

**Address of Sir James Alderson, President of the Royal College of Physicians, to the Fellows on the 11th April, 1870.**

**Contributors**

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A D D R E S S  
OF  
SIR JAMES ALDERSON,  
PRESIDENT  
OF  
The Royal College of Physicians,  
TO THE  
FELLOWS,  
ON  
THE 11TH APRIL, 1870.

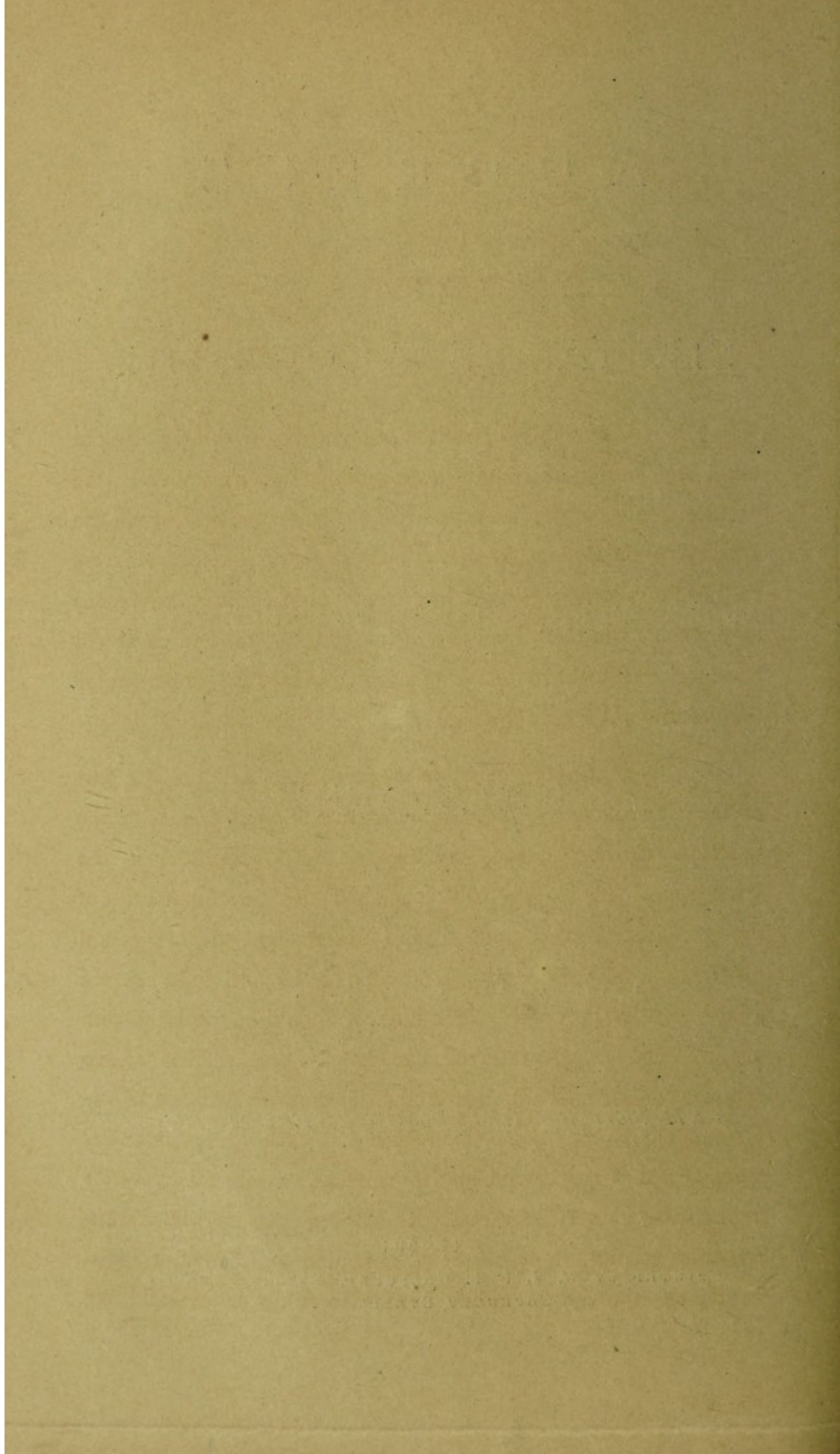
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Wed May 13<sup>th</sup> 1870

Edmund Gibb Bart

## A D D R E S S.

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I have now the satisfaction of laying before the College our usual brief retrospect of the more prominent occurrences of the past year, some of which are not without significant bearing on the Interests of the College, as well as on the general state and progress of the Profession. Though the events which I have to record vary much as to their nature and importance, yet I think it will be more convenient to notice them in chronological order rather than to attempt a classification.

I have first to mention a favourable act on the part of the Government. The Nomenclature Committee, with the sanction of the College, waited on the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and having fully explained to him the nature of the work they had completed, and the reasons why a general distribution of the work was greatly to be desired, preferred a request that all Medical Practitioners should be furnished with a copy. This request received a ready acquiescence, and 20,000 copies have been already distributed by the Government in the United Kingdom, besides many more in British dependencies abroad, and some have been transmitted to foreign countries through the several Legations. The College may therefore consider that the important object of obtaining uniformity of registration has through its means been successfully promoted. We

may also congratulate ourselves that this onerous work has been thus honourably recognized, whilst we rejoice that the Income of the College has been justly relieved from a very serious burden. I must be allowed to remark that the heavy expenditure to which I allude, has resulted from the outlay in printing and publishing, and not from any payments to the Committee, who had bestowed their labours gratuitously. It will be satisfactory to the Fellows, that in accordance with a vote passed by the College, a piece of Plate has been presented to Dr. SIBSON, as an acknowledgment of his services to the Committee as the Honorary Secretary, whilst they will deeply regret that it is impossible to pay a similar compliment to others of the Committee, especially to Dr. BARCLAY, all of whom have borne their part willingly in this arduous undertaking.

The first business relating to the internal affairs of the College, was transacted very early in the year. In compliance with a general wish to ensure a greater certainty that meritorious members of the College should not be overlooked in the selection for the Fellowship ; it was agreed that the Council should receive recommendations, and that such recommendations should be duly considered by the Council. The plan seems to have worked well in the only election of Fellows which has since taken place, inasmuch as several members so recommended were nominated by the Council, and elected by the Fellows.

The Annual Oration given by Dr. OWEN REES may be considered an occasion for mutual congratulation. The College will doubtless join me in earnest solicitude that this foundation of HARVEY's should never cease to fulfil the wishes of its venerated

founder, and it is always a subject for legitimate rejoicing when the Orator of the year sustains its reputation—this, Dr. OWEN REES has fully done, and he has afforded good proof that the change from the Classical to the Vernacular Diction has been a profitable innovation, giving, as it does, room for solid scientific matter to replace the mere declamatory effusion of a Latin Address.

The presentation of the Baly Medal took place after the Oration. It was to be regretted that the actual Medal could not be produced at the formal presentation, for which disappointment the Artist was wholly answerable. The Gold Medal is now upon the table for the inspection of the Fellows.

In July, the Colleges received from the Poor Law Board a recognition of their Licence as a Qualification to practise both Surgery and Medicine, thus enabling those holding the Licence from the College to be appointed to Unions: I need scarcely point out the importance of this measure.

In the course of events, the occurrence of the usual Soirée has next to be noticed, and it may be considered to have been a most successful reception. Every opportunity of bringing together the Fellows and Members is valuable as far as it contributes to make the Governing Body of the College better acquainted with those from whom their ranks are to be recruited.

Another measure tending in the same direction has been this year adopted, by opening the Library to the Members, and also the Reading Room to the Licentiates.

The usual accommodation has been afforded to the Medical Council, which has twice during the past year held a Session within these walls.

Eleven Fellows have been elected this year. Eight Fellows have deceased, viz. :—

Dr. JAMES JOHNSTONE.

Dr. MATHEW STOVELL.

Dr. PETER MARK ROGET.

Dr. ALEXANDER BRYSON.

Dr. JAMES YONGE.

Sir CHARLES WILLIAM HOOD.

Dr. JOHN BRIGHT, and

Dr. JEFFERSON.

Dr. ROGET's name demands especial notice. Though he had long passed what has hitherto been considered as the natural age of man, we have all much to regret in his departure. He had, it is true, of late years, withdrawn himself from professional life, and had ceased to take part in our College affairs, devoting himself to those literary and scientific pursuits which had, indeed, throughout his life been more his occupation than Medical Practice; whilst his long connection with the Royal Society associated him with men of general science; but he always held with warm cordiality to the members of his own profession. His talents and his industry, and his benevolent character contributed to make him an ornament to any Society, and a valuable labourer in every work that he undertook.

Another of our Fellows, Dr. JOHN BRIGHT, who has departed in the plenitude of years, has been more intimately asso-

ciated with the affairs of the College. He was one of the last of the ancient body of Elects, and cheerfully assented, together with his colleagues, to the extinction of the privileges which they enjoyed under the Act of Parliament of Henry VIII. He had filled the office of Censor, and had given the Harveian Oration, but since what may be termed the period of our revolution, he has taken no part in the business of our College. As a scholar he was an ornament to the Profession; and his kindness and cheerfulness, and his possession of many genial qualities, made him welcome in social life, and endeared him to many friends who enjoyed his society to the last. Dr. JOHN BRIGHT may be considered a type of the old Physician, and as such we may well regret his loss.

Sir CHARLES HOOD's decease at an early period of life, demands a tribute of regret, whilst we render justice to meritorious qualities which had placed him in a forward position as Visitor of Lunatics to the Lord Chancellor.

Seventeen Members have been admitted. Six have died, viz. :—

Dr. SEPTIMUS WRAY.

Dr. JOHN GRANT STEWART.

Dr. HENRY GOODE WRIGHT.

Dr. JAMES RAMSAY ATKINS.

Dr. JAMES NICHOLS, and

Dr. McLOUGHLIN.

Of these I would not willingly pass over the name of Dr. Mc LOUGHLIN, without a word; though his advanced age and perhaps failing powers had almost removed him from general

sympathy; yet, at a certain period of his life he had enjoyed considerable success, having had the lead in English practice in Paris; and though he seemed latterly to have fallen out of reputation and prosperity, our charity demands that we should accord him an expression of kind feeling, and perhaps of some regret.

I need scarcely detail the attendances on the various Trusts belonging to the College. The Fellows will, I hope, believe that this duty has not been neglected. In regard to the Tancred Trust, I may state that I went, as before, to York, to the Annual Audit, and I may report with some satisfaction, that the troublesome attempt to subvert the foundation of the Charity has altogether failed; whilst, on the other hand, good has resulted in the enlarged power of the Trustees to carry out the Founder's wishes; one of the results being an increase in the number of Studentships. There is yet some work to be transacted in Parliament, for the favourable conclusion of which, we have every right to expect success.

I now proceed to a most important topic, and propose to render a brief account of the labours of your Committee appointed to consider the possibility and propriety of establishing a single Board of Examiners for the whole of England. I need scarcely remind you that this College took the lead in this business, and solicited the co-operation of the English Universities and the other Licensing Bodies, to establish a single minimum Examination through which all persons entering the Profession should be required to pass. I have the great satisfaction of stating that the whole scheme has been cordially

assented to by the several Committees appointed by the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and London, as well as by the College of Surgeons. The entire concurrence of the Apothecaries Society has been withheld, until their claim to the privilege of appointing Examiners in Medicine should be conceded. The unreasonableness of this claim will be evident, when it is considered that Clinical Examination is to form the subject most insisted on, and that the principle is generally adopted that Hospital Physicians are the most competent to conduct such Examination, whilst they are the only persons who can command examples of Clinical facts. And it is also unreasonable to ask that Members and Licentiates of our Colleges, as well as gentlemen preparing for graduation at the English Universities, should be required to pass an Examination in Medicine conducted by Apothecaries. The unwillingness on the part of the Apothecaries Company to concur in the proposed Scheme has caused some hindrance and considerable additional labour to the joint Committee. Our opinion, however, is that their opposition is not, by any means, fatal to the business, which will proceed and, when matured, will be laid before the College.

#### GENTLEMEN :

Although I may have had no very striking events to record, and no accomplished conclusion to announce as the result of much very onerous and difficult work, yet I think we may safely congratulate one another on having passed a year of additional prestige to our calling : deriving a certain consciousness that this great Institution has fully done its part in serving the community at large.

If in our late anxious deliberations to obtain a uniformity in Examination, a project which is one of the most important that has ever occupied the attention of the College, we have tried to conform to the spirit of the age, and to enlarge the influence of the Physician whilst we recognize and mould all current aspirations so as to apply them to the best of purposes; we have already reaped a certain amount of recompense, viz., in having established a perfect unanimity throughout all the Medical Authorities and Universities, with the slight exception of the Apothecaries' Company—a unanimity which we may feel assured cannot be otherwise than fully estimated by a Government desirous of acting reasonably and justly.

Therefore, it is not too much to say that there is strong hope of producing a truly beneficial and permanent result, and that at no distant time we shall have to rejoice in the accomplishment of all that has lately occupied our thoughts and wishes.

