The rewards and punishments are also left to the boys, and lately, on Robert Owen's proposal, after much discussion, they have also abolished these. There is a similiar school at Hazelwood, near Birmingham, kept by Rowland Hill. His book called *Plans for the Government and Liberal Instruction of Boys in Large Numbers, Drawn from Experience* (Whittaker, 1822) gives an account of it."

"Distinction of rank is in a great degree

abolished at New Lanark. These young people address Robert Owen by his Christian name. They are not naturally a refined race, retaining much of the Scottish clumsiness and assurance, yet in their dancing, walking, and bowing, they appear like the best-bred children. Some of the younger are handsome and interesting, but on the whole they would not prepossess a stranger. They improve on further observation."

"The store at New Lanark contains a variety of articles, but not all that the people want, laid in at the cheapest rate and of the best quality. The profits derived from this store are laid out on the education and the medical care of the people."

On the whole he was disappointed, and left the place convinced that the system was unsuccessful and incompetent to work the moral reformation which Owen had expected.

Owen's connection with the place ceased four years afterwards, and the arrangements lapsed into other and more old-fashioned methods. Macartney, however, continued his interest in Owen's experiments, and at a later period pursued his inquiries as to the success of Owen's American village commune at New Harmony.

From Lanark he went to Dumfries, and comments by the way on the macadamized roads. The roads in this districts were amongst the first to be constructed upon that system, Macadam having been one of the trustees of these roads before his removal to Bristol in 1815. He also makes sarcastic allusion to the predilection of the Scotch for peppermint and whiskey. A fellow-traveller whom he picked up by the way "is a great friend to Owenism. He makes but one objection, which is, that the idlers in the community will not work." Crossing the border, he visited the Cumberland lakes and Lancashire. He called upon Southey, whose house he describes as "in one of the worst and most exposed situations, making almost part of the dirty outskirts of the town—a common-looking house with a garden and straggled walk leading down the hill towards the street. The house itself is, however, very commodious and the views from it very fine, and the library is tastefully fitted up." He passed by the "Beautiful Cottage" of De Quincey at Grasmere, but did not call. He notes in passing: "De Quincey is married to a girl [Margaret Simpson] who lived with him as servant, and they live together in a very homely way."



“Travelled with some manufacturers, who seemed to have no idea of the working people than as so much mechanical power which was to be applied to their own profit, ridiculed the idea of regulating the age and hours of labour by law, and said that it was always evaded by the parents and children.”

Stress of weather drove him back to Dublin, with hopes, which were doomed to disappointment, of seeing his new building progressing to its completion.

The class during 1823-4 was exceptionally large, as the difficulty of studying practical anatomy in England was increasing, and the report had been spread abroad that the facilities for anatomy in Dublin were abundant. Many men, therefore, were induced to cross the Channel for the purpose of study.

“I learn from Mr. Rigby,” writes his former demonstrator, Cross, now settled in Norwich, “that the schools in Dublin are very flourishing and that the Professors are contented and in harmony with each other. The latter is not the case just now in London; a warm dispute has sprung up between Sir Astley Cooper and Henry Earle about the difficult question as to union of

the neck of the thigh bone. Sir Astley cannot brook the criticisms of his pigmy opponent, and the schools of Bart's and Guy's are consequently set together by the ears. Much abuse and ill-will will come of it, if nothing else." "The difficulty experienced last winter in obtaining bodies in London is expected to recur this winter, and students are therefore running over to Dublin as the only place where dissection is to be obtained."

Early in the course of this winter Macartney injured his hand while dissecting, dividing a large branch of the median nerve, and he subsequently suffered much from a painful sensation in his right palm. Hearing that Colles had had occasion to apply caustic forty-four times to a dissecting wound which he had the misfortune to inflict on himself, he became a little anxious; but by degrees the disagreeable sensation diminished and finally disappeared. The injury left him in a depressed state of health and he felt on this account the need of obtaining a mid-session rest at Christmas, so, even although the weather was cold and wet, he proceeded through Wales to London. He gives an amusing account of his coach companions: one, an Englishman, with

a strong prejudice against the Welsh, denied to them good looks, good manners, or talents. Macartney, on the other hand, was as strongly prejudiced in their favour. Seeing a very pretty girl at a halting place near Capel Curig, the Englishman made a bet that she was not Welsh, whereupon Macartney interrogated her; she replied, "Yes, and my family has been Welsh from the beginning."

Arriving at Shrewsbury, he found Abernethy "lame and helpless from his late illness, but as amusing as in his younger days, and, although after four days and nights' travelling, in much higher spirits than afterwards in his own house. Such is the effect of short absence from home, however dear it may be." Abernethy, always strong on the subject of simplicity in diet, told him a story of a hermit who cured many people by giving them an elixir, of which they were to take three drops three times a day, when, if they abstained from excesses and took exercise, they recovered from all diseases. After curing the Grand Vizier, the Sultan compelled him to tell the nature of the medicine, which was—water. "Abernethy says he knows a man who dispenses in London and who is very successful. He prescribes rules in diet and bread pills"!

“Visited Wilderspin’s<sup>1</sup> Infant School at Spitalfields, an old and badly lighted house. The children pay a penny a week. He is perfectly right in the plan of suiting the knowledge to the years. He professes to form their ideas from the perception of sensible objects, but to do this he employs the commonest daubed prints of all sorts of stories. Among Scripture scenes he has one of Jacob’s ladder and a view of the interior of heaven, of which the children will thus imbibe the most gross and vulgar ideas. This method of teaching by pictures, which are only delineated by imagination, is more destructive to sound reasoning than the old system of inculcating the mysteries of revealed religion, as in receiving opinions thus they sometimes reason on them.”

“Dined with Abernethy. His daughter, Mrs. Warburton, very feeble, but pretty and interesting. Eliza is a fat, good-humoured girl. James, who is to be a surgeon, gives promise of talents.”

“Dined with Brodie ; he is going to publish on

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Wilderspin was the founder of Infant Schools in England. The method he introduced differed in many respects from that adopted by Oberlin of Steinthal, who was the actual founder of such schools. Wilderspin’s work is described in his “System for the Education of the Young,” 1840.

the injuries of the brain. Thinks the extirpation of joints ought not to be attempted. Believes that the greatest number of spine cases are mere hysteria."

"Visited Charles Bell, who is getting very stout. Saw Bonaparte's horse, which is a beautiful white stallion barb, with scars of five wounds, mostly behind."

While in London he heard that bodies for dissecting cost ten guineas each, which the students pay. The medical schools had applied for legislation on the subject of anatomy to Canning and Peel, who had shown a disposition to help the anatomists, and Peel had spoken to the heads of the police to connive as far as they could at the "resurrection-men." On Christmas Day he notes the ceremony of the parish beadle in full dress proclaiming the birth of Christ in a stable, ringing a bell at twelve o'clock, and at the conclusion saying, "Pray remember the beadle." "It is quite wonderful how necessary every person seems to think that an inordinate quantity of good things should be eaten on this day."

One Sunday he went to hear Edward Irving, with whom he was not favourably impressed, although he says that he possessed "that extra-

ordinary kind of eloquence which seems to have existed so much among the Scotch, with unnatural drawling voice and averted eye, so that sometimes the whites only appear, and with the affectation of deep and laborious reasoning which perplexes his hearers so much that they cannot tell whether he is leading them right or wrong. He has wonderful command of language, which he uses forcibly and originally."

This winter visit was a pleasant time for reunion with old friends, and he spent successive days with Abraham Rees, Brodie, Charles Bell, and others. Visiting Chatham, he notes: "Sir J. McGrigor makes great efforts to improve the museum, but is much hampered by the Government. Duke of York being applied to by commanding officer about dissection, has told them to mind their own business."

"Cooper says he killed three patients cutting the pudic artery with Cline's gorget."

He returned to town early in 1824, and having obtained proof copies of a portrait which had been recently taken, he sent them off to his friends.

The new school buildings were progressing very slowly in spite of the oft-repeated letters

of the Professor to Board, builder, and architect. His continual visits to the works, and his comments on the style and character of the workmanship, had annoyed both the architect and contractor, and they gave orders to their men that he should be excluded.

At the close of the session his class again entertained him at dinner, this year celebrating the Professor's birthday (March 8th). Colonel Miller, who had been a diligent attendant on his lectures, presided. Macartney in his speech touched on the improvements which he had effected during the year, and mentioned that he had appointed three new demonstrators—Green, Reilly, and Lowry—to assist Jacob. Mr. Reilly, in speaking concerning the increased numbers in the school, said that he had been told by a Dublin physician that when he was studying anatomy twenty years before, there was but one man dissecting in Trinity College.

The principal part of the next summer was spent in London. He found Mr. Clift bitterly complaining of "the atrocious conduct of Sir Everard Home in burning Hunter's manuscripts. Clift declared that Home knew nothing of the subjects on which he had written." Passing

through Wales on his way back, Macartney went to a Methodist church, but took a dislike to the preacher, as "his scowling countenance was so like McKenna, the builder of the new Anatomy House."

He revisited the Isle of Wight, where he had lived twenty-three years before. "This visit revived in my mind my former sensations much more distinctly than any scenes to which I have returned after long absence. In defiance of every physiological reason to the contrary, I cannot help feeling myself to be the same I was twenty-three years ago."

"Breakfasted on Sunday with the Co-operative Society in Piggot Street,<sup>1</sup> Strand. Mrs. Wheeler's picture over the fireplace. Fifty present, of mixed rank." "Owen stated his doctrine that all religions being founded on the idea of man's responsibility produced disunion, and therefore all the misery and vice that exist. It was curious

<sup>1</sup> Picket St. The Co-operative Society was founded by Owen and held its meetings at this place during the summer of 1825, moving in November to 36, Red Lion Square. They held weekly debates on Social and Religious subjects. Mrs. Wheeler was a well-known advocate of Women's Rights whose name often occurs in the Co-operative literature of the day. See Holyoake's *History of Co-operation*, vol. i., p. 140.



to hear the discussion while the bells of St. Clement's were summoning the people to church."

Keenly interested in any organisation for the promotion of truth and free thought, Macartney joined the Co-operative Society in 1826. It then numbered two hundred members.

"*August 10th.*—Dined with Bell; looks as handsome as ever." "*14th.*—Dined with Billing; met Bright, Babington's son-in-law; seems a very clever man." "*15th.*—Dined with the Birkbecks. Birkbeck's<sup>1</sup> death a great public loss. He had emancipated his own slaves, and had obtained the abolition of slavery on his estate by an appeal to the people after the Legislature had decided in favour of slavery. He highly approved of Owen's establishment at New Harmony, Indiana. £3,700 advanced by Mr. Birkbeck for building the Mechanics' Institute." "Saw Owen at Mr. Walker's house, 49, Bedford Square.<sup>2</sup> Is more

<sup>1</sup> Morris Birkbeck, cousin of George Birkbeck the founder of Mechanics' Institutes. Morris had purchased an estate in Indiana, and was drowned in 1825 while swimming his horse across the Wabash on returning from a visit to Owen. See Godard's *Life of Birkbeck*, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Walker was one of Owen's partners in The New Lanark Company.

sanguine than ever. The new village chiefly filled with backwoodsmen. They are Universalists. The Irish settlers are the most unmanageable. Owen receives five per cent on his outlay."

When the new session opened in November, 1824, but little progress had been made in the building, and it was obvious that it would not be in a state fit for occupation during that session. Taking advantage of the dissatisfaction of students from the continued defective accommodation, a rival school had been established in Park Street, not far from the College, and to this Dr. Jacob had gone. The introductory lecture in this school is humorously and graphically described in the *Lancet* by "Erinensis."<sup>1</sup>

By New Year's day the new house appeared

<sup>1</sup> My respected teacher in physiology, Dr. Jacob, although a man of immense erudition and extremely kind to his students, had not the knack of keeping a class in order. I was present on one occasion, I think in 1859, when a student incautiously directed his pea-shooter so that the pellet struck Dr. Jacob on his spectacles. This insult was too much for the irascible old gentleman, who stopped, turned towards the culprit and addressed him: "I see you, and you are a coward, to insult an old man, but old as I am I'll fight you." Then pulling off his coat and squaring his fists he said, "Come on now, you coward." Needless to relate, the student did not respond, and the class broke up in confusion.

to be externally complete ; but there was a long delay in obtaining possession. On January 29th the Professor wrote urging the Board to get the architect to certify to the completion of the work ; but the architect had some trivial faults to find, which took time to correct. This delay was the last straw which upset the Professor's equilibrium. Macartney insisted on going into the building, and on meeting the architect there he spoke to him very freely about its bad design and bad workmanship, and the inefficient supervision which had been exercised over its construction. The architect resented this, and struck Macartney with his cane, whereupon Macartney retaliated, breaking his umbrella over the architect's head. The irritation arising from this fracas threatened to disturb seriously the peace of all parties concerned, but it was eventually subdued, through the good offices of the Provost, who acted as peacemaker ; but Macartney refused to withdraw his charges, and tabulated a formidable list of defects, winding up with the statement that it was the worst-planned and worst-executed building he had ever seen. Those who knew the school in later years will heartily endorse many of Macartney's complaints. The

damp which he dreaded had never been quite subdued, even with the later advantages of a continually working pumping engine within fifty yards of the building. The skylights were leaky and the plaster had but a slight hold on the walls, while the doors, windows, and passages were continual troubles.<sup>1</sup> The builder commenced an action for libel against him, but this on more mature consideration he wisely allowed to drop.

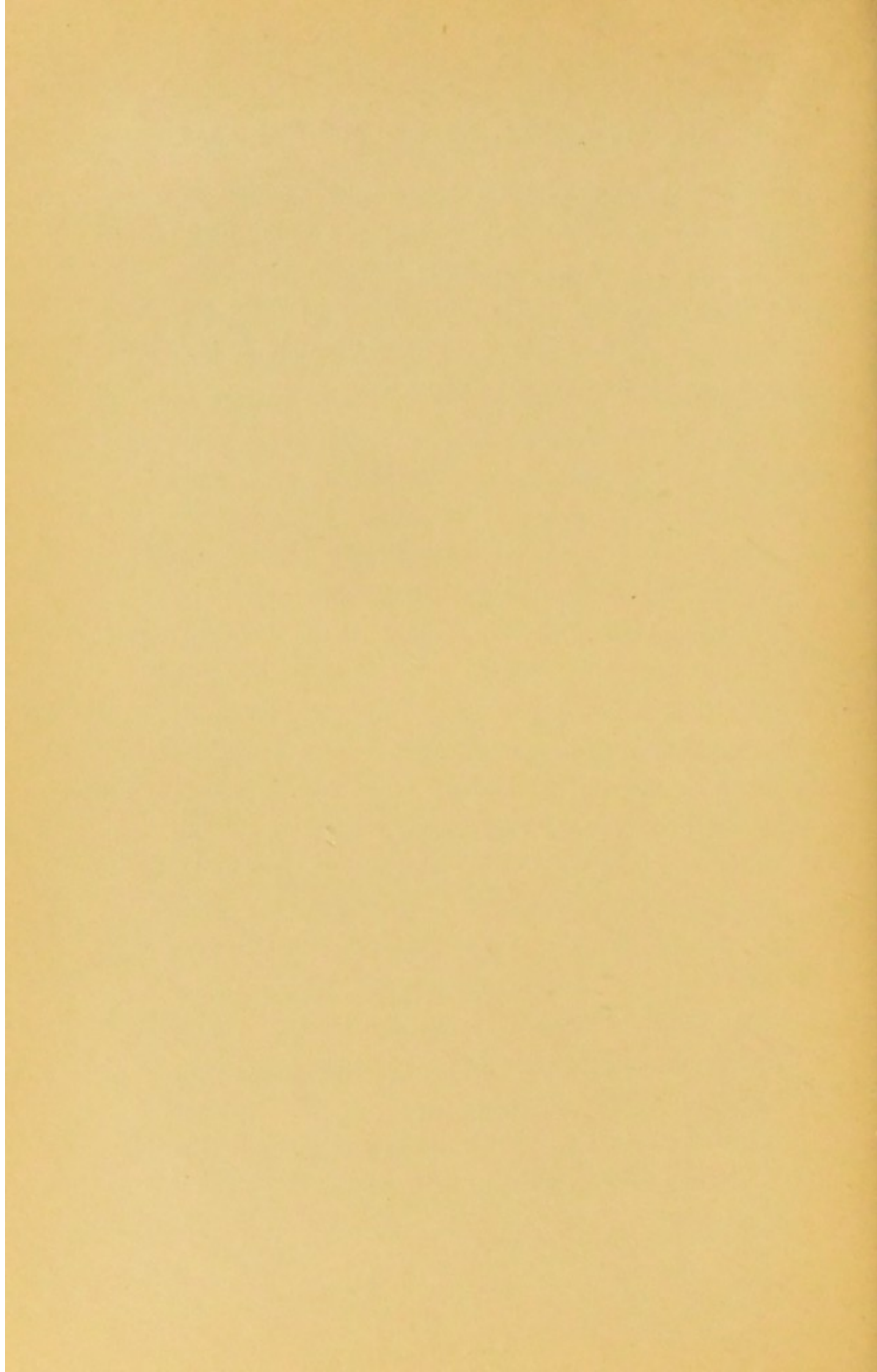
The class during this year had been rather more comfortably housed than before. At the beginning of the session Macartney tried to lecture a class of a hundred and sixteen in a room twenty feet square, but this was a dismal failure, so the students petitioned the Board for more suitable accommodation, and after some discussion they agreed to lend the old philosophy school on condition that no dead body should be brought into it, and that the Professor of Anatomy should not incommode Dr. Whitley Stokes. As Macartney had a hundred and sixteen students and Stokes five, the latter

<sup>1</sup> The building has been entirely remodelled and practically rebuilt within the last four years.

complaisantly gave to the anatomy class all the assistance in his power.

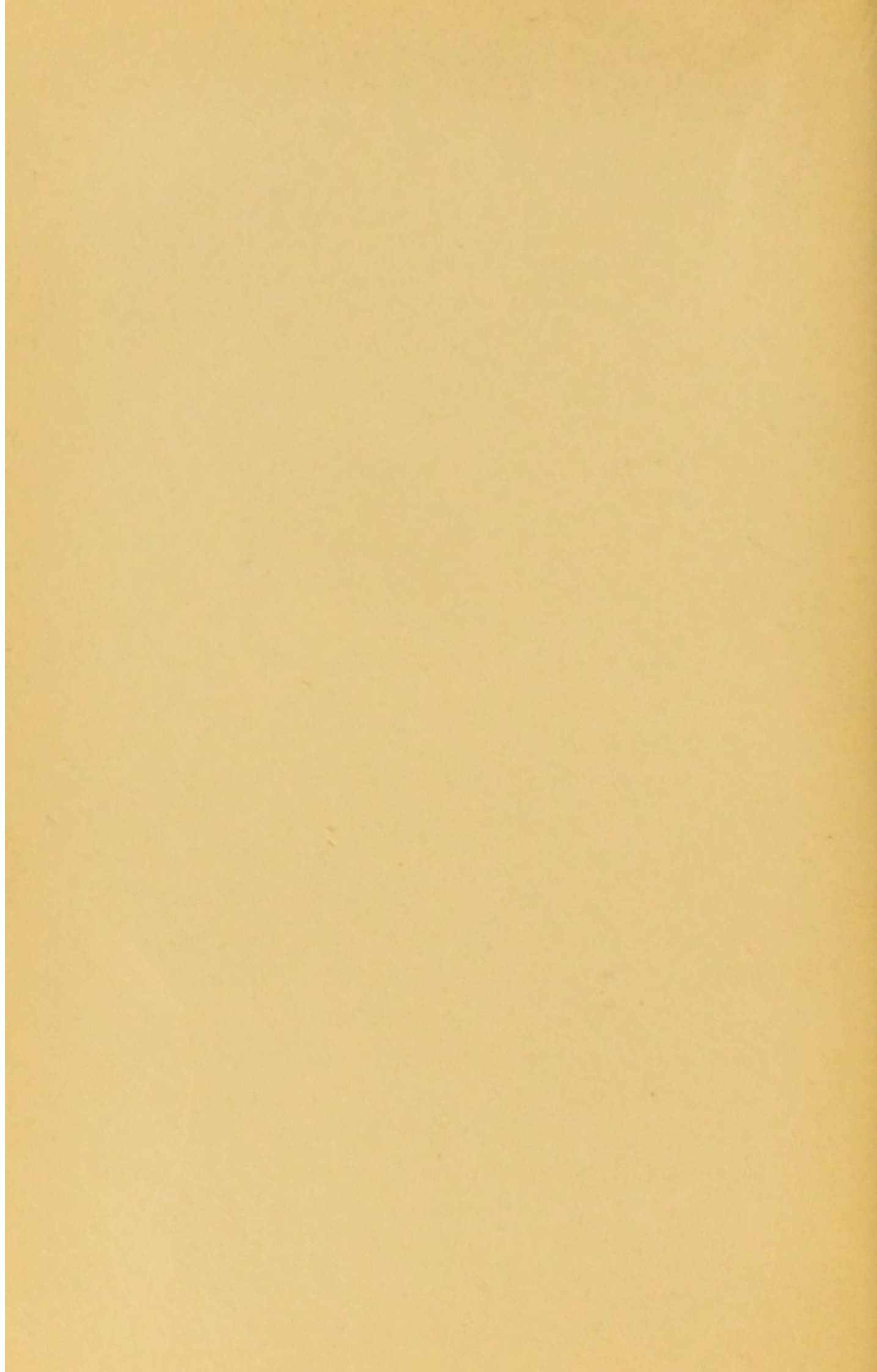
At last, however, all formalities were over, all bills paid, and the Professor took formal possession of the new building. It was far from being as perfect as he hoped or wished ; but, with all its imperfections, he believed that it was better than any anatomical school elsewhere ; and in his inaugural lecture on November 1st, 1825, he says that he regards " the erection of this building to be a great and permanent benefit, not only to this country but also to the whole of the empire. The Board of Trinity College have bestowed a more valuable gift on the community by building this house than if they had founded ten hospitals. It is here and in similar places that students can alone acquire that knowledge of the human frame practically and by their own hands, and imbibe their first principles of medical science, without which their professional career must consist of imposition on the rich and the sacrifice of the poor." He wrote to the Board inviting their attendance at his lecture and set apart a front seat for any of its members who chose to come. It is scarcely necessary to say that none of them availed themselves of the privilege.

In the autumn of 1825 he again made a tour in the south-east of England and visited Cambridge. He spent most of his short time in the Fitzwilliam Museum. "The best paintings there are those by Gerard Dow. The Titian is faulty from an anatomical point of view."



1825. The False Accusation





## 1825. THE FALSE ACCUSATION

THE class which assembled during the first session in the new building was the largest that had ever attended the lectures of any medical teacher in Dublin. In spite of its many faults of construction, there were yet in the new anatomy house the countervailing advantages of ampler room, better light, and freer ventilation than in the old quarters.

Macartney selected as the subject of his public lectures for this year the archetypal skeleton of vertebrate animals. As the course proceeded he evolved a typical animal with typical limbs differing little from that which, in after years, was associated with the name of Professor Owen.

A wave of popular excitement was then agitating the public mind in Dublin on the subject of vivisection ; and, as in similar and more recent recurrences of these periodic outbursts of sentimentalism, certain physicians took a leading part

on the popular side. His colleague, Professor John Crampton, both spoke and published letters against those who practised vivisection, aimed specially against Macartney, who had been the chief offender. He was in the habit of illustrating his lectures by means of vivisections, but always operated with due precaution to avoid unnecessary cruelty, which he abhorred. Referring to this subject in a lecture during this term he said: "Such experiments require great care, and should never be performed wantonly, nor without due occasion; they are liable to error if not done aright, and should therefore be practised with circumspection, and related with diffidence."

Macartney took no part in the public controversy, but his demonstrator, Green, accepted the challenge and published a crushing reply to Crampton in one of the Dublin newspapers.

In spite of its auspicious commencement, this session was destined to be one of anxiety and trouble. A few days after he had delivered his introductory lecture a formal accusation of the gravest kind was laid before the Board against him.

It appeared that a young man named Clements, who had been a student in his class during a

preceding session, had, when dying of fever, refused to accept the consolation of religion offered to him by his friends, and avowed himself an atheist. On inquiry he stated that he had adopted these views while a student in Trinity College, and he added further that no one could study physiology without becoming a materialist. Before his death, however, he professed himself repentant, and received the sacrament from the Rev. Mr. Mathias. As Macartney was the teacher of physiology and was not a member of the dominant Church, the young man's friends at once concluded that it was from him that Mr. Clements had learned his infidelity, and accordingly they began to make inquiries regarding the character of his teaching. Two of those who had been in attendance on Clements—one a baronet, and both clergymen of the Established Church—took up the inquiry and proposed to make a full and personal investigation of the matter. The former of these, Sir F. Blosse, had been occasionally present at Macartney's public lectures, and now began to attend regularly, once or twice visiting the dissecting-room as well. Being unaccustomed to the aspect of an anatomy-room, the appearance

of the half-dissected bodies filled him with horror, and he became convinced that one who had to teach such subjects in such a place must be capable of any extreme of immorality and materialism. On one occasion he was overpowered by the appearance of one of the dissected specimens, and, rising from his place, hastily left the lecture-room, but on cross-examination afterwards he was unable to recollect what it was that had so affected him.

While attending the lectures, Sir. F. Blosse took every opportunity of making inquiries among the students as to the nature of Macartney's private instruction to them and as to his conversations with them, endeavouring thus to get evidence against him. By this means his animus soon became known to most of the class. He also consulted Macartney about works on anatomy, fulsomely praising his lectures to his face in the presence of witnesses. In order to compare Macartney's teaching with that given in other schools, Blosse went to the lectures of another teacher, who had formerly been Macartney's demonstrator. On seeing him in the room the lecturer said aside to his assistant: "We have got the baronet here; we must be

careful to say or do nothing to offend him." The lecturer in consequence devoted half an hour to an exposition of the evidences of Design in Nature. In spite of all his efforts he found nothing specific of which he could take hold until, in the course of the last lecture in 1824, Macartney, describing certain surgical operations, made use of illustrations which seemed startling to one who could not appreciate the force of the references. It was the last lecture of the course, and on its conclusion Macartney was, as usual, loudly applauded, but Blosse, in rehearsing this to the Board, stated that "it was the coarseness of the Professor which was applauded by the class, so much were they demoralised."

The other clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Sillery, was the brother of a former pupil of Macartney's for whom the Professor had exerted himself, successfully using his influence with Sir J. McGrigor to get him an appointment. The clergyman had often attended Macartney's lectures, and had asked him to give his brother the necessary certificate for a certain examination, which Macartney, in accordance with his fixed rule, had refused. In consequence of this a coolness

had arisen, and Mr. Sillery aided those who endeavoured to injure Macartney.

The conspirators held private meetings in the house of Archbishop Magee, and through him brought pressure to bear upon the Board to call the Professor to account. He was not a graduate, his name was not even on the College books, therefore the Archbishop could not legally proceed against him by visitation; he was only amenable through the jurisdiction of the Board. The serious nature of the charges against a man whose private character was known to be spotless, and whose public reputation was the chief attraction of their school, made the Board, although some of its members were personally unfriendly to him, very unwilling to entertain such an accusation. They desired that the matter should be kept strictly private, but the Archbishop threatened that if they did not take it up he would hold a visitation, calling them to account for suppressing such a charge.

On one occasion the Archbishop sent down a boy with a clothes-basket-full of tracts to distribute to the students as they came out from Macartney's lecture-room.

Accordingly Macartney was formally cited to

appear before them to answer the accusation of teaching infidelity and immorality in his public discourses. The accusers appeared, but failed to prove a single particular instance either of coarseness or scepticism in the Professor's lectures. Their statements, as taken down by a shorthand reporter, were mere tirades of the vaguest generalities against "this horrible Macartney," as one of them called him. "We have had enough of these general statements," said the Provost; "give us any one instance of a statement or action of the Professor which you consider offensive either to faith or morals." But they could not do it; they accused him of having an infidel book in his library which he allowed students to read, but they confessed that they had the same, and worse, in their own libraries.

Macartney summoned as witnesses a number of former students who were men of acknowledged position, who had attended the same lectures, and produced letters from many others testifying for him. "With the strictest truth," one clergyman writes, "I can assert that, so far from your chair being made the vehicle of doctrines repugnant to the tenets of Christianity, I never heard you allude to any such subject, nor did I ever hear



you insinuate anything disrespectful to the public religion, derogatory to its doctrines, or calculated to shake the persuasion of your hearers. I entered your class-room with a strong persuasion of the truth of the Bible, and I left your lectures confirmed in my opinions. Your politeness to myself all through my course has shown me that one of distinctly religious disposition was thereby not debarred from your favour, and those who could infer arguments of scepticism from your lectures must, I fear, have mistaken their own conclusions for the doctrines of the lecturer, or it is more probable that they have taken for granted the reports of your enemies, and imputed to your lectures the insinuations which they heard respecting you from the teachers of rival schools."

Other testimony was forthcoming that Mr. Clements had been from his childhood under irreligious influences, that he had been a student of Voltaire's works, and of some of the coarser works of French materialistic writers, even before he had attended Macartney's lectures.

The Board sat for several days in secret conclave, but the accusation had completely broken down, so after full consideration Macartney was, by a unanimous vote, fully and honourably ac-

quitted of all charges made against him. This decision was communicated to him by Provost Kyle in a letter which he read to his class, and which was received by them with the most enthusiastic expressions of applause.

The event had been well known and canvassed, not only in Ireland, but also in England and Germany, and was commented upon in many journals. All the public notices of it showed the extent of the sympathy which his persecution elicited.

The news of the verdict of the Board was hailed with delight by his many friends. Maria Edgeworth wrote him a letter of congratulation; so did Miss Strickland, who says: "Most truly do we congratulate you that you have triumphed over your malicious enemies. Their fangs henceforward will be powerless: you have crushed them for ever."

His old pupil, Cross, of Norwich, wrote (March 2nd, 1826): "Mrs. Cross and myself were delighted with the newspaper you sent, which was the first information about the affair, by which your enemies have disgraced themselves. That such a transaction should have happened in these enlightened days shows only the

imperfection and perversity of human nature, and makes one despair of ever seeing the world governed by plain sense and reason. There are always grovelling fanatics at work to counteract the advancement of science, and going about seeking whom they shall devour. . . . I trust Mrs. Macartney's indisposition, resulting from her anxiety, is by this time surmounted, and the effects of the worry dissipated by her excursion eastward. If you come to London you will find them quite in a hubbub. They are going to revolutionise the College and work such reformation in surgical education that you must despair hereafter of attracting away students from the English schools and hospitals."

Mr. King, of Bristol, also wrote: "About a fortnight ago I heard a short passage read from a letter written by Mrs. Edgeworth indicating in a few words that something vexatious had occurred to you, which was expected to terminate to your satisfaction. I shrewdly supposed that some of the medical men of Dublin had been at their mean, envious tricks. Mrs. Macartney's letter to Mrs. King, and the newspaper, brought me the anxiously wished-for intelligence, which has spread heartfelt joy over the faces of my little

family group. I have long known from a variety of indirect sources of information, particularly from the tone of medical men, either Irish or connected with such, who were not aware of my being your intimate friend, that you were the object of the most rancorous envy and malice of some if not of all the leading physicians and surgeons in your metropolis. — certainly has cleverness, but I never could discover in him a spark of what I call mind. His conduct is therefore no riddle, whatever he conceives to be his interest must be the rule of his conduct, and his moral conceptions are as myopic as his eyes. Charles Bell deserves to be put into the pillory by Cruikshank, the caricaturist, and to be pelted to a funny tune by one of the Smiths,<sup>1</sup> or stuck up for an exhibition in the *Lancet*. But they will not again perform the dignified part of cat's-paw in a hurry."

The veteran anatomist of Göttingen, Blumenbach, also sent Macartney his warm congratulations on the result.

A few days after the announcement of the Board's judgment, the members of his class held

<sup>1</sup> Horace and James, the authors of "Rejected Addresses."

a meeting and drew up an address which was forwarded to him :—

“SIR,—Deeply sympathising with your feelings on the present occasion, which, as your pupils, we must naturally do, permit us to offer you our sincere and heartfelt congratulations on your honourable and triumphant acquittal from the late most unjust and unfounded charges.

“Convinced of the justice and impartiality which have ever influenced the decisions of the Board of Trinity College, and conscious of the propriety, delicacy, and judgment which form so conspicuous a feature in your course of lectures, we anticipated, be assured, sir, no other than the most honourable and satisfactory result, nor could we for a moment allow ourselves to indulge in the painful idea that on vague and frivolous grounds the country would be deprived of your invaluable services, and science of one of its brightest ornaments.

“Our anticipations have been fully realised by your unqualified acquittal, expressed in the unanimous decision of the Provost and senior Fellows of the University, in which, with sentiments alike honourable to them and to you, they have declared the charges to be totally unfounded.

“In deference to your feelings (for magnanimity is ever the companion of true genius) we will, though with difficulty, repress the language of indignation that struggles for expression when we reflect that your amiable virtues, splendid talents, and profound research could not secure you from the impotent attacks of ignorance or prejudice. In the fervent hope that you

will long continue to occupy the chair which you now fill with so much honour to yourself, credit to your country, and benefit to the best interests of humanity, we beg leave to assure you, sir, that we shall ever cherish for you the most profound respect and affectionate esteem.

“TO DR. JAMES MACARTNEY,  
“Professor of Anatomy and Surgery in the  
University of Dublin, etc., etc.”

To which Dr. Macartney returned the following answer:—

“GENTLEMEN,—I esteem it one of the happiest events of my life that the aspersions of my character which have been industriously circulated for some years, with all the exaggeration which characterises false and malicious reports, have at length assumed the shape of a definite accusation which could be met and refuted; and if my accusers possess any sense of justice, or feelings of Christian charity, which ‘rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth,’ they must feel happy in having been the instruments by which the conduct and motives of their neighbour have been justified.

“The inquiry which has taken place cannot fail to assure to me the good opinion of the heads of the University, and I can never forget that it has been the means of producing so strong an expression of the affection and esteem of my pupils.

“It is with parental pleasure that I now have an opportunity of boasting that, with scarcely an exception, no class of persons in the community, from the highest

to the lowest, is more distinguished for moral worth and propriety of conduct than the anatomical students of Trinity College.

“It is almost unnecessary to add that the manly and ingenuous feeling you have manifested on the present occasion will endear you to me through life.

“JAMES MACARTNEY.”

The *Morning Register* of December 26<sup>th</sup> published the following article:—

“For some time past the literary and scientific circles of this city have felt great interest in the result of an investigation which the conduct of the highly respectable Professor of Medicine in the University of Dublin was undergoing before the Board of Fellows. The investigation alluded to furnishes another instance, in addition to those continually occurring, of the deplorable fanaticism that has seized upon the minds of many individuals, who, one would suppose, should be secure, by reason of their habits and acquirements, from the influence of such a contagion. It appears that certain persons, amongst whom, if our information be correct, are some Protestant clergymen strongly imbued with *Methodism*, proceeding on a suspicion produced by the ravings of a delirious person, who was known to hold opinions inconsistent with the doctrines of revealed religion, resolved upon a very serious and responsible measure—that of arraigning Dr. Macartney on charges of having inculcated materialism in his lectures, and of demonstrating in a manner and words that were indelicate. If there be one man more than another in society whose

character, personally and professionally, should have protected him from such an attack as was thus made on his honourable reputation, that man is Dr. Macartney—if there be a member of the ‘silent sister,’ who redeems in some measure her ill-fame, *that* member is Dr. Macartney. He is a gentleman of high character and spotless conduct. He is distinguished for his attainments in literature and general science; and, contrary to the habits of most other officers of the College, he has extended his reputation far beyond its walls. Dr. Macartney is, we are told, the contributor of many of the most valuable articles in *The Modern Cyclopædia*, and is eminent in other countries for his profound knowledge of his peculiar profession.

“Notwithstanding these strong assurances that Dr. Macartney could not be guilty of the imputations which were cast upon him, a grave and formal arraignment of him was made before the Board of Fellows which of course terminated in his full and honourable acquittal.

“While we rejoice sincerely at this result, although we have not the honour of being in the most remote degree acquainted personally with Dr. Macartney, nor any more than by the opinions of the public, which we have heard generally expressed with regard to his merits, we cannot refrain from censuring, in the most unqualified manner, the persons who caused the investigation, without having, previously to their adoption of such a severe proceeding as regarded the learned individual, satisfied themselves that their course of conduct was sanctioned by proofs stronger than, as they now appear, the suggestions of their own whimsical fanaticism.”



The occurrence was commented upon at length by Dr. Peter Hennis Green in one of his very sarcastic and brilliant letters in the *Lancet*, (1876, p. 557) probably the best of the whole "Erinensis" series.

The anniversary dinner at the end of this session was an occasion of great enthusiasm. Never had there been such a number of his old pupils assembled to do him honour. Even although Jacob, his former demonstrator, had, with others, started a rival school close to the College, yet this in no degree diminished Macartney's reputation as the greatest teacher in Dublin, and the enthusiasm of his students was boundless. The dinner was held on April 14th, 1826, at Hayes's Hotel, Dawson Street. "Amid the party dissensions which so long agitated this unhappy country," said the chairman, Mr. Lowry, "Dr. Macartney has viewed with philosophic eye the petty interests which have dis severed the bonds of friendship, and has pitied the miseries of such a state of society and tried to ameliorate them. A recent investigation, however vexatious in itself, has been attended with the greatest good. The character of Dr. Macartney, which some have been for years trying to undermine, has at length

acquired its proper value, and shines with redoubled splendour from the vain attempt to sully its lustre."

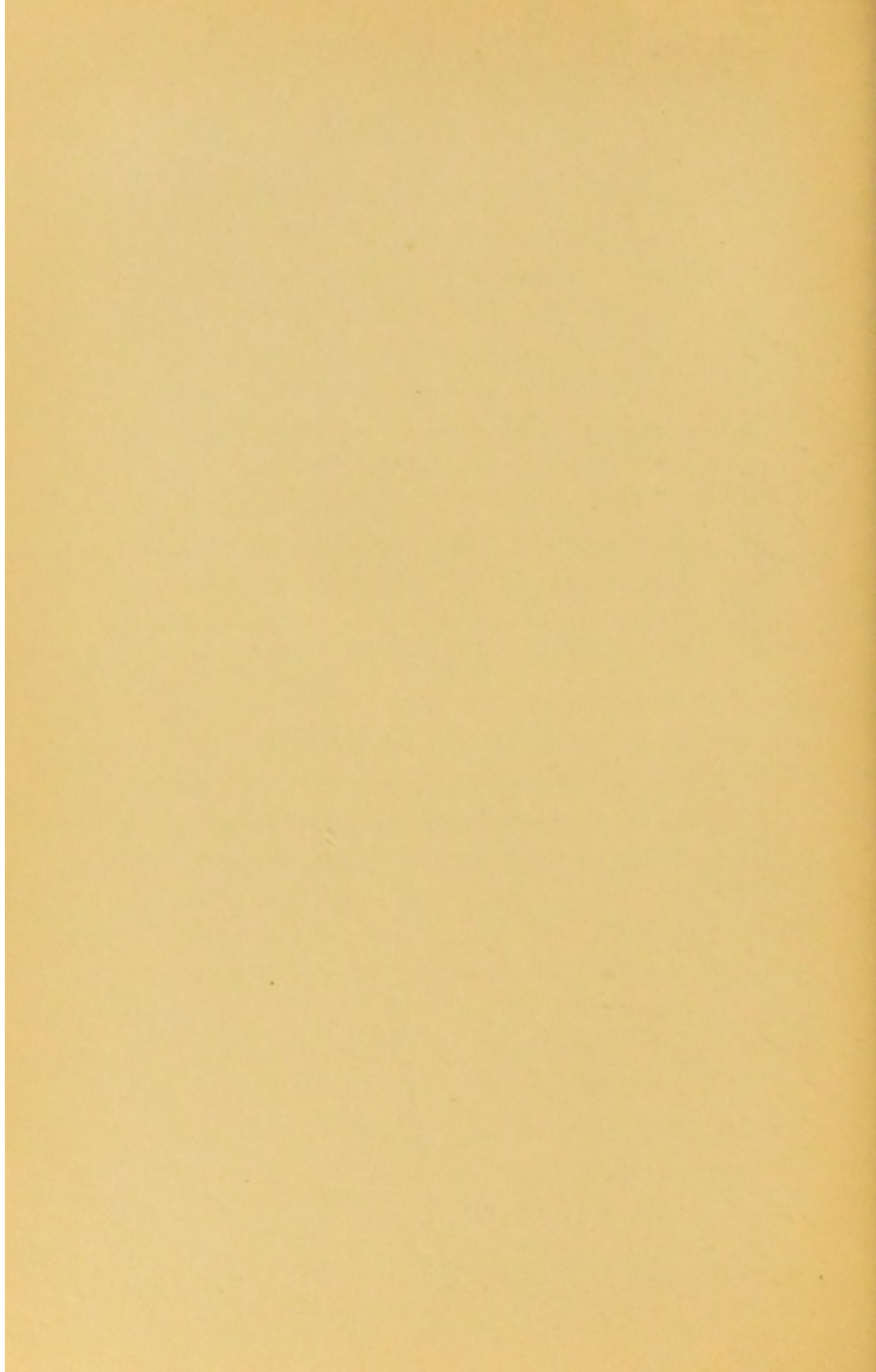
To this Macartney replied:—

"GENTLEMEN,—I return you my most ardent thanks for the enthusiastic applause with which the giving my health has been accompanied. The highest recompense that any teacher can receive is the affection of his pupils; and it is my proudest boast that I have obtained yours without any compromise of principle, either on your part or mine. I have never sought to win your favour by any means, except an attention to your true interests, which are inseparable from the faithful and honest discharge of your duties as professional men. I owe you, gentlemen, a debt of gratitude, which never can be repaid, for the generous and manly feeling which you displayed when a powerful persecution was raised against my character as a man and a teacher. Your conduct on that occasion was distinguished by a sense of honour and a love of truth and justice, without which the young mind gives no promise of future worth or usefulness. For those who were capable of being the secret promoters of

that persecution, and those who were their visible tools, I can now feel nothing but pity. The upright, impartial, and independent decision of the Board of Trinity College, followed as it must always be by public opinion, has left me no ground for resentment, by rendering my adversaries innocuous. I again offer you my thanks, and my warmest wishes for your prosperity and happiness."

During all this period of intense anxiety he carried on his work without intermission. He almost lived in the dissecting-room, and we find him writing to Sir James McGrigor in the interests of some of his former students and revising the regulations for the qualification of Army surgeons, even while the investigation was pending; and he presided at a public annual meeting of the Mechanics' Institute a few days after the judgment of the Board had been pronounced.

1826—1827. Petty Vexations



1826—1827. PETTY VEXATIONS

THE collapse of the false accusation put Macartney's enemies to temporary silence, but even in the hour of victory there were other, although more petty, annoyances in store for him on the part of his colleagues.

One of his most cherished projects had been the founding of a large museum of anatomy and pathology, somewhat along the lines of that formed by Hunter which he hoped to leave behind him as a national monument of his scientific work. He had spared neither labour nor expense in collecting and preparing specimens to serve as a nucleus for it. Since he had been appointed to the Professorship he had, with his own hands, made all the autopsies on the patients who died in Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital. He had thereby obtained useful and instructive materials for his lectures, and he made these to serve as

texts for the instruction in pathology of the clinical students of the hospital.<sup>1</sup>

A feeling had arisen among his less popular colleagues that this system of teaching interfered with their prerogative, and should therefore be prevented; and at a meeting of the governors of the Institution, held on February 8th, 1826, it was resolved that the physician who had been in attendance on each patient, "and no one else should make the post-mortem examination in case of death, and that this resolution be communicated to Dr. Macartney."

This gratuitous restriction was a double trial; not only for its positive effect of debarring him from pathological research, but for the unfriendliness which it showed on the part of his fellow-professors. Speaking of this action of the hospital authorities in an introductory lecture in 1832, he says: "At one time I gave instruction to the pupils of Sir P. Dun's Hospital on 'The Mode of Investigating Morbid Appearances,' wrote

<sup>1</sup> The only subsidy towards this museum received from the Board was a grant in 1827 of £20 to Dr. Nolan, "for putting the preparations in the Anatomy House in order, he supplying materials himself, labelling the bottles, etc." Some of these preparations (but since remounted) are now in the Cambridge Museum.

an account of the dissection, with such remarks as occurred to me for the clinical lecture, and preserved the preparations at my own expense. But this was not allowed to last. I was jobbed out of the hospital, and what has been the consequence? Pathological teaching disappeared. I am now, however, independent of all foreign means of increasing my collection, and the prohibition by the Governors saved me from much trouble and expense, although it has been highly injurious to the clinical students."

Among the falsehoods which to this day are current about him is one that he was "horribly afraid of fever." His case-book gives the lie to this, for he attended, noted, and made post-mortem examinations on many cases of typhus, smallpox and scarlatina; and, when engaged in his work on animal heat, he made thermometric observations with his own hands on many such cases, long before clinical thermometry had been recognised as an aid to diagnosis. The material foundation for the story is the fact of his having manufactured a stethoscope eighteen inches long; but this was for the purpose of avoiding quite another kind of infection, familiar to any one who knows the habits and concomitants of the Dublin poor.



On account of these unhappy relations with those who were leading men in the College of Physicians, he resigned his membership of the "Association of the Members of the College" in May, 1826.

Acting on the suggestion of some friends, he published the first and last lectures of the course which had given rise to the accusations in 1825, and he subsequently received many letters of congratulation on their appearance. Maria Edgeworth wrote on March 7th, 1826:—

"I am delighted with your 'Lecture on the Uses of Anatomy and Physiology in Various Branches of Knowledge,' and believe me, in the first place, that I never would, even to the author, say I was delighted with a book if I were not. I would thank for the honour done me in giving me a copy, etc., but I never would say what I did not think.

"You have with great ability and in a most interesting and entertaining manner shown the uses of anatomy in a vast range of subjects seemingly unconnected with it. To the learned and the unlearned, to philosophers and to practical men—as many who disdain general principles are pleased in their conceit to call themselves—you thus do an important service.

"Your illustrations are admirable; the facts all curious in themselves and beautifully apposite.

"I admire the judgment with which you opened the subject with Paley, then with Linnæus, showing how

the want of anatomical knowledge has been injurious to works written with the best intentions and by men of the finest genius. This was at once bold and effectual for your purpose.

“Is it *possible* that this can be the lecture that gave offence? How? I should have thought that ‘Les Précieuses Ridicules’ themselves, whose ears were, as Molière said, the most delicate part about them, could not have found anything to prim up their mouths at here.

“I must beg from you another copy *from the author*, if you please, in your own hand. The copy which Mrs. Macartney was so kind to send me and for which I have at last the grace to thank her I must give to a young brother of mine who is worthy of it.

“Believe me, dear Sir,

“Your obliged

“MARIA EDGEWORTH.”

The account of Macartney published by Peter Green, the author of the satirical letters published in the *Lancet* over the signature “Erinensis,” is worth noting as presenting a graphic account of the Professor as he appeared at this time:—

“He is a very singular, if not an extraordinary personage; one upon whom the panegyrist might safely lavish a portion of his art without any risk of satirising by a misapplication of praise; or the libeller on the other hand might exercise his vocation with almost equal success. His virtues and his foibles, his acquirements and deficiencies, are so obvious, that it would

require little tact to place either in strong relief. It would be no easy matter to decide whether his life or his lectures abound with most useful precepts, or whether his physiology is more valuable to the student, excellent as that may be, than the practical lesson of wisdom furnished by his unsuccessful career. A sort of biographical paradox, his history unites the extremes of scientific prudence and worldly neglect, of exalted merits with the most incongruous accompaniments of persevering industry, unrequited by its proper reward, successful in everything, except the great end for which most men submit to the labour of study. His conduct is correct, though daily censured by fanatical charity. With every qualification to be useful to mankind, his powers are neglected; abroad he is admired for those qualities which have rendered him an object of hatred at home.

“The explanation of such an anomaly may appear difficult; but it is no such thing. Mr. Macartney was not formed by nature, or rather he did not fit himself, for the prosperous office of a liar, a pimp, a pander, or a sycophant. He could not rise into notice on the strength of a quadrille, or let his surgical dexterity be inferred from fingering a flageolet. He did not attach himself to a religious or a political faction that he might physic the body by caressing the prejudices of the mind. Nothing of all this could he do; they were accomplishments far beyond the reach of an upright man.

“Were we to attempt a description of his person we should commence by tracing the outline of a man of middle stature, his figure considerably inclining from the perpendicular. His head is decidedly one of the best we have ever seen, but it loses much of its effect by

being displaced from its proper position. It only wants attitude to complete its appearance. His brows advance on the view with a majestic boldness that would seem to set all difficulty at defiance. His features, which are extremely regular in detail, are peculiarly expressive, in the aggregate, of intellectual energy, mingled, too, with a good deal of the severity of thought. There is an emanation of intense feeling in the all-pervading glance of his eyes, which are full of fire, scrutiny, and animation, and as deeply set as those which we usually see in the ancient cameos of Greece. There is an air of freshness of discovery about all he says which makes the old as palatable as the new. The contrast between him and his contemporaries in Dublin is striking. We know not one who would bear comparison with him in physiology or general science. In comparative anatomy he stands alone."

In this year the second of the septennial periods for which he held the chair had expired and the time of election drew nigh. The notices of the vacancy were inserted in the newspapers as usual, and by order of the Provost they were worded as if the chair were really vacant. To prevent misconception on this subject, Macartney inserted a notice in the medical papers to indicate the real state of things, and no other candidate appeared. Accordingly on February 20th he was re-elected.

Hitherto he had not been in any way

connected with the arts school of the College, and in those days the granting of honorary degrees to distinguished men, unless they happened to be clerics, from other universities, had not become so common a practice as in more recent times. Macartney's name was not, as we have seen, on the College books, so he was thereby out of the jurisdiction of the Visitors. After his re-election he was ordered by the Board to put his name immediately on the books. To this he replied that he would willingly do so if they instructed him as to the mode of so enrolling himself, but that to enter as an ordinary undergraduate would not be worth the trouble at this period in his career. The matter was permitted to drop and no degree was at this time conferred upon him.

The status of Professors in the University of Dublin was, until lately, anomalous. They had no voice in the arrangement of the subject or order of study or in the government of the professional schools.<sup>1</sup> The Fellows of the one

<sup>1</sup> These conditions were altered about twenty-six years ago by the appointment of an Academic Council upon which the Professors are represented, and by the institution of a Medical School Committee.

College of the University monopolised all the advantage of the institution, and constituted its governing body, and the Professors were kept out even from the social life of the college. As one of the Fellows once expressed it to me in conversation: "We Fellows are the children of the house; you Professors are outsiders." This was in Macartney's days still more trying, as certain familiar words of Pope bearing on the quality of the "Fellow" were by no means inapplicable to some members of that body.<sup>1</sup> Even those Professors who lived within the College were, until lately, debarred from a full participation in the academic life of the place. They could certainly dine in hall; so could any resident graduate who paid for his dinner; but, unlike resident Professors in Cambridge, they were excluded from the common-room, and it was not until about twenty years ago that this restriction was removed. A former Vice-Provost once remarked to one of my co-Professors as he hurried past us one Saturday morning: "There is a most important meeting of the Board to-day; we have to select a new porter and a Professor of Astronomy."

<sup>1</sup> "Essay on Man," iv., 203.

A most ingenious vexation was inflicted by the Board at this time on the unpopular Professor. The new school of anatomy was situated at the east end of the College grounds, remote from the rest of the College buildings from which it was shut off by a wall, a small gate in which afforded access to the school from the College. The only other entrance was through a dirty stable lane from Park Street, in which were several disreputable public-houses. Macartney had hoped that the students would, as heretofore, be able to enter the building from the front entrance of the College; but in February, 1827, he received a notice from the Registrar that the Board had ordered the gate between the College and the Anatomy House to be kept locked, "except during the times of the *public* lectures," that is on twelve days in the year. There had been no misconduct alleged nor irregularities committed in College, but the majority of the medical students were not students in arts, and so were regarded as foreign to the College, to which they had been attracted by the reputation of the Professor. The Board therefore desired to keep them at a distance. Macartney wrote to the Provost asking that a

new and more respectable access might be given from Leinster Street, but this letter was not even answered. He again wrote and urged the evil of compelling all the class to pass through the dirty mews, but again without avail, although he showed that drunkenness and vice were fostered among some of the young men by exposing them to the temptation so constantly. And this was no mere fancy of his own. In a private roll which he kept of his class, wherein he entered the characters of the men and observations on their conduct, we come across the entry opposite several names "Ruined at the 'Hole in the Wall,'" the name of one of the public-houses. In much later times it has been the experience of the teachers in the medical school of Trinity College that the existence of a public-house in proximity to the back-gate is a temptation, even though the rookeries which in Macartney's day disgraced the place have been cleared away to make room for the more respectable thoroughfare of Lincoln Place.<sup>1</sup>

There were other and more personal annoyances connected with this back-gate difficulty. College

<sup>1</sup> Within the last few years the conditions of the neighbourhood have been greatly improved in this respect.



servants are a peculiar class, and are prone to take their cue from their superiors in their mode of treatment of those whom they are not forced to obey, and the man whom the Provost and senior Fellows put in charge of this gate, a former servant of one of that body, was one who conducted himself with scant courtesy to the Professor, as well as with gross impropriety in his office: keeping the gate open at irregular hours, but objecting to open it for the carrying in and out of bodies; speaking publicly among the surrounding neighbours against the Professor, and characterising the practice of anatomy as a public nuisance, etc. At the present day, and with a more enlightened public opinion, this department of medical school work requires to be conducted with the greatest delicacy, regularity, and caution, but before the arrangements for anatomy were legalised tenfold greater care was requisite. On one occasion the body of a well-known person of notorious character was brought in by some of the "resurrection-men." Cuddy, the porter, proclaimed the fact to all the neighbours; and had not Macartney made provision for its immediate re-burial, there is little doubt but that the mob would have torn down the place.

On another occasion, three "resurrection-men" in the employment of Dr. Kirby stole the body of a lady from before the altar in a convent church and brought it into Peter Street School. The authorities there, however, feared a public commotion, and therefore directed one of the "resurrection-men," Ryan, to carry the body to Trinity College, and to sell it to Professor Macartney for thirty shillings, telling him that it came from "Bully's Acre." Next morning, when the sacrilege was discovered, there was a violent storm of public indignation, of which, fortunately, Macartney was speedily informed, and he lost no time in arranging with the clergy of the convent for the immediate removal of the body. The news of the desecration of the convent chapel had, meantime, come to the ears of the gate-porter, Cuddy, who on this occasion also endeavoured to stir up a popular tumult against Macartney and the school.

This troublesome subordinate kept a mangle in the Anatomy House, for the use of which people from the neighbouring lanes were in the habit of coming about the premises, and this was the occasion of much impropriety and public scandal. He also kept a domestic menagerie of goats, pigs, and fowls, the noise of which often

interrupted the lectures. In spite of oft-repeated remonstrances, this obnoxious porter, family, pigs, mangle and all were permitted to remain in the place for two years after Macartney had sought for their removal. It was not until Macartney obtained the co-operation of Dr. Barker, the Professor of Chemistry, that the Board saw fit to remove him to another gate.

It was with a sense of relief that, turning his back on all these petty troubles, he left Ireland in the summer of 1826 for a tour in the South of England. In his journal he notes, as usual, the general appearance of the people in each town, and makes memoranda concerning museums, hospitals, etc.

Visiting the London Hospital, he noted that dissection there was much interfered with by the clergymen. In Guy's he found some curious varieties of the thoracic duct, "many specimens mounted in spirits of turpentine, but most of them more showy than useful. A fine wax model of the ear, for which Cooper paid £25 in Paris. Perhaps the best preparations in London are those of the nervous system put up by Mayo in the Windmill Street museum. They have eleven hundred pathological specimens at St. Thomas's.

Brodie says he has between three and four hundred specimens of surgical pathology. Several preparations taken from persons who died of fever in the Windmill Street collection in which the intestine was ulcerated, the ulcers being a disease of the glandulæ aggregatæ which I have previously noted."

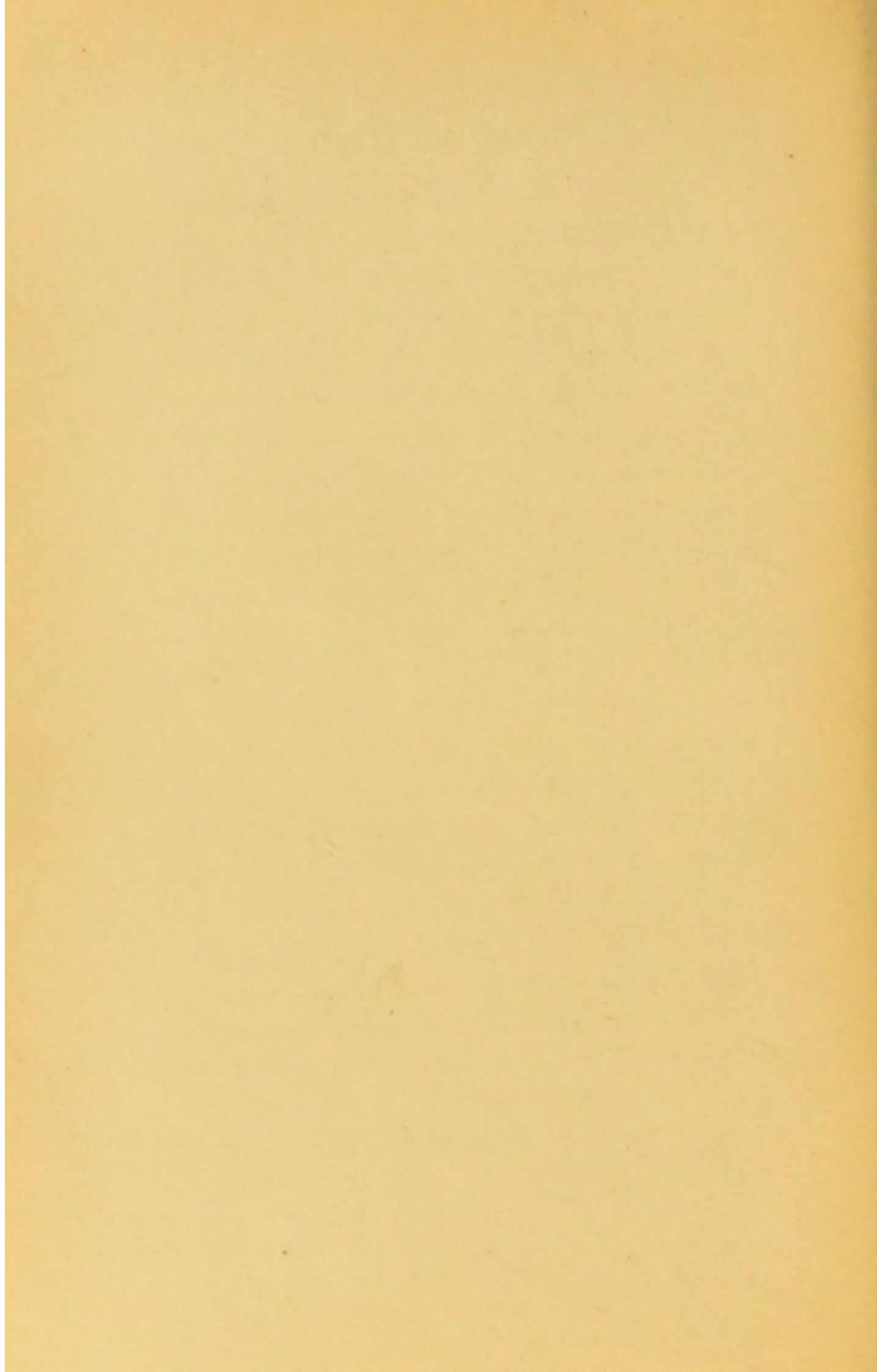
There is a melancholy interest in these successive journals, which bear witness that the wear of his manifold anxieties had produced a reflex and unhappy effect on his mind. While in his earlier years these holiday journals are written in an easy and pleasant vein, he now has become more irritable, more censorious, inclined to suspect of hypocrisy every one professing piety, so that the successive records cease to be pleasant reading and become more and more sad and depressing.

The session ensuing was uneventful and devoted to work ; he even refused the students' invitation to a farewell dinner at its close. These dinners had become wearisome to him, and other schools and other teachers had got up imitations of the "Macartney dinners."

The summer of 1827 was spent in Connaught, where he had not been since he was quartered with the Radnor Militia in Athlone in 1811. Among other places which he visited was the

famous resort of pilgrims, the mountain of Croagh Patrick in Mayo, on which, according to the legend, the saint had stood when he drove the vermin out of Ireland. Up the side of this steep, picturesque hill many pilgrims were wending their way performing their stations. At one place he "overtook a man and his wife going up to perform their stations at the first place, and on returning saw them again quite exhausted." They were not, nor were most of those to whom he spoke, going on account of sin, but to obtain some blessing in this world or the certainty of bliss in the next. "Miss White, the miller's daughter, admitted she was going round for her sweetheart, which may have been the reason that she went with so much alacrity. They go round the first heap of stones on the side of the mountain seven times, round those at the top seven times, some of them fifteen times, saying prayers and picking up and depositing a certain number of pebbles. They go on their knees to St. Patrick's altar, on which is an old piece of alloyed metal which is called 'St. Patrick's Bell,' with which, it is said, he drove all the reptiles out of Ireland. They say it is an unknown metal, and has been preserved for fourteen hundred years."

1827—1834. Anatomy Troubles and  
Legislation



1827—1834. ANATOMY TROUBLES AND  
LEGISLATION

THERE has always been some practical difficulty in the way of the proper teaching of anatomy in Britain, as the requisite means of instruction are not easily obtained. In former times this obstacle very greatly hindered the progress of medical teaching in England and Scotland, and although in Ireland the means of practical instruction were more easily supplied, yet even there this difficulty was a constant source of anxiety to the Professor.

To devise some effective method of overcoming this hindrance was long an anxious subject of thought in Macartney's mind ; and as the trouble of procuring bodies chiefly arose from a false sentimentality, he concluded that the only way to educate the public opinion on the subject was by teaching in the first place those in the more cultured walks of life that there is



nothing necessarily repulsive or inhuman in the study of practical anatomy.

With this intent he wrote to the various Dublin newspapers on the subject; and in his public lectures impressed upon those attending, as forcibly as possible, the importance of human anatomy and physiology as branches of general education.

“Unfortunately the meanest and most worthless knowledge is preferred to it. Instead of physiology constituting a part of universal education, it is considered as a study only fitted for a particular class of men. The shape or fashion of a garment is thought of more importance than the body it is intended to cover.” “One will pore over the pages of history, which, with the exception of the mythic history of the heroic age, is little else than a record of human folly and crime, and will yet neglect to study the nature of man and those physical springs from which his emotional nature is moved. Years are spent translating writings from one tongue into another, but a few months will not be spared to understand the organs by which these languages have been uttered or heard.”

Having more faith in the influence of example

than in mere precept, he believed that the public mind would be more forcibly impressed if a large number of persons of position would bequeath their bodies for purposes of dissection, and he urged upon his friends and pupils the advisability of so doing.

Several persons acted on this suggestion, and the first of these bequests was carried out in 1827. A former pupil, Dr. James J. O'Connor, had directed his body to be given up to Dr. Macartney after his death, on condition that Surgeon-General Cheyne, Sir Arthur Clarke, and Dr. William Stokes should be present at the dissection. O'Connor died of consumption on June 13th, 1827, and his wishes were fully acceded to by his relatives. Macartney placed his skull in his museum, and it is now in the anatomical collection of the University of Cambridge. It is a large, finely-formed skull, and in the hands of Professor Macartney, and subsequently in those of Professor Humphry and his successor, it has been the means of conveying instruction to many generations of students.

Wishing to encourage this system of personal bequest for the good of the human race,

Macartney prepared a long parchment roll, at the head of which he wrote this declaration:—

“We, whose names are hereto affixed, being convinced that the knowledge of anatomy is of the utmost value to mankind, inasmuch as it illustrates various branches of natural and moral science, and constitutes the very foundation of the healing art, and believing that the erroneous and vulgar prejudices which prevail with regard to dissection will be most effectively removed by practical example, hereby deliberately and solemnly express our desire that at the usual period after death our bodies, instead of being interred, should be devoted by our surviving friends to the more rational, benevolent, and honourable purpose of explaining the structure, functions, and diseases of the human being.”

To this roll he himself affixed his name, and in a very short time he had obtained three hundred and fourteen signatures. Among these are the names of many distinguished men—Spurzheim, the phrenologist, Louis Agassiz, Robert Owen the philanthropist, and a select party, male and female, of Owenites, Sir Charles Saxton, and Sir John Lentaigne, the last named having been the last survivor of this distinguished and goodly company.

This curious document is now in my possession, and is of historic interest, although, from the nature of the law, none of the bequests could be enforced. Macartney expected to obtain a thousand signatures, and he would certainly have exceeded his expectations had not the legislation on the subject in 1832 removed the necessity for any such proceeding.

The method in use up to this time for the supply of bodies to the medical schools of Dublin was very simple. Dublin was always remarkable for the number of its pauper inhabitants, as into the city a constant influx took place of the unemployed or vagrant poor from all parts of Ireland seeking work—or maintenance without work. As these congregated in the densely inhabited and filthy streets of the poorer districts, the death rate was, as it still is, disproportionately high.

Adjoining the grounds of the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham on the west side of the city there is a large field which has been the *Aceldama* of Dublin for nearly a thousand years. Here after the battle of Clontarf in A.D. 1014, Murtagh and Turlogh O'Brien, the son and grandson of Brian Boromhe, the Irish King, were buried, and

since that date it has been the resting-place, temporary or permanent, of countless and uncounted numbers of the poor of Dublin. It was a perfectly free burial-ground, unguarded and almost unfenced; and at a neighbouring public-house picks and shovels were kept, wherewith the friends of the dead could dig their graves. The proper name of this now disused cemetery is the "Dublin Hospital Fields Burying Ground," but it was much better known under the by-name of "Bully's Acre."

It was in all respects the most convenient place for the "resurrection-men" to pursue their calling, and at this period some fifty of these "tradesmen," the chief of whom was one Tom Geraghty, were kept in constant employment in Dublin.

Some of these men were usually to be seen loitering about the adjoining public-houses, watching, and often assisting in, the interments. Many of them were nominally undertakers or hearse-drivers during the day, and therefore knew the places of the recent burials. After dark these vultures assembled at certain well-known rendezvous, and with but little concealment despoiled the newly made graves.

The terrible tragedies in Edinburgh in 1827<sup>1</sup> which are associated with the names of Burke and Hare made a vivid impression on the public mind. In Dublin there had often been minor commotions, and those who took part in this traffic many a time risked their lives in conflict with the watchers, especially in the outlying country churchyards, such as Killester, Kilbarrack, Drumcondra and Kilgobbin. In each of these to the present day bullet-marks on several tombstones bear witness to these midnight affrays. Macartney himself in his younger days had had more than one narrow escape, and had once been made prisoner by some soldiers employed to guard a grave. However, the number of "resurrectionists" was so large, and their work generally so easy, that students took much less part in these raids in Dublin than elsewhere.

Hitherto there had been no organised interference with the profession of these "Sack 'em ups" as the "resurrection-men" were colloquially designated, and the supply of bodies was equal to the demand. "Erinensis" estimated the number used for dissection in Dublin in the year 1826

<sup>1</sup> For an account of these see Lonsdale's "Life and Writings of Robert Knox," 1870, p. 73 ff.

as between fifteen hundred and two thousand. This, however, is a little over the mark, and from Macartney's memoranda I believe that the real numbers varied annually between six and eight hundred.

The wild and exaggerated rumours of kidnapping and murder universally prevalent in 1828 were widely circulated in Dublin, and they filled Macartney with anxiety and disquiet. The approach to the anatomy school in Trinity College was not under his control, and as the gate porter openly denounced the practice of anatomy as a nuisance to the neighbourhood, he knew that in case of any riot his museum, the work of his life, would be placed in imminent peril. Again and again he appealed to the Board to give him the command of the outer gate; but his letters were either silently ignored or answered in curt, unfavourable terms. On hearing, some years later, of the burning down of the Anatomy House in Aberdeen<sup>1</sup> he applied again, but in vain.

A new danger arising out of the excited state

<sup>1</sup> The building burned by the mob in 1831 was the private dissecting room of Dr. Andrew Moir, commonly known in Aberdeen as the "Burking House." Moir's father having been a sexton, this place (in St. Andrew's Street) was generally well supplied with bodies.

of the public feeling now threatened the efficiency of the medical school. Most of those interred in Bully's Acre were waifs from the country, buried by their fellow-vagrants at beggars' lodging-houses, or else strangers whose friends were unknown. There was therefore no organised watch kept at the place, and usually no attempt at watching at all. But in this crisis of general excitement, some persons, wishing to obtain popular favour, started a society under the title of "The Humane Society of St. John, to protect the remains of our poor fellow-citizens." A circular was issued stating the objects of the society, and a subscription-list opened "to raise a fund to defray the expense of a sufficient number of men to guard the remains of our poor fellow-citizens, who will be interred in the Hospital Fields Burial Ground, which has been, and still is, the only depository of the bodies of the numerous poor of the city, whose feelings for the preservation of the remains of their relations and friends are as acute as those of their more favoured fellow-Christians."

Macartney saw that, in the absence of any legalised source of obtaining subjects, this society was an agency which, if successful, would effectually interfere with the work of the school,



as similar organisations had done in Scotland and England. Hitherto the price paid to the "resurrection-men" in Dublin had never exceeded two pounds, and seldom amounted to more than ten shillings, while in Scotland ten, even twenty, guineas had been paid for one body. In a letter to a prominent business man in Dublin, whose name was on the committee of this new organisation, Macartney pointed out the twofold evil effect the society was likely to produce—firstly, that it would diminish, or possibly destroy, the medical school of Dublin, which was worth to the city at least £70,000 a year; and secondly, that it would raise the price payable for bodies, so as to prove an irresistible temptation to the sextons of country churches, and he suggested that the money might be better expended in relieving the wants of the poor when alive.

"I do not think," he writes to a newspaper, "that the upper and middle class have understood the effects of their own conduct when they take part in impeding the progress of dissection, nor does it seem wise to discountenance the practice by which many of them are supplied with artificial teeth and hair. Very many of the upper ranks carry in their mouths teeth

which have been buried in the Hospital Fields."

In 1831 he applied to Sir H. Vivian, the officer in command at the Royal Hospital, to prevent the society's guards from watching the Hospital Fields. The General replied that he had doubled the guards at the Royal Hospital because the "Sack 'em ups" used to enter Bully's Acre by the Hospital grounds, and "bodies half decomposed were found frequently lying in various parts of the grounds belonging to the Hospital."

Very soon a serious abuse arose in the society itself. The men chosen as watchers were many of them taken from the lowest class in the city, and they found that they could add considerably to the emoluments of their posts by carrying off the dead whom they were paid to watch. As by their very occupation the Dublin trade was shut out, as being too near to be safe, they enclosed the bodies in barrels and piano-cases and shipped them to Scotland.

The originator of this export trade from Dublin was one Wilson Rae, a Scotchman, said to have been a half-pay Navy surgeon, resident at Irishtown, near Dublin. This person and his wife employed a number of "resurrection-men,"

who went in small parties under his personal superintendence around the city and suburban churchyards. At first they avoided Bully's Acre, as it was in the hands of the "regular practitioners," some of whom were retained in constant employment at regular wages by the private medical schools of Dublin; but when his cargoes were deficient, Rae outbid the schools and bought others from their servants.

The bodies thus collected were put in packing-cases, labelled "pianos," "books," etc., and Mrs. Rae brought them down to the packet, the captain of which received a small percentage on the traffic.<sup>1</sup>

Rae and his wife were eventually arrested, chiefly through the information supplied by Geraghty, and this portion of the traffic was thus cut short.

Shortly after the watch of the Humane Society<sup>2</sup> was established, the persons employed by it became the regular suppliers of Conolly and Murphy, Rae's former subordinates and his successors; and they continued this traffic with but little intermission until Warburton's Bill passed. These guards were armed with guns, swords, and pikes, and they exacted a fee from all persons

<sup>1</sup> See the *Lancet* for 1829.

<sup>2</sup> At one time the income of the society was £800 a year.

burying bodies in the Fields. Two of the watchers were subsequently tried for shooting with intent to kill.

Many exciting stories were told me by the few survivors of these wild days whom I knew. Geraghty and those "regularly in the trade" were furious against Rae's gang, and used every means of doing them harm. One night, he, with McCormick and Sullivan, drove out to the unprotected graveyard around the ruined church of Kilbarrack, near Howth, having heard that a noted wrestler had been buried there that morning. When they reached the public-house just beyond the point at which the railway-bridge now crosses the Howth road, Geraghty saw Rae's gig standing at the door with the horse's head towards Dublin, and his professional eye at once perceived that he had been forestalled. Finding on entering the shop that the three men were new hands, Geraghty hurriedly transferred the burden to their own gig and he and Sullivan drove off while McCormick, getting into the sack, stowed himself away in Rae's vehicle. When the raw "resurrectionists" had finished their dram they remounted the vehicle and drove on. As they passed by the wall of Lord Charlemont's grounds,

McCormick began to groan loudly, and, ripping a hole in the sack, abused them roundly for having "stolen him out of his comfortable coffin," whereupon the theives, overcome with fear, leaped from the vehicle and ran off, and McCormick, emerging from his sack, drove the gig back in triumph, passing the runaways on the road.

Rae's anger at being outwitted was unbounded, and he himself led a party of "watchers" against Macartney's men the next night when pursuing, like Jerry Cruncher, their "agricultural labours" in Bully's Acre.

Meanwhile Cuddy, the obnoxious porter of the Trinity College medical school, continued his endeavours to excite popular feeling against the Professor and his school. Macartney wrote again to the Board informing them that he had reason to fear "that this may be the occasion of riot and may be visited on him (the porter) by the "resurrection-men," a class of people who have been driven by persecution and abuse into a state of desperate courage which renders them more prompt to give what they think just retribution than mercy; and who acknowledge no obligation so strongly as the *lex talionis*." These persecutions had diminished the number of "resurrection-men"

in Dublin, in regular employment from fifty to about twenty of the most determined and unscrupulous ruffians in the city.

So bitter was the persecution that some of the teachers of anatomy had to conceal their "Sack em' ups" in their own houses. In 1827 the late Professor Ellis, of the Catholic University, who was then a partner in Kirby's anatomy school in Peter Street, took pity on two unfortunate "resurrection-men," who were being hunted by a mob, and secreted them in his stable. There they remained until the popular excitement had subsided, but so closely was he watched by his neighbours that it was only on the pretext of carrying food to his dogs that he could bring them the necessaries of life.<sup>1</sup>

To ascertain his own position in the eye of the law Macartney submitted certain queries to the Attorney-General. He asks, Can warrants be issued to search the medical school for bodies? Can people be compelled to give evidence concerning the disinterring and receiving of bodies? And can I be charged with misdemeanour for

<sup>1</sup> For information concerning the London resurrection-men, see "Memorials of John Flint South," by Feltoe, London, 1884, p. 90 ff.

procuring bodies for dissection? To the first and second of these, the Attorney-General replied, "I think not"; to the third, that the possession of a body was no misdemeanour, but the act of disinterring or conspiracy to disinter was. As Macartney had been more than once threatened with personal violence, he asked what course he should pursue for his own protection, and was recommended to swear an information to that effect before a magistrate, so as to have those who threatened him bound over to keep the peace.

As there appeared no sign of the abatement of the popular feeling, early in 1832 Macartney forwarded a petition to Parliament praying that legislation on the subject might be hastened, and recording his opinion that "your petitioner is disposed to think that it would be proper to close all dissecting-rooms in the United Kingdom until the present excited state of the public mind should subside."

"SCHOOLS OF ANATOMY—IRELAND.

"To the Right Honourable and Honourable the Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses of the United Kingdom, in Parliament assembled.

"The Petition of James Macartney, M.D., Professor of Anatomy and Surgery in the University of Dublin,

“HUMBLY SHEWETH,

“That in consequence of the prejudices which prevail with regard to practical anatomy, many medical students are unable at present to acquire a knowledge of their profession, or to comply with the regulations laid down for their education by the different medical corporations.

“That the difficulties of procuring dead bodies for dissection are daily increasing, and unless some alteration be speedily made in the law respecting this subject, the practice of anatomy will, at no distant period, be extinguished in the United Kingdom.

“Your petitioner is persuaded that the impossibility of supplying the anatomical schools in the ordinary way, and not the high price paid for subjects, has been the cause of introducing a species of crime into these countries which is unknown in any other part of the world—a crime that promises, if not arrested, to disturb the feelings of security and confidence which sustain the closest relations of human society.

“Your petitioner is further convinced that no enactment for the legitimate practice of anatomy will answer the proposed end unless the prejudices of the public, which have produced all the present evils, be previously removed—and as the means of accomplishing this object, your petitioner would humbly recommend that, in the first instance, an Act be passed declaring that the dead body is not dishonoured by dissection; that the law which makes dissection a part of the punishment for the crime of murder be repealed; that assignments by deed and bequests of the body for anatomical purposes be made legal and obligatory on executors to fulfil; and that the law which makes it a



misdemeanour to purchase or possess a dead body for dissection be also repealed.

“Your petitioner and near four hundred persons of different ranks in society have signed a declaration expressing their desire that their surviving friends should permit their bodies, after death, to be made useful to their fellow-creatures ; and your petitioner is satisfied that the majority of these persons would bequeath their bodies to particular schools, if they were enabled by law so to do ; your petitioner believes that if other anatomical teachers would act in a similar manner, although it would not furnish the necessary supply to the schools, it would have great influence on the unreasonable feelings of the public, as it would prove, beyond all contradiction, that no disrespect is intended or offered to the dead body by dissection.

“Your petitioner is disposed to think that it would be proper to close all the dissecting-rooms in the United Kingdom until the present excited state of the public mind should subside. This measure would have the effect of convincing all persons of the value and importance of the medical profession to society, more especially under the threatened approach of a malady [cholera] which has proved a scourge to a great part of Europe, and it would prepare the public for the introduction of any measures which the legislature may deem necessary hereafter, for affording ample means for anatomical instruction.

“Your petitioner would beg to observe that, although a certain stock of anatomical knowledge might be laid in by the means of a foreign education, it is necessary that this knowledge should be revived and improved by frequent application to the dead body. It is by such

means that British medicine and surgery have hitherto attained their high character.

“A surgical operation is the dissection of the *living* body, directed by scientific skill; yet the meanest mechanic art would not be tolerated if those who exercised it were as ignorant of its principles, and as inexpert in its practice, as surgeons will soon become in these countries if they continue to be debarred of their only legitimate source of information,

“And your petitioner will ever pray, etc., etc.,

“JAMES MACARTNEY, M.D.,

“Professor of Anatomy and Surgery  
in the University of Dublin.”

While affairs were in this condition Mr. Warburton had presented his revised Anatomy Bill, drafted with the sanction of Peel and with the aid of the leaders of the profession in England. The former Bill of 1829 had been withdrawn mainly on account of the hostility of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Macartney, who had been kept informed of the progress of the measure, went to London to confer with his friends on the subject. He had some time before given evidence before the Select Committee of enquiry which was appointed on Mr. Warburton's motion on April 22nd, 1828, to enquire into the practice of Anatomy. This evidence, which is recorded at p. 106 of the

Report, was severely criticised. Though at first hostile to the form of the legislation, he in the end approved of the principle and general plan of the measure, but was anxious for the introduction of some changes in its details ; and he especially pointed out some clauses which have since come to be regarded as its weakest parts. However, as an imperfect Act would be better than none, when he saw that no amendment could be imported into it without endangering its progress, he withdrew all opposition, supported its extension to Ireland, and returned home. His action in this matter was grossly misrepresented, but Mr. Warburton, though at first misled, eventually understood Macartney's position, and in their correspondence he subsequently thanked him for his friendly assistance in the matter.

On July 19th, 1832, this first Anatomy Act came into operation, which, though not explicitly, yet practically empowered boards of guardians to allow the bodies of those who have been supported by public money, and who have no discoverable friends, when they have remained for a reasonable time after death in the workhouse on chance of being claimed, to be given for the purposes of anatomy ; provided that the person, so

receiving the body, guarantees proper Christian burial for the remains, and performs the dissection in a licensed place, himself being licensed by the Home Secretary; and the place and all its arrangements being under the inspection of a Government Inspector appointed for the purpose. The one weak point in the Act which Macartney pointed out is that it leaves the onus of granting or refusing the permission on the legal custodians of the body, that is on the guardians, thereby putting them in an invidious position in the public eye, and rendering possible the ruin of a medical school at the caprice of a poor-law board. Fortunately, it has been the experience of those interested, that the majority of the guardians are men of sense and judgment, who, fearless of popular clamour, do their duty in this respect. Still it is true that if the law could be amended so as to relieve them from the necessity of giving what must often be an unpleasant vote, it would be a distinct gain to medical education and to the public good. Macartney's suggestion was that the inspector appointed under the Act should have the power to claim and receive all such bodies when necessary. If this were carried out, much anxiety would be saved to anatomical

teachers in Britain. Is it too late to hope that such an amendment may yet be made?<sup>1</sup>

While over in London on the business of the Anatomy Commission he was not unmindful of his desire to keep abreast of the scientific improvements of the year, and notes in his diary his visits to the several medical schools and museums. Among other places visited was the collection of Deville, the phrenologist. Macartney had, many years before, pointed out in his lectures the weak points of phrenology, but believed that there was some, as yet unknown, localisation of functions in the brain. He asked Deville to examine his head, and notes the record: "Construction, good; perception of magnitudes and lines; a natural turn for drawing; dislike to gaudy colours; a desire to control and regulate those under my direction; argumentative and positive; a sufficient command of words for my purpose, but no oratory; ambition, the leading object of my mind, but checked by a sense of justice; perseverance; great fondness for children and place, and strong attachment to friends."

In February, 1830, he received from Dr. Wood, of Bandon, a remarkable specimen illustrative of

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix on "Anatomical Legislation"

the marvellous recuperative power of the brain, the record of which is well worthy of being put beside the classical "Crowbar" case of the American surgeons. The subject, when a lad of ten, had fallen from a cart, upon the point of a pitchfork which pierced his head from the orbit to the parietal bone and was so firmly impacted that the projecting point had to be hammered back. He recovered after a very short period of suffering, having some slight loss of memory, but being otherwise little the worse, and died of an affection quite unconnected with the accident ten years later. The specimen was sent to Macartney, who found the track of the wound to have become cicatrised, but no other brain mischief was detectible.

Soon after he received a similar specimen; a portion of bone which had been removed, by trephining, from the skull of a boy who had fallen on an open penknife. The blade pierced the bone, entered the brain, and broke off. The boy recovered without a bad symptom, and was perfectly well when Macartney last heard from his correspondent. These cases led him to make, on the brains of rabbits, a series of experiments which were of a very singular and instructive character.

About this time there occurred a vacancy in the parliamentary representation of the University, owing to the dissolution in 1831. The medical graduates of the Dublin University, although not numerous were influential, and a committee was formed among them to urge Macartney to stand for one of the seats. This, however, he declined, as he knew that his views, especially with regard to legislation for Ireland, were of so advanced a character, that they would not be acceptable to many of those who would, on private grounds, have wished to support him. He wrote a letter, therefore, to *Saunders's Newsletter* expressing his thanks to those who wished to put him forward, but absolutely declining to become a candidate. He, however, urged the importance of the representation of the medical profession, with respect to whose interests "the most shameful ignorance and indifference have hitherto been evinced by the legislature" (*Saunders's Newsletter*, Sept. 12, 1832).

During 1833 he visited Cambridge on the occasion of the meeting of the British Association, and was Vice-President of the Medical Section of the Association. He was domiciled in Trinity College and met with great kindness from

Professor Clark, Dr. Haviland, Dr. Thackeray, and others, of which he preserved lively memories through his life. The only papers which he read at the meeting were on the structure of the nervous system in man, and on the survival of buried toads. In the second of these papers he detailed experiments which proved that if a toad be closely shut up it speedily dies, if loosely enclosed it can survive for a considerable time.

On Thursday, August 21st, the degree of M.D. was conferred upon him by the University of Cambridge. This year his class petitioned him to publish his lectures, but he declined to do so, as he shrank from the labour involved in such an undertaking.

While in London in 1833 he gave a public demonstration of the structure of the brain at King's College, in the presence of Owen, Partridge, Clift, Kiernan, Green, Mayo, Stanley, and others.

In 1834, the third of the seven year periods of tenure had expired, and a new election was necessary. Early in the year the Provost read to the Board a letter from some one "whose name he was not at liberty to divulge" in which it was stated that Macartney had given evidence before the medical committee of the House of



Commons hostile to Trinity College; that he had recommended the formation of a State examination in London for the granting of medical degrees and of unifying the qualification to practise in the three kingdoms; and had suggested that all students should be compelled to attend the London Hospitals for two years. These charges were untrue in the form in which they were brought forward and, in any case, were not to the purpose in the matter of the election. However, the Provost proposed that advertisements should be inserted in many papers, both local and English, instead of the statutory notice in the *Gazette*. These were again so worded as to make it appear as though the chair were really vacant. This was so manifestly unjust that Macartney thought he had good reason to protest, but when his protest was communicated to the Board, the Provost proposed that they should then justify their advertisement by publishing a resolution declaring the chair to be really vacant. Unfortunately, for this scheme, the precise date at which the seven years had expired was past; so Macartney again protested that they could not declare by resolution that they had caused him to vacate his office when the

post was simply vacant by efflux of time. He also, as he had done before, inserted a notice in the medical papers to the effect that he intended reapplying. In consequence of this no other candidate appeared.

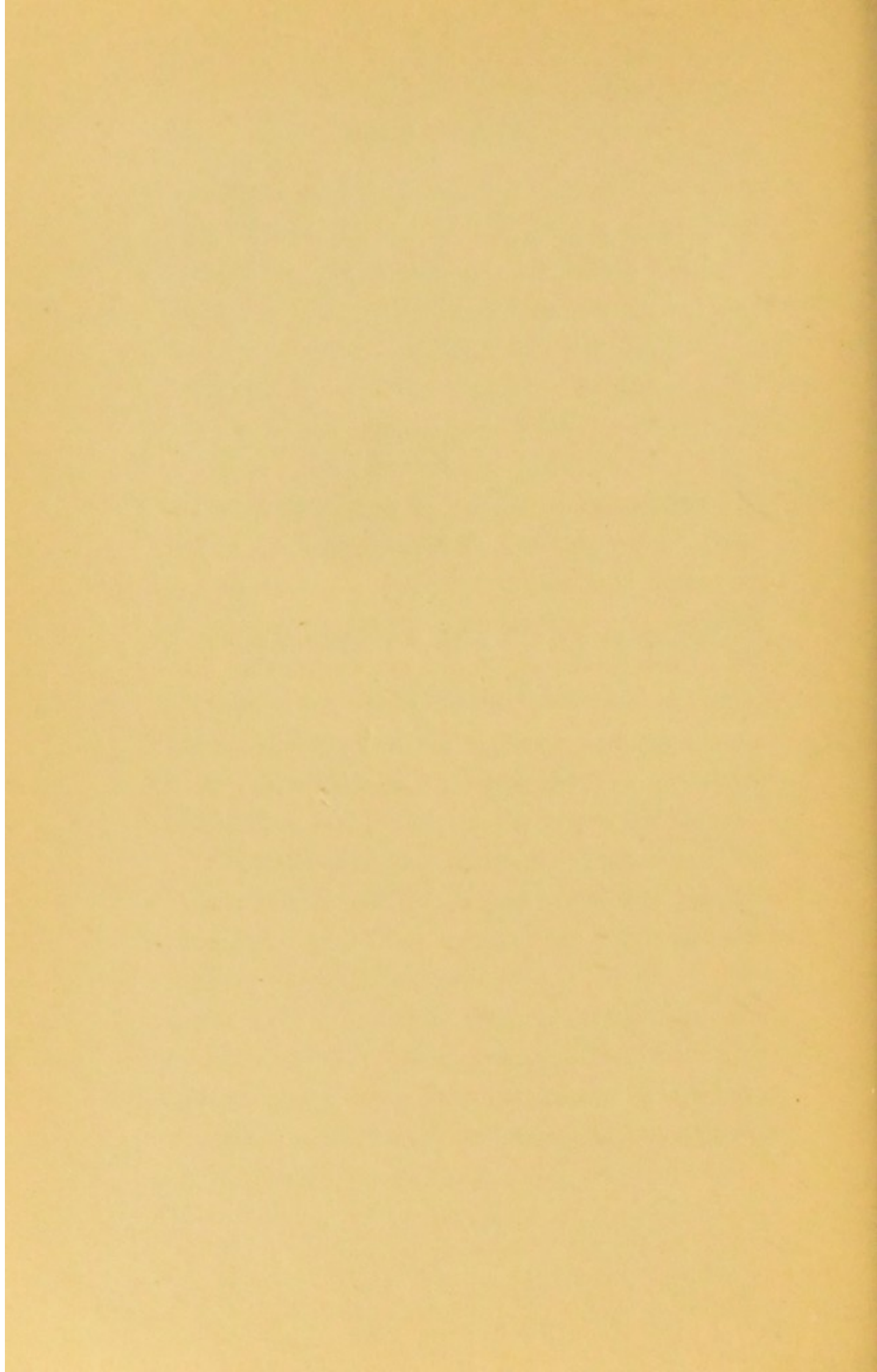
There is a melancholy interest in reading the letter which he sent in signifying his re-application.

“The present is one of the very few occasions in which it becomes justifiable to speak of one’s own conduct and qualification. I have now filled the office for twenty-one years, and the best evidence I can offer of the manner in which I have discharged my duties is to contrast the present state of the school with what it was when I was appointed. During Dr. Cleghorn’s time the class varied from eighteen to seventy-four pupils, and in that of my immediate predecessor it was reduced to seventeen. I found the College collection of preparations going to decay, and not a single preparation added by those who preceded me. At that time the medical school of the University was unknown out of Ireland, and certificates of attendance were mere matters of form. Since my appointment the class has increased to upwards of

two hundred pupils, many of whom have come from abroad. Some of my former students are now filling professorships. I have formed a collection of preparations, both in natural and morbid anatomy, which, for the purpose of teaching, is superior to any in the United Kingdom. I have introduced a degree of discipline into the school which has given a character for general propriety of conduct to the pupils greater than that of any other school in the city. I have extended the course of lectures to double the number they were formerly, and have given annually a course of lectures on pathology, which is now considered, in other places, a subject of the highest importance, and I may be allowed to state that I have only missed one lecture during the last seven years."

When the date fixed for the election arrived and no other candidate appeared, the Provost proposed that the election be postponed for another three months. This, however, was negatived by a small majority, whereupon the Provost and Dr. Wray rose and left the room, and the remaining Fellows proceeded with the election, unanimously reappointing Macartney for the fourth period.

1834—1837. Further Persecutions  
and Resignation



1834—1837. FURTHER PERSECUTIONS  
AND RESIGNATION

THE Professorship which Macartney held in Trinity College is entitled that of anatomy and chirurgery; and to him the teaching of both subjects was committed. During the third year of his tenure of office he had divided his lectures into two concurrent series and, later, he had gradually expanded the surgical portion of his course, delivering extra lectures on this subject at the latter part of the session. On this account it was frequently necessary that his students should remain in town a month after the close of the official medical session.

When the great cholera epidemic of 1832 burst upon the city, he was engaged in delivering these supplementary surgical lectures. Some of the private medical school teachers took occasion to raise an outcry against him, and letters were written to the newspapers calling on the

Government to interfere and order Macartney to stop his anatomical course, saying that he was thereby helping in the diffusion of cholera. To this he replied<sup>1</sup> that he had at that period ceased lecturing on anatomy for the year, and had refused to allow any bodies which had died of cholera to be brought into the College, while it was a matter of notoriety that such had been openly dissected at the College of Surgeons and elsewhere.

In 1831 the University of Edinburgh made a regulation declaring that no course would be recognised either in anatomy or surgery unless it consisted of lectures delivered on five separate days in the week, and continued through the winter six months. This regulation seriously affected his class, many of whom desired to seek the Edinburgh degree. Comparatively few of them graduated in Dublin as there degrees could only be obtained by those who had previously graduated in arts. It, therefore, became necessary for Macartney to comply with the regulation of the Scottish University in order that his certificates should obtain recognition there.

To enable him to suit his arrangements to this rule, he wrote in September, 1832, to the

<sup>1</sup> *Dublin Morning Post*, April 24th, 1832.

Provost, Dr. Bartholomew Lloyd, asking the sanction of the Board to the division of his course, and proposing to continue lecturing on anatomy as heretofore at one o'clock, and to give a concurrent and separate course at three o'clock four days in the week, thus doubling his work. This the Board sanctioned on September 29th, 1832, and Macartney accordingly wrote to Dr. Barker, secretary to the Professors, apprising him of the fact in order that the advertisement of the school should be correctly drawn up; and during the years 1832, 1833, and 1834, this double course continued, without interfering with any other part of the work of the school.

On December 18th, 1832, Dr. Lendrick was appointed to the Regius Professorship of Physic, and in the course of the session 1834-5, the new Professor found that the hour of three o'clock would suit best his own private arrangements for the delivery of his lectures. Finding that Macartney's lectures drew the whole class to them during that hour, Lendrick applied to the Board of Trinity College, in order to compel Macartney to alter his time of lecture. There were great difficulties in the way of any change. Macartney refused to lecture during two consecu-



tive hours, as not affording the requisite time for the making of preparations for his class, both courses being practical; besides, the continued speaking for two hours was too severe a strain upon voice and brain. He could not take a morning hour, as hospital attendance occupied that time; while the evening hours were out of the question because such would probably have increased the irregularity in conduct of the students, "more especially as the only entrance permitted to the Anatomy House is through a lane where there is a gambling pothouse, in which several of the students have been scandalously demoralised even during the day."

As the history of this correspondence has been often referred to in an incorrect form, I hereby append the actual texts of the several letters which passed between Macartney and the Board on the subject.

*From Dr. Macartney, to the Provost of Trinity College.*

SEPTEMBER 28TH, 1832.

MY DEAR SIR,—Some regulations were made last year in Edinburgh, by which no course of anatomy or of surgery will in future be recognised as such, unless the lectures be delivered *five* days in the week, during the winter six months.

I don't think this time too great to devote to subjects of so much importance: but if it were otherwise, our school would lose credit by not furnishing as full courses as are expected

elsewhere; and the interests of all the Professors, as well as mine, would be seriously injured, if the numerous class of medical students that graduate in Edinburgh should be compelled to obtain their qualifications in anatomy and surgery in any school except our own. Much inconvenience has been always experienced both by myself and the students, by having only *one* hour in the day allotted to two courses of lectures (anatomy and surgery), each of which is a subject of greater extent than those taught by the other Professors.

I have been obliged, hitherto, to detain the pupils in town after the medical session, and lecture sometimes three times a day; and even so, have not satisfactorily terminated my lectures. I should add, that I am at present necessitated to give on surgery a *shorter* course than any other, on the same subject, in the United Kingdom, or, I believe, in Europe. Under all these circumstances, I only wait the sanction of the Board, to prolong my courses to the necessary extent: and I shall be much obliged by your bringing the matter before the Board, if you can, before you leave town, as the time has arrived for making the winter arrangements.

Yours truly,

JAMES MACARTNEY.

UPPER MERRION STREET.

*From the Provost, to Dr. Macartney.*

MY DEAR DOCTOR,—The Board has agreed to sanction your proposal of lecturing at three o'clock, *four* times a week, in surgery, in addition to your lectures every day in anatomy.

Yours very faithfully,

BAR. LLOYD.

PROVOST'S HOUSE, *September 29th*, 1832.

*From Dr. Macartney, to Dr. Barker, Registrar to the Professors in the School of Physic.*

LUCAN, *October 4th*, 1832.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,—I have obtained the authority of the Board for using the hour of three, four days in the week, to

enable me to give the full course of surgery,—I need not, therefore, come into town to attend the meeting of Professors to-day. The Provost says he sees no objection to two Professors lecturing at the same hour, as the pupils have three years to attend us all.

By fixing ten o'clock for visiting the hospital, an hour would be gained for the lectures; and the patients would then be able to get, in proper time, the medicines prescribed for them.

Shall I trouble you to drop me a line to say what you do at the meeting?

Yours truly,  
JAMES MACARTNEY.

TRINITY COLLEGE, *October 13th, 1835.*

SIR,—I am directed, by the Board, to communicate to you their order of this day, which is as follows:—Ordered, that Dr. Macartney shall not lecture at the hour from three to four o'clock—that hour having been already assigned to another of the Professors of the School of Physic.

I am, with much regard,  
Your very humble Servant,  
ROBERT PHIPPS, Registrar.

TO JAMES MACARTNEY, Esq., M.D.

Resolved by the Board, that this order be communicated to the King's and Queen's College of Physicians, through their registrar.

The aforesaid order having been violated, it is now further ordered that the doors of the Anatomy House shall be closed from three to four o'clock every day.

By direction of the Board,  
ROBERT PHIPPS, Registrar.

*November 28th, 1835.*

*From Dr. Macartney, to Dr. Phipps.*

UPPER MERRION STREET, *December 4th, 1835.*

SIR,—The enclosed memorial was prepared and signed by a majority of the class attending me; and would have been

signed by all (except three or four, who are not seeking information, but the technical qualification of a certificate), when a report was heard that those pupils would be fined who should sign any memorial.

I therefore send the copy of the one adopted, for the inspection of the Board; and beg to know if the memorial will be received with the signatures of the pupils, without visiting them with any blame.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

JAMES MACARTNEY.

In the correspondence that ensued, the whole professional staff of the school took Dr. Lendrick's part against Macartney. Lendrick was an influential physician, and his lecture-room at Dun's Hospital had been deserted while Macartney's at the College was full. It was to the anatomy and surgery lectures that the students flocked, and there was a scarcely concealed jealousy of Macartney felt on the part of the King's Professors. Consequently when the time came for issuing the advertisement of the lectures in the School of Physic for 1834, the secretary of the Professor, on his own responsibility, omitted all mention of the lectures on surgery; and on his being asked by Macartney for an explanation of this, he returned an evasive answer.

In spite of this obvious difficulty of readjustment of time, the Board, on October 13th, acting

under Lendrick's influence, ordered "that Dr. Macartney shall not lecture at the hour from three to four o'clock." This interference on the part of the Board was really an unjust innovation, as the permission to lecture from three to four had been actually given by the Board nearly three months before Lendrick's appointment and had been acted on for three years.

This placed Macartney in a difficulty. Most of his class had come to his lectures and paid their fees to obtain certificates for the licensing bodies who require complete courses, so he had either to give back their fees and send the students away, or to disobey the Board. He wrote to the Board begging them not to injure the reputation of their school by curtailing instruction "at a time when in all other universities, including Cambridge and Oxford, the arrangements for medical study are being greatly improved in quality and quantity." Finding that only a very small proportion of his class had any desire to attend lectures on practice of medicine, he thought he might venture to continue his lectures, if those who desired to do so were sent off to Dr. Lendrick.

He had not calculated, however, on the antagonism of the Board. When the news was

brought to that august body, that a mere Professor had dared to disobey them, they determined to take summary and effective measures to secure obedience, so it was ordered (November 28th) "that the Anatomy House be closed every day during the hour from three to four, and that a copy of this order shall be posted on the College gate, and on the hall door of the Anatomy House." Accordingly, without giving the Professor the courtesy of a notice, the next day at three the Registrar, Dr. Phipps, together with a college porter and a locksmith went down in solemn procession, and affixed a padlock on the outer door of the Anatomy House, and placarded the manifesto of the Board on the outer door.

This treatment of the man who had made the reputation of their school, who had raised the numbers of their students from seventeen to two hundred and ten, and for no fault, but a wish to do his duty as thoroughly as he could, was difficult to bear with patience, and Macartney drew up a case, stating his position, which he submitted to counsel. He received a discouraging answer that the Board had acted strictly within their rights, so that he had no legal redress.

In the meantime the students attending the lectures on surgery forwarded to the Board a memorial to the following effect :

“Your memorialists beg leave to state that they are medical students, attending the lectures on anatomy and surgery in Trinity College ; and that many of them have come from England, expressly for the purpose of studying anatomy and surgery in the University. The greater number of your memorialists are matriculated students ; but not being students in arts, are precluded from taking a medical degree here, and are preparing themselves for graduation in the University of Edinburgh, or for the diploma of the College of Surgeons in London, in order to obtain which, *complete* courses of anatomy and surgery are required. Of your memorialists, some have become students in arts, for the purpose of obtaining here a complete medical education, and a medical degree ; and all have enrolled themselves as pupils of the University, in order to acquire that extended and useful course of medical education which the present state of medical science, and the high reputation of the Professor of anatomy and surgery led them to expect. Your memorialists further beg leave to say that they and their friends have made various arrangements which cannot now be altered without great inconvenience, and some pecuniary loss to themselves, in the expectation of attending the lectures on surgery at three o'clock ; and they do not wish, for this reason, to attend any other lectures at that hour. They, therefore, most respectfully beg that the Board will revoke their recent order, and permit them to attend the lectures on surgery, from which they have every reason to expect

the most useful information, and certificates of which are, to many of them, indispensable towards their attainment of a medical degree."

To this memorial the Board did not condescend to make any answer, nor even, I believe, was its receipt recorded on the minutes of the Board. But as some immediate action in reference to the students was necessary, the Professor wrote to the Registrar of the Board on December 8th.

"SIR,—The Board not having signified their pleasure respecting the memorial of the pupils, and the door of the Anatomy House having been locked Saturday and to-day, it may be concluded that it is intended to persist in the exclusion of the pupils from the surgical lectures at three o'clock. Those who propose graduating here are very anxious to know whether the Board will grant the *liceat* for examination, without my certificate for surgery; or if they will accept a certificate for the *imperfect instruction* on *both* subjects, which can be given at *one o'clock*. The hour of twelve (the only one unoccupied by other Professors) would be totally impracticable, as some time is necessary to make arrangements for each of the subjects I teach; and would also be objectionable, as interfering with tutors' lectures, and those on divinity. Some gentlemen are attending me this year who wish to qualify for both the clerical and medical professions, on account of the present uncertainty of provision in the Church. I must beg that the Board will condescend to give me



an answer on these points as involving so seriously the interests of the students.

“I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,  
“JAMES MACARTNEY.”

To this the Registrar replied that the Board would accept his certificate of the course at one o'clock as a course in anatomy and surgery. Macartney, in consequence, published a notice.<sup>1</sup>

TRINITY COLLEGE, *December 15th*, 1835.

In consequence of the proceedings above related, Dr. Macartney, in order to accommodate the pupils as far as possible, has determined to give, *during the present season*, five lectures in the week on anatomy at one o'clock, and one lecture on surgery in the week; and as the latter would be deemed insufficient in every institution except Trinity College, he returns to those pupils who are preparing for the surgical diploma, the money, to purchase the necessary course of surgery from other teachers in Dublin.

While this matter was unsettled, and before the beginning of the session, Macartney had written to his friend Ephraim McDowel, offering him the appointment of lecturer on surgery.

<sup>1</sup> While this matter was pending Macartney wrote to his friend Professor Alison, of Edinburgh, to ask if a course of six months' demonstrations and directions might be substituted for anatomy lecture, but his reply (December, 1835) was that the letter of the statute expressly prevented their receiving such a certificate.

Had he accepted it, he intended to appoint him as his demonstrator, and to hand over to him the portion of his work on surgery. McDowel, however, declined the offer.

Ever since the days of Cleghorn, the affairs of the whole anatomical class had been in the hands of the Professor, who appointed his own demonstrators, and made what arrangements he pleased about the allocation of the fees which were on all sides regarded as his own private property.

Writing to the council of the College of Surgeons regarding the qualifications of his assistant he says :—

“The appointment of demonstrators has always been left to the Professor of anatomy in Trinity College. Both these gentlemen (Drs. Nolan and Carlile) possess the Chief Secretary’s license, and I consider them to be better anatomists and physiologists than any teachers in Dublin; and either of them would be degraded by being compared with the different persons who teach here in haylofts and stables, some of whom have no collections, and would not know a good preparation when they see it. I had three demonstrators—Mr. Cross, Dr. Jacob, and Mr.

Macnamara—before the present gentlemen, all of whom I appointed myself.”

In the autumn of 1836, he attended the meeting of the British Association at Bristol, and read his paper “On the Preservation of Animal Substances” (*Trans.*, p. 99), and a note “On the Organ of Voice in the New Holland Ostrich” (p. 97).

In the following year, Macartney, having carefully considered the amount of matter to be presented to his students in the now much restricted course, sent to the Board a list of the subjects which the time at his disposal compelled him to pass over, and signified to the Registrar of the Professors that he considered it best to give two lectures on anatomy, and two on surgery each week.

This proposition produced a panic among the Professors. Such a course would be glaringly insufficient for either anatomy or surgery—the two subjects which had been the main stays of the school. They saw now, but too late, that their folly had had the effect of closing the school against the influx of those non-university students who had formed the largest element of the class. They appealed to Dr. Sandes, the Bishop of

Cashel, whom they knew had much influence with Macartney. He wrote to Macartney on the subject, but as there was no other possible course open to him, the intercession was in vain. They then resorted to their last expedient, an order of the Board ; who, in order to ascertain how they could best coerce their Professor, stated the case to a barrister, Mr. Pennefather, for his opinion. As a result of this, the order was issued on November 26th, 1836: "that the Professor of anatomy be ordered to deliver five lectures a week, at one o'clock, in the anatomical theatre from November 1st to the end of April. This order to be esteemed a bye-law, agreeable to the twenty-sixth section of the School of Physic, Act 40, George III."

The receipt of this decided Macartney to resign his office. He had, however, begun his lectures for the year, and felt bound to his class to carry them on for this session, and to conduct the examination at midsummer. Accordingly, when these duties were fulfilled, he sent his resignation to the Board on July 11th, 1837. This was accepted, and thus by their own act, and by a continuous course of petty annoyances and persecutions, the University of Dublin lost

the services of the greatest teacher, the best anatomist, the most philosophic surgeon that Ireland has ever produced. His whole period of connection with the College had been on his part a warfare against corruptions and a continuous effort to raise the school, but, like other reformers, he paid the penalty ; and, although every single reform which has since been instituted in the medical school of Trinity College has been simply the carrying out of the changes which he projected and in the prosecution of which he lost, first his popularity and then his professorship, yet in the course of time his name has come to be forgotten as the real author of the reforms, and others have reaped the credit justly due to him.

I have been particular in this chapter to give minutely the details of this final episode, because, in the course of tradition, very garbled versions of it have passed into circulation, and coupled with these there have been the most unfounded and gratuitous aspersions upon his character for which there was not the slightest foundation in fact.

Even this, his last session, was not free from the systematic petty vexations arising from uncon-

ciliating colleagues. The Professor of chemistry publicly announced to his class that the Board would procure a full course of lectures in anatomy next year, and on being asked his authority for this statement, referred him to the "Governors of the School of Physic."

His colleague Crampton, the Professor of materia medica, wrote to the College of Physicians complaining that Macartney demonstrated during his lecture hour. This was not the case. Nolan and Carlile had for years carried on an optional course of midday demonstrations as their predecessors had done during the whole of Macartney's Professorship, but no students were compelled to attend, and in this course the Professor had no concern. The complaint was still more vexatious as Crampton's lecture hour had been ten o'clock, and he had got leave from the Board to change this for his own convenience, without consulting the arrangements of the anatomy school.

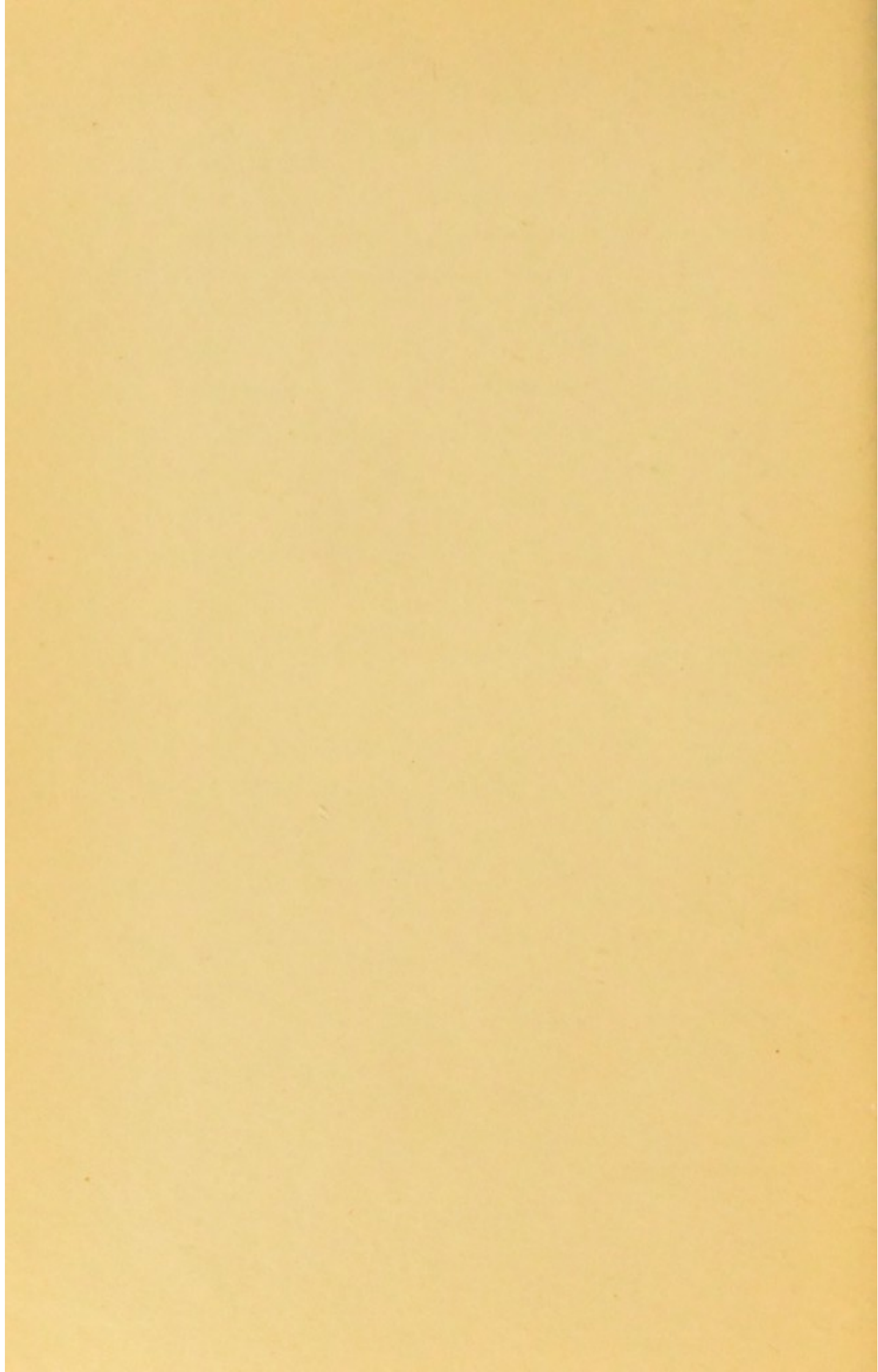
It was little wonder therefore that Macartney terminated without much regret his connection with colleagues so unfriendly and overbearing.

The advertisement of the vacant professorship was at once issued, and to it was appended this

postscript: "All preparations made by the Professor to be the property of the College, but any expense attending them to be defrayed by the College." The election took place on October 21st, and, as had been long predetermined, his old pupil, Robert Harrison, was elected. Carlile, undoubtedly the best man for the post, did not obtain a single vote. The new Professor was as unlike Macartney as any man could well be. He was a man destitute of an original idea, but with a marvellous facility of making up any subject for lecture, and with a fluent, oratorical delivery. He lacked, however, even a general knowledge of practical anatomy, and though he had compiled from Cruveilhier and Cloquet that dreary book from which Dublin students of my day had to learn their anatomy, the "Dublin Dissector," yet his knowledge never rose even to the level of his text-book. We look in vain in the University museum for any traces of his work. Indeed, had it not been for the industry of Mr. Connor, Trinity College would have had, until the last quarter of the century no anatomical museum except the traces of the residuum left by Cleghorn and Hartigan.

1838—1843. Retirement and Last Days





1838—1843. RETIREMENT AND LAST  
DAYS

BEING now relieved from the duties and cares of office, Dr. Macartney set himself to the task of preparing for publication his long-projected work on inflammation. In his annual course of surgical lectures, he had, during the preceding twenty years, expounded those theoretic views and practical observations on this subject which were so peculiarly his own.<sup>1</sup>

He now set to work at the literary task of putting the materials of his lecture notes into a more appropriate form for publication, and he was thus occupied during the latter part of 1837 and the early months of the succeeding year. The work was published by Longmans, in 1838, as a handsome quarto with two plates. It had been looked forward to by many of his friends

<sup>1</sup> This was the partial carrying out of a more ambitious work projected in 1802, which he then proposed to call "The Philosophy of Disease."

with great interest; and those pathologists who were only acquainted with Macartney's opinions through the often distorted traditional report derived from students were desirous of seeing an authorised expression of views which were in some respects revolutionary.

In the light of our present knowledge of the pathology of inflammation, it is needless reviving the old and necessarily crude theories devised before the microscope had been pressed into the service of pathology; and it will suffice to give a very slight sketch of the principles which Macartney most particularly emphasised. He arranged his matter in fourteen sections, dealing successively with the history, phenomena, and consequences, real and reputed, of inflammation. In reviewing his own observations on the comparative pathology of inflammation, he proposes the theory that the power of reproducing lost parts is in inverse ratio to the liability to inflammation, and as man's power of reparation is minimised, so the proneness to inflammation and to the constitutional disturbance there with associated reaches a maximum in him. Much of the reasoning in the early sections is weakened by a vagueness and want of definition in the use of terms, to

some extent unavoidable in the absence of histological criteria. The real consequences of inflammation recognised are engorgement (named by him "chemosis"), œdema, vesication, suppuration, gangrene. Of these conditions he regards suppuration as always due to extravasation. The simple pouring out of lymph on a cleanly cut surface he does not regard as truly inflammatory, and he also excludes ulceration from the inflammatory category. He, on this account, differed from all the older surgeons of the Hunterian school by teaching that the super-vention of inflammation hindered, instead of hastened, the healing of a wound. Thereby he opposed the prevalent doctrine that, as Sir Astley Cooper expressed it, even the wound of the lancet in bleeding could not heal without inflammation.

In discussing wounds, he digresses to speak of those poisoned wounds to which anatomists are particularly liable—which he treated, always successfully, with cleanliness and alum water. On this subject he writes from personal experience, as throughout his whole life he had himself been peculiarly susceptible to the influence of animal septic poisons.

As a method of dressing wounds he had found the application of pure water by far the most efficacious ; and although he had not the credit of being the first inventor of water dressing, that treatment being nearly as old as humanity, yet he certainly deserves credit for having been the first who earnestly and forcibly pressed upon the surgical world the universal applicability of this method of treatment.

The book was extensively read and carefully reviewed. All the critics spoke of it in high terms of praise. The *British and Foreign Medical Review* devoted three articles to the subject, criticising it at great length, but saying in conclusion that "with all its faults it is a most valuable contribution to pathological science and to the healing art." The *Medico-Chirurgical Review*, after a patient and careful analysis, concludes by saying that, "much instruction and more pleasure may be derived from the perusal of Dr. Macartney's volume." The *Edinburgh Medical Journal* says that "the views of Macartney have given an impulse to modern surgery." The *Dublin Journal* says, "It is one of the most important treatises which has issued from the Irish press for many years." The *Medical Gazette*, always

acid and carping in its criticism, admits that "although Macartney's theory is probably not strictly correct," yet that "the practice founded on it is generally defensible, and often laudable," and that "it will be consulted by the student with great advantage." The *Lancet* has a noteworthy and justifiable criticism that "the work has appeared at an opportune time, as the principles of treatment which Macartney had been teaching for many years were now largely adopted, especially on the Continent, where the credit of the treatment had been given to another; and that a recent treatise on the principles of surgery by a Professor attached to a Scottish University<sup>1</sup> contains the major part of Dr. Macartney's peculiar ideas expressed in so methodical and quiet a manner, that any one unacquainted with the history of the school to which Dr. Macartney was attached for so many years would naturally and without hesitation attribute them to the Scottish Professor; yet the name of Macartney is not whispered in the whole work, nor is the slightest indication given of the table under which the crumbs have been gathered." In the conclusion of the review the *Lancet* says,

<sup>1</sup> Liston.

"We do not hesitate to pronounce the treatise of Dr. Macartney to be the most original medical work which has appeared since the days of John Hunter."

In appraising at the present day Macartney's claims to originality, we should remember that he began to teach these views and to use water dressing in his military practice, 1803, and that in the thirty-five years which intervened between that date and the publication of the book, he had been engaged in verifying the practical results of the theory on which his treatment was founded.

It must not be forgotten that it is largely to the teaching of Macartney that modern surgery owes the simplification of the treatment of wounds, and thus his "water dressing" paved the way for that most important development of modern practice, antiseptic surgery. Some of the researches in this work have obtained an abiding place in surgery; thus Sir J. Paget, in his *Surgical Pathology*, adopts Macartney's name "Immediate Union," and gives him credit for being the first to observe clearly that the healing of wounds may be effected without any intervening substance, such as blood or lymph.

Many old friends sent their congratulations to the veteran Professor on the accomplishment of this work. Maria Edgeworth wrote to thank him for a presentation copy; and in her postscript she added a piece of wise advice:—

“Whenever you publish another edition, which must be called for sooner or later, pray bring it out in a small, handy octavo. Quartos are gone out of fashion, lie upon the shelf, not upon the table. Following the present mode and rage for embellishment, perhaps you might give a Vignette on the title page; and, by way of illustration, I should suggest the ‘cut finger’ of Wilkie’s print, with a note upon water dressing; by which water dressing I have profited, and am profiting now.”

Having this care off his hands, he spent the early part of the summer in France, but returned to England to attend the meeting of the British Association at Bristol, at which he was Vice-President of the medical section. In the course of this journey he spent two days in Cambridge as the guest of Professor Clark, and there completed the arrangements for the sale of his museum to Cambridge University.

As far back as the year 1835 he had foreseen



that the changes which were then imminent in the Trinity College school could not fail to depreciate the value of his chair. His health also was unsatisfactory, as his heart showed signs of weakness and he suffered from swelled feet. Accordingly on April 20th, 1835, he wrote to the Registrar of the College to state that, as he might in a short time contemplate the resignation of his Professorship, he wished to know whether the Board of Trinity College were willing to purchase his museum. To this they did not give a definite response, so, on the supervision of those difficulties which ultimately led to his resignation, he offered his museum for sale elsewhere, and at Professor William Clark's recommendation the University of Cambridge gladly accepted the offer.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, in 1836, a year before his resignation, the main bulk of his museum was sent by sailing vessel to London, and thence by waggons to Cambridge. So well was it packed

<sup>1</sup> The Cambridge authorities were influenced to buy the collection not only by the recommendations of their professors Clark and Haviland, but by the enthusiastic praise of the Macartney museum given by the great French anatomist Cloquet, and the distinguished German anatomist Tiedemann. The price paid for the museum was an annuity of £100 a year for ten years.

by him, that it arrived without a single jar being broken or specimen injured.<sup>1</sup>

Within the two years which had since passed, he had mounted many new specimens, and these he desired to present to Cambridge as a supplement to the museum. To make preparations for their reception, he visited the University on this occasion, and notes that he was most kindly received by Dr. Clark and Dr. Haviland, the Regius Professor of Medicine.

At first he had expressed a wish to have his museum kept by itself as the "Macartney Museum"; and in the graces presented to the Senate, it is spoken of as the "Museum Macartneianum." However, Professor Clark wisely pointed out that the University had already 1,300 specimens in their museum, and that when Macartney's 2,007 were added, the whole collection, with future increase, would be more useful as a concrete and classified whole. To this Macartney willingly agreed.

In one of his letters, written in 1838, Dr. Clark says that Dr. Buckland and Professor Owen

<sup>1</sup> He had been offered £300 for the Comparative Anatomy specimens by Oxford, but refused to divide the collection.

had been sojourning in Cambridge examining the collection of fossil saurian bones in the Woodwardian Museum, and that Owen was delighted with the specimens in Macartney's collection, some of which he pronounced not to be surpassed. "Your museum is one of the chief lions of the place—nay, I may say, almost an object of greater interest to visitors than anything else."

Having completed the mounting of these additional preparations, he sent them as a present to the Cambridge Museum, and received a very courteous letter of thanks from the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Worsley, who says:—

"I have not yet had an opportunity of personally examining the valuable accession to the Macartney Museum which you have so kindly sent. The high estimate, however, formed of it by Professor Clark cannot but increase my sense of its importance whether as a positive addition to our resources or as a means of awakening in other distinguished men a similar spirit of munificence and of sympathy with our endeavours in the cause of science."

A second series of preparations, seventy in number, was sent in the ensuing year, and for

these he received a cordial letter of thanks from Dr. Hodgson, the Vice-Chancellor.

On returning to Dublin in October, 1838, he set about improving some surgical instruments which he had from time to time invented. He had devised an artificial leech fifteen years before, but had never perfected it. This, together with a new double tube canula, a probang, and a new tooth elevator, were now the objects of his attention.

In 1839 the attention of the profession was very much occupied by the subject of medical reform, upon which subject Sir J. Graham and other leading politicians contemplated legislation; and it was becoming evident that some steps would be speedily taken by Parliament on this matter.

A little later the various medical bodies in Dublin were energetically setting their houses in order, as they believed the legislation to be nigh. The College of Physicians had a special meeting on May 9th, 1842, at which Sir James Graham was present. He proposed, and Dr. Stokes seconded, that "the College do immediately, and with the least possible delay, adopt all the resolutions relative to collegiate and medical

reform which have been from time to time proposed by Dr. Henry and invariably rejected by the College." The Board of Trinity College had a similar meeting in June, 1842.

As various aspects of the subject of medical legislation occurred to him, Macartney had prepared successive expositions of his views, but he had hitherto refrained from publishing anything on these vexed questions. One of the most interesting of these brochures was in the form of a "Dialogue between M.D. and M.P.," but, unfortunately, only a portion of this manuscript is forthcoming.

The largest and most important of his letters on the subject was one which he contributed to the *Provincial Medical Journal*, and which was published on January 19th, 1839. In this he advocated the formation of a medical register; the election of a medical council; legislation on medical education, education on the qualifications of teachers, on examinations; etc. His views were clear and definite. Certificates should be given to those students only whose attendance at lectures had been *bonâ fide*. Examinations should be conducted practically in the scientific branches, clinically in the practical branches.

Oral examinations should be restricted, to prevent the student from being satisfied with a knowledge of names and words only. On the subject of the qualifications of teachers he held that there should be some public guarantee of their ability, and some supervision to see that they had adequate appliances at their command for the purpose of teaching. Some of his views on this subject had been laid before the Parliamentary Committee of 1828.

The apprenticeship system he regarded as a relic of barbarism, and the multiplication of small medical schools as injurious, tending to make teaching "a mere trade, followed for gain, without any hope of reputation. Pupils are unable to discriminate good from bad teachers, and are caught by the imposing terms of advertisements, or the lower price of the certificate. Free trade is good when people can judge of the articles, but some fundamental legislation is required to limit the competition to *bonâ-fide* competitors, and to ensure that the articles given be sound. We do not apply the '*caveat emptor*' principle to the weight of a loaf, to the using of light weights or adulterated foods."

"Grinding" he believed to testify either that

an examination is so odd and peculiar that a really well-informed man cannot pass,<sup>1</sup> or so slight that no real knowledge is required. History has shown the justice of his strictures, and now after a lapse of forty years we see that the reforms which he advocated have been in most places adopted, and the action of the Medical Council in 1886 in organising an inspection of schools of medicine is, we hope, the first step towards some method of testing the capacity of teachers, the only one of his suggested reforms which has not been carried out.

In these and similar literary labours the next two years passed by uneventfully. He had a very pleasant visit from Ecker, the Embryologist, of Carlsruhe, in 1839, who came to him with a letter of introduction from Agassiz; and he visited many old friends in England, France, and Germany during the summers of 1840 and 1841. In the latter year he acted as umpire in

<sup>1</sup> That some of the licensing bodies in Ireland conducted examinations of this kind is testified to by some of their examination papers. When written examinations in physiology were inaugurated in one of these institutions, two questions out of a small number in one paper before me are on "the haptogen membrane" and "the cravate de suisse"!

the dispute as to priority between Owen and Nasmyth, in reference to the formation of the material of teeth. He had been elected a corresponding member of the Paris Royal Academy of Medicine in 1839, and of the Société Française de Statistique Universelle in the same year. In this year he published his papers "On Means of Stopping Hæmorrhage," "Rules for Finding Arteries," and in the following year "On the Cauda Equina and Filum Terminale."<sup>1</sup>

He was not a strong man, but except for the attacks of palpitation and the swelling of his feet he enjoyed, on the whole, fairly good health, and his literary labours served but to occupy his time and mind, without causing any undue strain. None of his friends had any suspicion that his end was near, although he had himself remarked to Dr. Clark that he did not expect to live for the ten

<sup>1</sup> Several years before, he had accepted the office of Honorary Professor of Anatomy to the Royal Hibernian Academy, and had allowed the art students to attend his University lectures. Although he had ceased lecturing, he retained the office and often gave valuable private instruction to young students of art. This was very much prized at the time, for as Mr. Cregan, an artist of repute in Dublin, stated in a letter to him on his appointment, "The fine arts in Dublin are now very much neglected."



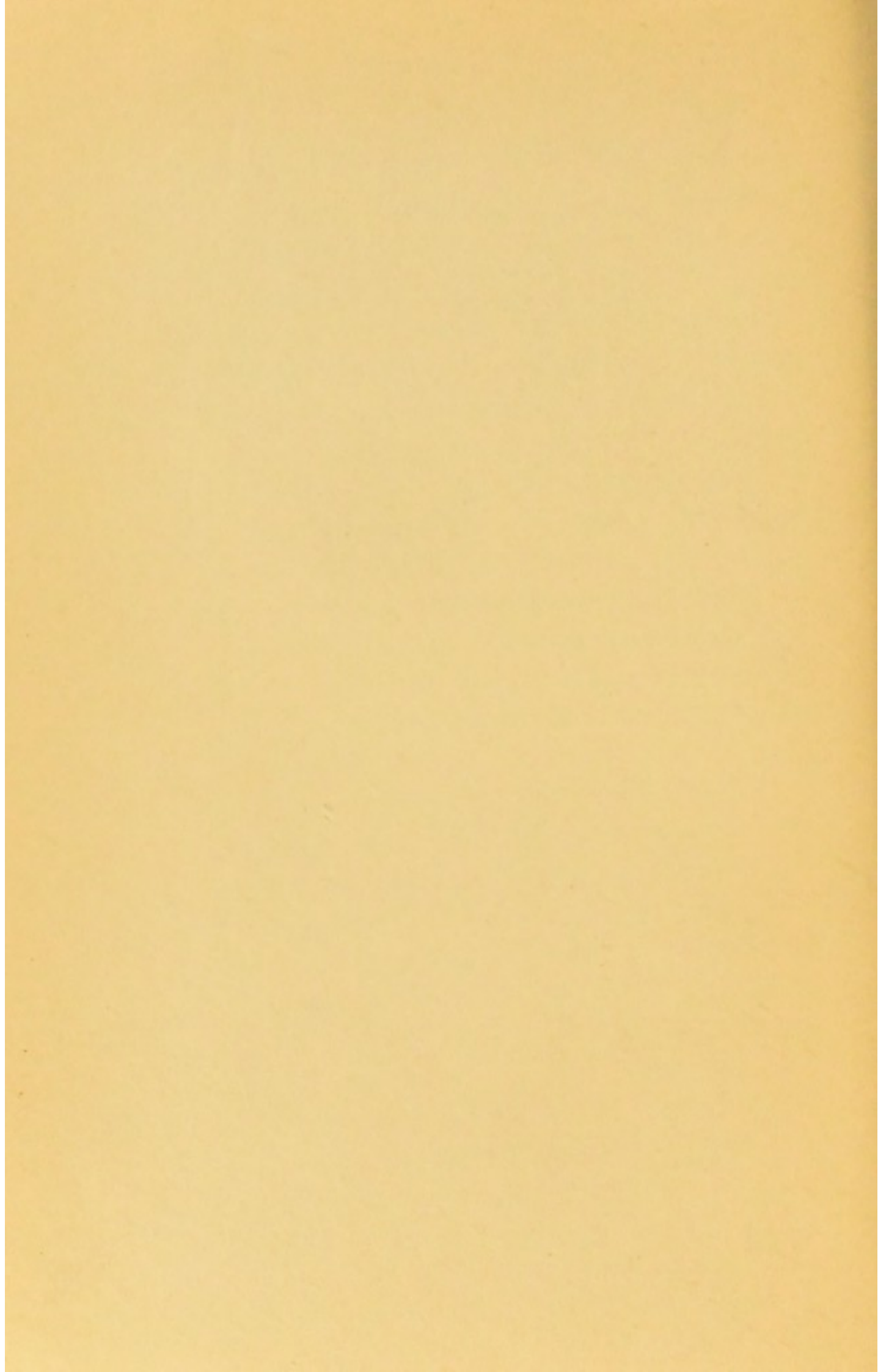
years during which the Cambridge annuity was payable.

Early in 1843 he had been asked to read a paper before the College of Physicians, and had promised them a discourse on "The History of the Development of Faculties in the Animal." In the composition of this lecture he spent the last few days of February. Meeting one of the officials of the College in Grafton Street on Sunday, March 8th, he told him that he had the paper nearly ready. It required but a little addition at the end. On Monday morning he went into his study to finish it, and was some time later found there dead, having ended his paper with these words, the last he ever penned:

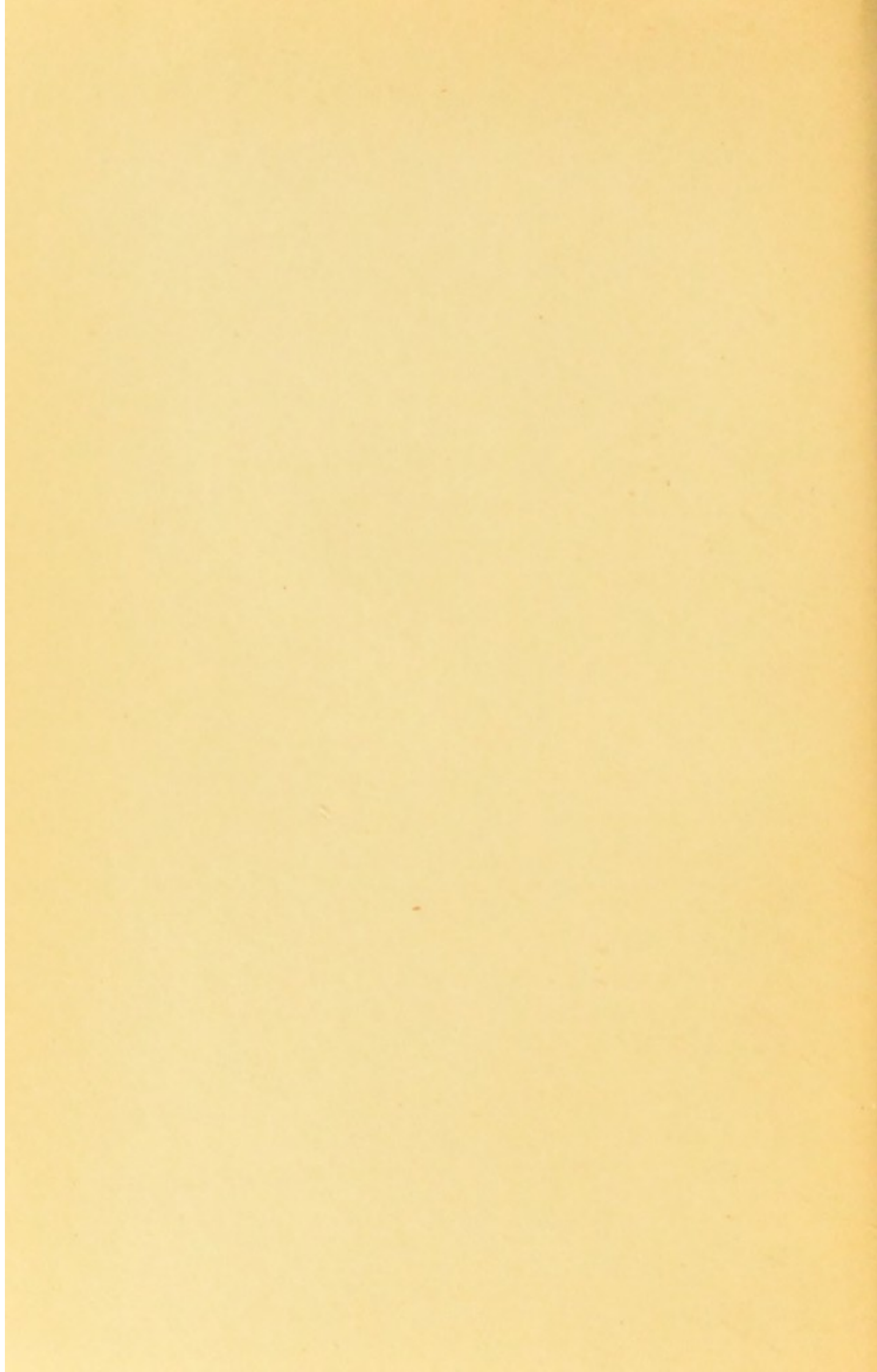
"The last great event is the extinction of the systematic functions which is commonly called death. As soon as the vitality of the tissue is lost, the body becomes subject to the laws of inorganic matter. The greater part of it is exhaled and is carried by the winds and clouds to distant regions, and finally they descend with rains to fertilise the earth. We thus repay our great debt to nature, and return the elements of our bodies to the common storehouse. Thus ends this strange, eventful history.

“‘ All forms that perish, other forms supply:  
(By turns we catch the vital breath and die,)  
Like bubbles on the sea of matter borne  
They rise, they break, and to that sea return.’”

At this point the pen had evidently dropped  
from his hand.



## Conclusion



## CONCLUSION

I N reviewing the records of Professor Macartney's eventful and much-trying life, there is little difficulty in discerning, between the lines, the real inner life and character of the man. Educated as a Unitarian, he adhered to that system of faith and morals through life, but did not formally commit himself to any creed, looking with suspicion upon all cut-and-dried systems of dogmatic theology. When, on his election to the Professorship, he was compelled to take the oath abjuring the Pope, Popery, and the Pretender, he is said to have asked the Provost whether there was any other system he was expected to repudiate! Himself reserved in the expression of his religious opinions, in a country in which polemical rancour is often in the inverse ratio of heart religion, he had learned to distrust the obtrusive profession of any peculiarity of belief.

Although brought up in a school which

professed to respect reason rather than revelation, he had a strong vein of religiosity pervading his inner life, and when he approached in his thoughts the mysteries of the Divinity, it was with an awe and reverence born of his insight into nature. Indeed, it was the spirit of repugnance to the anthropomorphism of the Deity as represented in the Jewish writings which repelled him as it has repelled others. He held strongly the Pelagian theory of original innocence, and rejected the Calvinism of his early surroundings as irreconcilable with his belief in free will. From his observations in Wales and Ulster he believed that in its effects it was provocative of laxity in morals. Trained in his early life in an atmosphere disturbed by the storms of political and of religious strife, he had come to the conclusion that dogmatic religion, instead of promoting the divine spirit of Christianity, was the great hindrance and the provoker of dissension, and he longed for a religion more after the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount and less after that of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

“The improvement of mankind depends little upon precept, but almost entirely on discipline and example. The first gives the power of regu-

lating the passions and of exercising all the powers of the mind with a settled or chosen purpose—in other words, gives self-command; the second stimulates all the good that is in human nature, without which mankind would only have the excellence of machines.”

In some speculations written—but evidently not for publication—during his later years on “Elementary Grounds of Opinion and Belief on Moral and Religious Subjects,” he expresses peculiar Manichean views on the origin of evil. He believed that it was not in accordance with the character of a perfectly benevolent Deity to give a revelation, as, knowing the intolerance necessarily associated with the consciousness of a special knowledge of God’s will, “every revelation, no matter whether it be real or supposed, must produce hatred and persecution amongst mankind, even though it inculcate universal love and brotherhood as its most important precepts.”

He was essentially an investigator, and carried on his researches through life in matters ethical and sociological, as well as in the domain of physical science; inclined to take nothing for granted, but desirous of submitting every statement to the test of experience. This was one of the



inducements which led him to spend so much of his recess time in Wales, as among that imaginative and excitable people whom he knew so well he had better opportunities than elsewhere of watching the practical outcome of the many varieties and vagaries of religious opinion current in the Principality.

In his philosophical system he was the disciple of no particular school, although widely read in the metaphysics of his day. His views, as expressed in some sections of his manuscript lectures on psychology, resembled those of Bain, perhaps, more closely than those of any other leader of thought. Condillac, Spinoza, and Hobbes were also favourite authors, and he professes his indebtedness to the first named of these.

In one of his lectures in 1825 he expounds his views on creation as being the "gradual combining of elements into forms," with the query, "How were the elements created?" "The supreme knowledge of the Deity places the elements in such circumstances that they can act and be acted upon." The most rational conclusion is that supreme Wisdom and boundless Power have constituted laws which are unchangeable, and from whose interaction the present forms have arisen;

so that, by some natural law which we cannot command at present, natural forces were probably the means of originating vitality, and so that which is called the creation of the first of each species is probably, after all, a natural phenomenon.

In sociology he held peculiar views. At one time he was interested in the system of Robert Owen, but he had little sympathy with the eccentricities of that visionary, who called himself the "High Priest of the New Moral World." It is with unconcealed impatience and contempt that he records finding him masquerading at a festival with a black gown and a false beard, personating Diogenes, but carrying his lantern unlit, as he did not expect to find an honest man under the old system. He examined where he could the different communistic systems which had been proposed, and found them all wanting, although he thought that hidden in these there was the germ of some ideal and successful sociological system as yet undiscovered. Politically he was an advanced but rather theoretical Radical with a large programme of reform. He believed that Government should take in hand the education of the people, that this should be made compulsory, but that it should

be a wise and suitable education of a thoroughly practical kind. Free trade was not with him the fetich it has since become to so many. He regarded it as good in theory but injurious in practice unless trade were free everywhere. He believed that the prices of the absolute necessities of life should be regulated by Government, that the laws of primogeniture and of entail and the game laws should be abolished, that there should be a graduated income-tax, that waste lands and royal forests should be cultivated by Government, and that co-operation of industry and trades unions should be encouraged within limits.

He believed that Government should fix a uniform tariff for travelling, that peerages should be only for life and should be rewards for merit, and that no clergy should sit in either House of Parliament.

In his moments of recess he cultivated music, and was no mean performer on the flute.

The state of Ireland was an ever-present subject of anxious thought. He was sceptical as to the success of any scheme of government of Ireland emanating from English politicians, and more than once expressed in forcible language the sentiments which Sydney Smith has embodied

in his well-known words: "The moment the very name of Ireland is mentioned, the English seem to bid adieu to common feelings, common prudence, and common sense, and to act with the barbarity of tyrants and the fatuity of idiots."

We have seen that in his early life he was an ardent Nationalist and United Irishman. Writing to a friend—Mr. Forster—much later (in 1831) on this "truly difficult and intricate question," he notes the want of employment for the lower and want of capital among the upper classes. He blames the people for their reckless character, their want of self-respect produced by long years of Protestant oppression, and he notes that "depression is rapidly changing into discontent, and this has been aggravated by the proselytising systems which have been allowed to be carried on under Government patronage. The insecurity of property and uncertain administration of the law in Ireland keep out capital, while the insufferable and ignorant pride of the middle ranks of the people, aping a non-existent aristocracy, prevents them from engaging in trade."

"The whole system of parochial and Grand

Jury assessment wants reformation ; rents are too high ; tithes are oppressive to Catholics, and the poor relief cannot but be administered with partiality." "No expenditure of public money would do permanent good in the way of employment, but might be used beneficially by opening up free communications. Every encouragement should be given to trade and agriculture." "But the most prominent evil is the inordinate Church property, which the Catholics look upon with envy and jealousy, and there will be no peace for Ireland until that bone of contention is entirely removed." "The Catholics and Dissenters, who may be said to make up the mass of the people, will never be content while paying so largely for the support of a religion which they do not believe, and which they have been taught to consider, with too much truth, to be the chief cause of their oppression." "A tax on absentees could easily be evaded, and would reduce the value of land, for who would on any terms be compelled to live in a country where his life would be insecure?" "Absenteeism I do not consider to be the great evil which it is sometimes believed to be. There is as much poverty around the resident gentry as elsewhere, and in

the north, where there are so few great resident landowners, the people are as well off as they are in England." "Any changes made in the law will be very slow in manifesting their effects. A long time is needed to change the idle, dirty, careless habits of the people, accustomed to the many evils of the present system." "The supremacy of the police is a continued irritation to the people and an incentive to them to resist the enforcement of law and order. It keeps up divisions and stimulates to social disquiet." "Waste lands might with advantage be cultivated by poor colonists, as in Holland." "Relief works and mendicity institutions have increased the pauperism of the country and have largely destroyed the self-reliance of the poor."

These words were written seventy years ago, and how far subsequent events have proved to be a commentary upon them we have materials in the recent progress of history to judge. Had he lived at the present day he would certainly have been an advanced Home Ruler, probably rather of the type of Mr. Butt than of Mr. Parnell.

In personal habits and manners Macartney was

quiet and unassuming, although very determined and obstinate in maintaining his opinions. He was slow in making up his mind, and steadfast in adhering to his conclusions. He had a true Carlylean hatred of shams, and a habit of speaking plainly concerning those whom he believed to be hypocritical. In a country where the Government maintains a sham Court, wherein much that is real self-interest appears among one party as a sham loyalty and among the other as a sham patriotism, this disposition continually brought him into unpleasant collisions with his neighbours. Painfully conscientious himself, he had no patience with diplomacy, and much of his want of outward success was due to this uncompromising refusal to curry favour with those in authority. In his domestic life he was undemonstrative, avoided all personal displays, and was careful even to penuriousness in his housekeeping, although he could be lavishly generous in private.

His great power was that of a quick, intuitive perception, but he was deficient in the ability to deal with abstract terms, and had very little sense of humour or talent for generalisation. His memory was also singularly capricious, even from his youth. Although a constant reader and keen

lover of poetry, he could not repeat a single stanza, and he says of himself that he never could either make a pun or expound a riddle.

He attained to greater honour and reputation than any of his professional contemporaries in Dublin. Cambridge had conferred on him an honorary degree, and this example was tardily followed by his own University. He was an Honorary Fellow of very many foreign scientific societies, among others of the French Academy of Medicine, but his profession was never a source of pecuniary profit. He had enough, and made no exertions to accumulate wealth.

The influence of Macartney upon medical thought in Dublin was widespread, although for the most part not acknowledged. Indeed, as might be expected in the case of one who all through his career suffered from the inordinate jealousy of his professional brethren, it was and still is the habit to undervalue the effect of his teaching. Yet I have very little hesitation in saying that whatever of reputation Dublin has had as a school of anatomy has been due to him, for it has been by practising the methods which he introduced, and by adopting his very phrases, that others who came after him have risen into



a local and temporary fame. And it will be little to the credit of the Dublin School of Medicine if it fails in some adequate manner to commemorate the labour and honour the name of this its greatest teacher.

THE END

## APPENDIX ON ANATOMICAL LEGISLATION.

THE first reference to anatomy in the English law is in the Act of 32 Henry VIII., 1540, c. 42, § 2. For many years afterwards there was no other Statute dealing with the custody or disposal of the dead. By an Act of 1 James I., c. 12, it was declared felony to steal a body for purposes of witchcraft, but I can find neither Statute nor judicial decision bearing on the subject until about the middle of the last century, and it is declared by a classical legal authority that a dead body is not property. In the case of *Rex v. Lynn*, 1788, the defendant was found guilty of misdemeanour because it was ruled that to disinter a body was *contra bonos mores*. Shortly after the Edinburgh atrocities of 1826-7 had excited the public mind concerning anatomy, Mr. Warburton, Member for Bridport, moved in the House of Commons (April 22nd, 1828) that a Select Committee of Inquiry be appointed to "inquire into the manner of obtaining subjects for the schools of anatomy and the state of the law affecting persons employed in obtaining or dissecting bodies." Petitions had been presented to both Houses a few days before praying for legislation on the subject, and the matter was discussed in the Commons by Sir J. Mackintosh and Mr. Hume. The

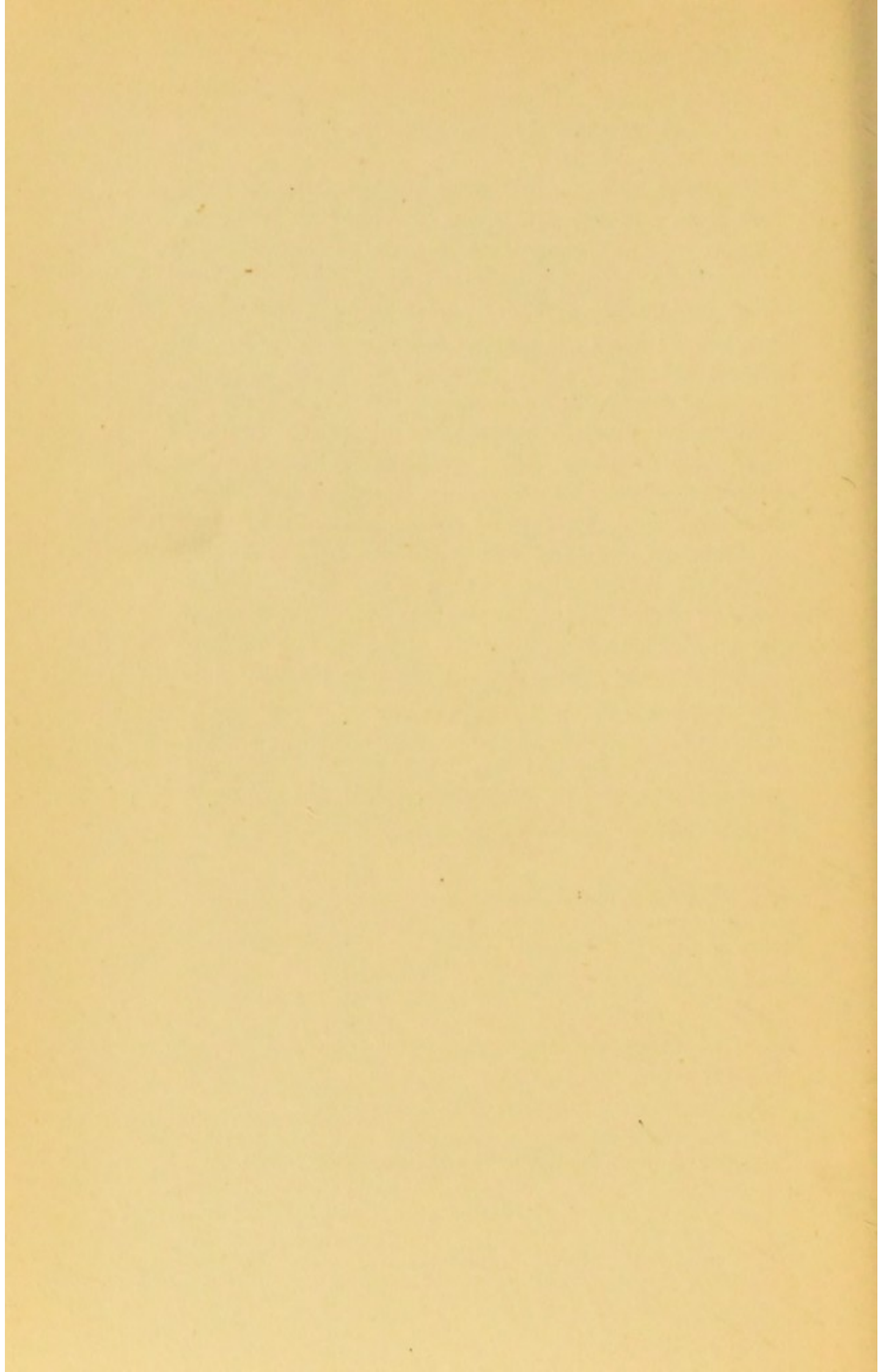
Committee then appointed met on April 28th and at intervals during the following months, and collected abundant evidence, which is published in the fourth volume of Committee Reports for 1828, p. 1. All the leading men—Cooper, Brodie, Abernethy, Macartney, etc.—were examined, as also were Crouch and Butler, the two leading “resurrection-men,” whose evidence is given as that of “A. B.” and “C. D.”

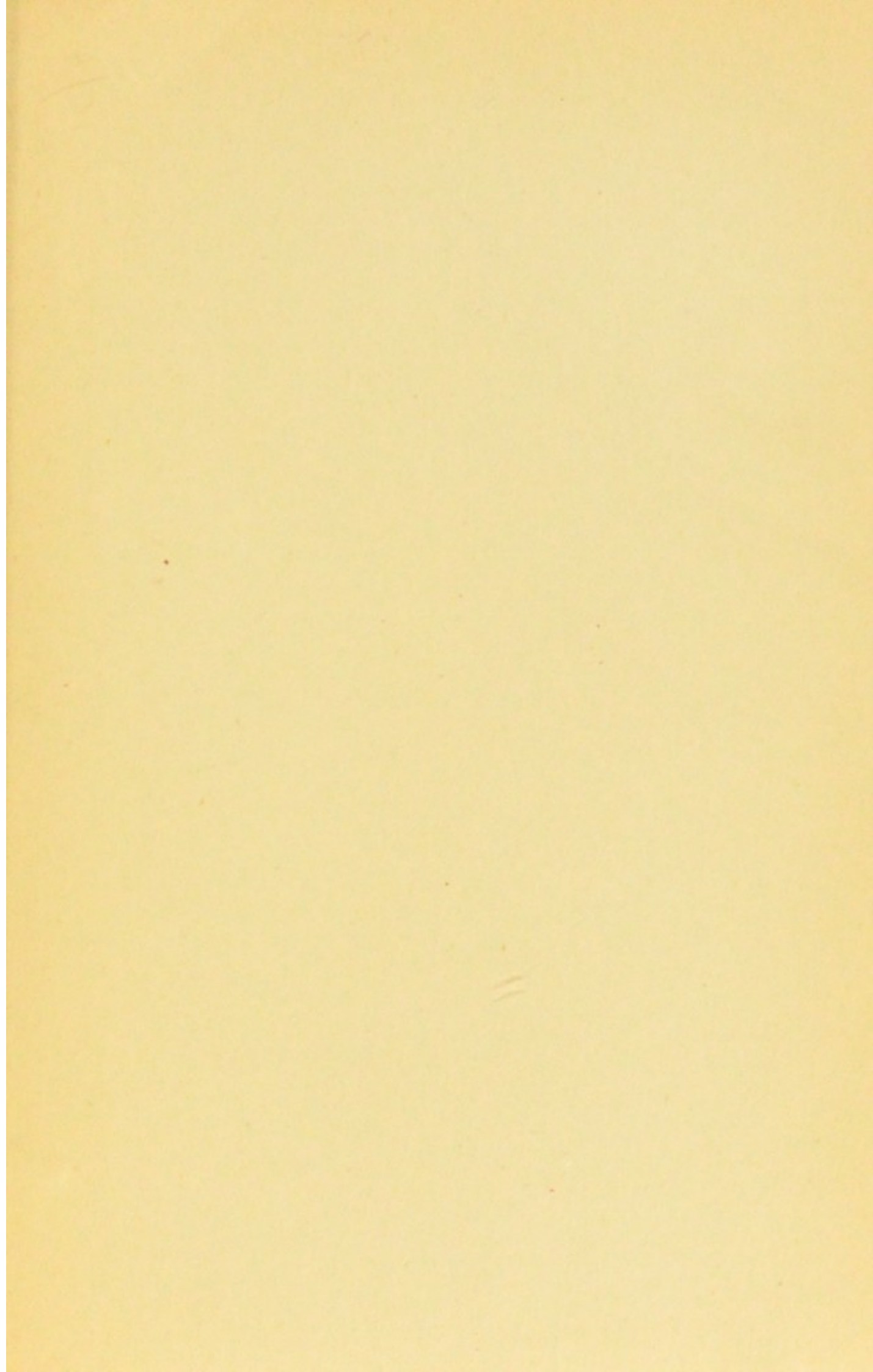
In the following year (March 12th, 1829) Mr. Warburton moved for leave to bring in a Bill to legalise and regulate the supply of subjects. On April 7th he again moved that a Select Committee be appointed to consider and give effect to the recommendations contained in the report of the Committee of 1828. This Committee was appointed, and the first Anatomy Bill was prepared, which was read a second time May 15th, and a third time May 20th. The College of Surgeons petitioned against this Bill, as it did not give that body the control they desired over schools of anatomy. This Bill was withdrawn in the Lords owing to the opposition of the Archbishop of Canterbury, though warmly supported by the Duke of Wellington and Lords Calthorpe and Lansdowne.

Many fresh petitions having been presented praying for legislation, Mr. Warburton, on December 31st, 1831, asked leave to bring in a new Bill on the subject, and, though violently opposed by Messrs. Hunt, Sadler, and Vyvyan, leave was given. This Bill was read a second time on January 17th, but on that occasion the House was counted out. It was again brought forward on the 20th, and, though opposed again by Mr. Hunt, it passed this reading. The subject was several times discussed on the presentation of petitions, some of which were

foolish and trifling. O'Connell strongly supported the Bill, saying in his speech that he hoped he would be dissected when he was dead, that he had endeavoured to be useful while he lived and should wish to be so after his death. The Bill passed through Committee on January 24th, was re-committed and amended on February 27th. On this occasion Mr. Hunt delivered a violent diatribe against anatomy, on which Macaulay commented severely, saying that his attack was undeserving of answer before such an audience. The Bill was subjected to discussion again on April 13th, May 7th, and, after a third violent attack on the part of Mr. Hunt and those who aided him in opposing it, passed its third reading on May 11th. It came before the Lords on June 19th, and was strongly supported by Lords Minto and Rosebery, finally passing on July 19th, 1832, and stands in the Statutes as 2 & 3 William IV., c. 75.

A short Amendment Act was passed in 1872 altering one clause. This was brought in on April 4th, and passed finally May 1st. There was no discussion on it in any stage. It is the Act 34 & 35 Vict., c. 16, § 2.





26





Dublin Journal of Medical & Chemical Science  
Vol VII. 1835 p. 412

Case of Extra-uterine Fecundation by Dr Macartney

By Sir J. Macartney M.D.  
Barrister at Law May 1835

Report to his Son ... Dr John B Macartney of Ferns.

Review of 'A Treatise on Inflammation'  
Dublin Journal of Med & Chem Science Vol XIV 1839  
p. 152

The Rev Dr Gillery p. 175

3695

