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Presidential Address  
TO THE  
Lincolnshire Naturalists' Union, 1927,  
BY  
H. WALLIS KEW.

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# Lincolnshire Naturalists' Union.

## Presidential Address

Delivered at Lincoln, 24 November 1927,

BY

H. WALLIS KEW.

MARTIN LISTER & LINCOLNSHIRE NATURAL HISTORY.

‘An ingenious and learned physician, and one of the best naturalists of the 17th century’.

*Phil. Trans. Abridged*, 1809.

i.

It is a commonplace to observe that the troubled seventeenth century was a period of great advances in many subjects. Looking back, it seems to us that there were giants in the land at that time. As William Kirby long ago remarked, a brilliant constellation of geniuses then arose—they included Sir Isaac Newton (from Woolsthorpe, we never forget that), Sir Christopher Wren, the Hon. Robert Boyle and many others. In our own sciences we were told that the stars of the first magnitude and brightest lustre were John Ray (the glory of England, so it was said), Francis Willughby and Dr. Martin Lister. Such was the verdict of the early eighteen-hundreds on these naturalists of a period from which the Dark Ages were not greatly remote, a period of conditions of natural knowledge very different from those which we enjoy to-day. These men were born within some twelve or twenty years of the death of Shakespeare, and more than a century before the publication of those works of Linnaeus from which we derive our familiar system of naming animals and plants. Ray and his friends cannot truthfully be described as the fathers of natural history; but they were undoubtedly early and able cultivators of fields long neglected.



Of them, Willughby was descended from a line of eminent ancestors. He inherited an ample estate, and he had a laudable desire to elaborate a general natural history. At Middleton Hall, he and his friend and helper Ray spent laborious winters, and they travelled much during the summer months. Lister was ancestrally associated with Craven, where he had his own lordship, and (after the death of Thomas Parkinson, of Carlton, his father-in-law) other interests. When Willughby died in 1672, Lister was already a physician at York, and he then invited Ray to join him there. But Ray was still required at Middleton, Willughby having appointed him one of his executors, with a pension of £60 a year. Ray, like Willughby and Lister, had enjoyed the advantages of the University of Cambridge; he had been ordained priest by Robert Sanderson Bishop of Lincoln. He devoted many years to the completion of Willughby's unfinished books—in those tasks Lister co-operated with him to some extent—and in such ways were these three naturalists united in their labours and in friendship. Besides their learned works (by which indeed we should know them) we have the Ray Society as a continuing memorial of Ray; zoologists write of Willughby's Char and Ray's Bream and Ray's Wagtail; and botanists have the orchidaceous genus *Listera* fittingly to commemorate the man whose own desire it was (if possible considering the shortness of life) to participate with posterity.

Ray and Willughby may have the wider fame; but Lister should be as fully recognized, especially by this Union of Naturalists of the county wherewith he was associated in early life.

## ii.

It is no credit to British biography that no comprehensive life of Lister has been written. But to the honour of this Union Mr. Goulding's memoir 'Martin Lister, M.D., F.R.S.' serves the world as a thoroughly reliable and entertaining guide to the career of this laborious man.\* My object in re-opening

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\* This memoir of Mr. Goulding's and his 'Notes on the Lords of the Manor of Burwell' (*Assoc. Archit. Soc. Reports*, 1900 and 1897) and Mr.



the subject, though Lister's life and work cannot properly be treated in that way, is to give prominence to his Lincolnshire associations, and to indicate in some detail his contributions to the natural history of the county.

iii.

Martin Lister was the grand-nephew of the celebrated physician Sir Matthew Lister, M.D., by whom the Lincolnshire branch of the Lister family was established. In 1641, Sir Matthew acquired the manor of Burwell, with property in Muckton, Authorpe, and other villages; and the names of Burwell and the Lister family continued to be associated down to the early days of our own recollections. Many of us know those favoured parts of the county, where the chalk of the Wolds is partly free and partly covered with boulder-clay, and where the Burwell and other woods stretch away in a fine series along the foot of the wold. These woods are mainly of oak; they are on ground that has apparently never been cleared; and together with the chalky valleys and flowery closes about them, they remain to-day, probably much as they were in the seventeenth century.

Towards the close of his life Sir Matthew Lister retired to Burwell, and there he was succeeded by Sir Martin Lister, his nephew. This second of the Lister lords of Burwell was Martin Lister's father. By 1658 Sir Martin had taken up his residence at Burwell, and Martin who was then at Cambridge, and about 19, doubtless regarded the place as his home from that time onwards for nearly 10 years. He tells us that he spent many months in Lincolnshire; we know that he received affectionate invitations, 'let us have you at Burwell', &c., and that he made long and many visits. By the time he was

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Davies' 'Memoir of Martin Lister' (*Yorks. Archaeol. Jnl.*, 1873) contain many valuable references. Mr. Goulding made use of the Bodleian Library's Ashmolean MSS: very rich mines not fully exhausted. Useful matter is found in Derham's Philosophical Letters and Remains of John Ray, 1718, 1760; and the letters themselves in the British Museum (Bot. Dept.) have afforded certain additional facts. Lister's books and published papers and those of Ray have been consulted, together with many other works. Acknowledgments are due to the Bodleian and British Museum authorities, and to Mr. Goulding, Dr. Perkins, Mr. Preston and other helpers.



27, or thereabouts, he had observed much of the natural history of the neighbourhood. But whether he was, as many have been, a naturalist from the first, we cannot say.

iv.

At the time of Lister's arrival at Cambridge in 1655 and onwards till 1662, Ray was there—but Ray was Lister's senior by ten years—and it was not till they met at Montpellier in 1665 (when Lister was already a Fellow of his College, and doubtless by that time applying himself to physic) that we find evidences of their friendship. They then studied the plants, and observed some of the snails and insects, of the country around; and later, when they were again in England, Ray rejoiced to find that his friend continued such studies, not confining them to phytology only, but taking in zoology, and the whole latitude of natural history.

Lister returned to Cambridge in 1666, but the sickness still raging there, he left about midsummer, and spent the rest of the year in this county. Meanwhile Ray had called at Cambridge; that fact appearing from notes of Lister's (Bodl. MS. Lister, 39). These notes begin: 'June 18th, 1666. Mr. Wray, Mr. Dent and I went out a simpling'. That was a day's outing to the Gogmagog Hills, &c., ground already fully familiar to Ray and Dent, but to Lister many of the plants, of which according to the *Cambridge Catalogue* he set down a long list, were new. After Ray's departure, Lister went to Bassingbourn, and thence on July 18th to Burwell. Upon the road during this journey, also at Burwell in July and August, at Wainfleet in September, &c., he continued to record the plants he found. 'At Burwell' (and round about) more than forty kinds were noted, and they included those of the Woods, the Deer Park and the Water Park, the walls about the house, &c. The following are representative entries:

1. *Linum sativum* Ger. [*Linum usitatissimum*, Flax]. Sowed in the fields two miles before we came at Horncastle.
2. *Cannabis prima sive sativa* C. B. [*Cannabis sativa*, Hemp]. Plenty sowed between Bourne and Horncastle.
3. *Eupatorium aquaticum duorum generum* Park. [*Bidens*, Bur-Marigolds]. Everywhere in the Fens as I came to



Burwell.

4. *Helenium sive Enula campana* J. B. [*Inula helenium*, Elecampane]. At Burwell. Everywhere almost about the house in great plenty.
5. *Elatine folio subrotundo* C. B., and
6. *Elatine folio acuminato* C. B. [*Linaria spuria* and *L. elatine*, Fluellens]. Both listed under Burwell. Amongst the oats in a ground new broke up.
7. *Gentianella* .. [probably *Gentiana amarella*]. On the south side of the pales of the Water Park abundantly.
8. *Centaureum luteum perfoliatum* C. B. [*Blackstonia perfoliata*, Yellow-wort]. In the same place with the small Gentian.
9. *Alchimilla* [*Alchemilla vulgaris*, Lady's-Mantle]. In Burwell Woods.
10. *Mentastrum hortensis sive Mentha sylvestris* Park. [*Mentha longifolia*, Horse-Mint]. On the spring or rivulet bank as it runs into the Water Park abundantly.
11. *Orchis alba odorata minor* Park. [*Spiranthes spiralis*, Lady's Tresses]. On the layes near the Park and house.
12. *Genista tinctoria vulgaris* Park. [*Genista tinctoria*, Dyer's-Greenweed]. Groweth plentifully on the back side of Muckton in the old closes.
13. *Hieracium rectum rigidum quibusdam Sabaudum* J. B. [probably *H. umbellatum*]. In the Oxe wood ditch-bank next Muckton.
14. *Gnaphalium minus sive Herba impia* Park. [*Filago germanica*, Cudweed]. Common upon dry barren grounds.
15. *Gnaphalium anglicum vulgare majus* Park. [*Gnaphalium sylvaticum*, Heath Cudweed]. Upon the layes on the outside of the Deer Park over against the pond and house.
16. *Serratula vulgaris flore purpureo* Park. [*Serratula tinctoria*, Saw-wort]. In the meadows below Muckton.
17. *Ptarmica vulgaris folio oblongo serrato, flore albo* J. B. [*Achillea ptarmica*, Sneezewort]. In the same place abundantly.
18. *Coronopus vulgaris sive Cornu cervinum* Park. [*Plantago coronopus*, Buck's-horn Plantain]. At Wainfleet. Plentifully near the sea banks.
19. *Althaea vulgaris* Park. [*Althaea officinalis*, Marsh Mallow]. In the ditches there also.
20. *Kali spinosum* Park. [*Salsola kali*, Saltwort]. In abundance within the sea banks.
21. *Kali geniculatum sive Salicornia* Park. [*Salicornia*, Glasswort]. Everywhere within and without the banks.



22. *Cerasus fructo parvo nigro* [*Prunus avium*, Wild Cherry]. In the woods at Burwell plentifully.
23. *Fagus*, the Beech. I saw and measured a beech tree at Thorpe Hall near Louth of 19 foot almost, a yard and more from the ground.

When again at Cambridge in 1667 Lister told Ray of his experiences. That we know from Ray's reply (Derham, 1718, p. 18), wherein we read (1) 'Lincolnshire for Fish and Fowl, affords you a large Field, yet it is very much that in one Winter you should meet with upwards of 50 species'; (2) '*Hieracium rectum rigidum*, it's not unlikely you might find about Burwell; but it seems somewhat strange you should there meet with *Alchimilla vulgaris*, I having not to my remembrance ever met with it in England elsewhere than in mountainous Places'. But Ray afterwards found it in the lowlands, and we know it in Lincolnshire, including the Burwell neighbourhood.

Lister retained his Cambridge Fellowship till 1669, and meanwhile continued his Lincolnshire visits. Ray's letter, just quoted, refers to other observations already made by Lister, and two undated MSS. of his concern us. The first is entitled: 'Of the Fossills [minerals] of England' (Bodl. MS. Lister, 7). It reports observations (1) of the Chalk about Louth and the uses made of it; (2) of the 'red scarr' [Red Chalk] that broke out in the cliff of the Wolds about Tetford and all along for many miles; (3) of Bolingbroke's old pottery where the [Kimeridge] Clay they used was blue; (4) of Amber and Jet at Wainfleet and Theddlethorpe on the coast; and (5) of other matters of county interest. The second, which is called 'Scarabaeorum Angliae' (Brit. Mus. Sloane MSS. 783a, and Bodl. MS. Lister, 40), mentions Lincolnshire for (1) *Scarabaeus viridis alarum thecis miniatis*; (2) *Scarabaeus viridis*. An *viridulus* Mouffeti? (3) *Scarabaeus majusculus e nigro rufescens*; and (4) *Scarabaeus ex toto coccineus*: but no post-Linnaean coleopterist appears to have identified these insects. The Bodleian MS was printed with Ray's 'Historia Insectorum' as 'Appendix de Scarabaeis Britannicis' (in 1710) more than forty years later. Lister was glad, he said, that Mr. Ray's papers were printed,



but was ashamed of his own, writ in his youth.

About 1669 Lister wrote at length to Ray of Snails and Spiders, and Ray sent this letter to the Royal Society. Oldenburg entitled it 'Some Observations concerning the odd Turn of some Shell-snailes, and the darting of Spiders, made by an Ingenious Cantabrigian' (Phil. Trans. 1669, p. 1011), and thus Lister, when he was about 30, entered on his long career of authorship. No localities were given for the spiders and the shells with the odd turn [*Clausilia* sp. and *Balea perversa*]. But *Cochlea terrestris turbinata et striata* Col. [*Cyclostoma elegans*] was very frequent 'twixt Canterbury and Dover and likewise in some woody parts of the Wolds in this county.

## v.

On leaving Cambridge in 1669 Lister had probably already decided to establish himself at York, where a physic-practice had fallen void. Meanwhile he spent the winter of 1669-70 at Nottingham; and in November the happy event of his marriage with Hannah Parkinson, of Carlton-in-Craven, received Ray's blessing. In 1670 (March) he carried his wife to Carlton Hall, 'at her mother's', and there they abode most of that year. At both places he pursued his studies of nature vigorously; and with Ray he exchanged many letters about this time.

These letters were on many subjects. On that of minerals, &c., in 1669 (Derham, p. 55), he told Ray of the Amber and Jet on Lindsey coast. Of the Amber he had near 1 lb. by him that he bought of poor fishermen's wives at Theddlethorpe; likewise of the Jet, the great pieces and the small dust, he had both by him, and he thought them not Cannel because they burnt with difficulty, grimed not, were light, and many pieces if rubbed would draw straws. From this letter (and from Bodl. MS. Lister, 7) it appears that the Amber was gathered at Wainfleet and Theddlethorpe, and was sold at 3d. the ounce. Jet of bulk was brought ashore after great storms; and all along the coast the small dust was cast on the sands; this was swept into heaps by the poor people, and it served many families for fuel; the chimneys of those that used it having



wind-holes aside them. On these matters Ray agreed that what Lister had sent him was Amber, and that 'the other great piece' was Jet; but of the small dust [which still forms the well-known black drift along our coast] he said nothing.\*

Other letters of 1669 (Derham, pp. 48, sqq.) were mostly concerning plants. Ray was then preparing his 'Catalogus Plantarum Angliae', chiefly he said, by Lister's instigation and encouragement. Among the dried specimens or lists supplied by Lister was *Rhamnus primus* [*Hippophae rhamnoides*, Sallow-Thorn or Sea Buckthorn] from the Lincolnshire coast, where Ray had already been informed by Dr. Mapletoft that it grew. In the following year, 1670, the 'Catalogus' was made public, and Lister's discoveries therein recorded included the following from this county:†

1. *Caryophyllata vulgaris majore flore* C. B., Avens with a large flower. [*Geum intermedium*]. In Tetford Wood.
2. *Fungi longissimo pediculo candicantes sed maculati* J. B., Tall Navel Mushrome. [*Lepiota procera*]. Observed in the Wolds in Lincolnshire, &c., by Mr. Lister, who also experienced it in eating to be more savoury than the Champignon.
3. *Fungi Pezicae Plinii* Col., Cup Mushrome. [*Peziza*']. This sprang out of the clefts of the ground in the dry year 1666 in the wood-ridings at Burwell.
4. *Mentastrum spicatum folio longiore candicante* J. B., Long-leaved Horse-Mint. [*Mentha longifolia*]. By Burwell-beck plentifully. [Lister's more precise habitat has already been quoted. Peacock ('Naturalist', 1896) adds: 'It is growing by the side of the same stream to-day'].
5. *Rhamnus primus* Diosc. sive *Rhamnus Salicis folio angusto, fructu flavescente* C. B., Sallow-thorn or Sea Buckthorn. [*Hippophae rhamnoides*]. On the sea-banks on Lindsey-Coast.

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\* Cp. 'An Account of several Observables in Lincolnshire by Mr. Christopher Merret, Surveyor of the Port of Boston' (Phil. Trans., 1696): 'I suppose 'tis Coals broken'.

† Similar county-records re-appeared in Ray's 'Catalogus', 1677, 'Historia Plantarum', 1686, and 'Synopsis Methodica Stirpium', 1690; and some of my quotations have been amended from these works. There were other acknowledgments to Lister for other counties, e.g. *Fungus piperatus*, &c. (Pepper Mushrome) from Marton Woods in Craven: the *Lactarius piperatus* (Linn.) which Withering wished to call *Agaricus Listeri*.



vi.

By October 1670 Lister was at York—Ray having styled him Dr. Lister a few months before. There he practised physic during thirteen years. At the same time he wrote several learned books, and made many contributions to the Philosophical Transactions of Mr. Oldenburg and his successors. On Oldenburg's proposal he was elected F.R.S., and at York he was prominently associated with the virtuosi and learned men of those parts. He several times referred to his dangerous occupation (his life in the midst of diseases, &c.); but it did not keep him very constantly at York, for besides a journey into France ('I do it to gain my health') and almost yearly visits to Craven, he visited many other parts of Yorkshire and probably other counties. Moreover in natural philosophy he accomplished so much that we cannot understand very seriously that he had at that period little time for it.

By 1678, besides many minor writings, he had completed his first book: '*Historiae Animalium Angliae Tres Tractatus*', dealing with (1) Spiders; (2) Land and Freshwater Snails; and (3) Marine Snails, &c., and containing the earliest known descriptions and figures of very many of these creatures. To these three parts was added a fourth: on Stones fashioned like shells, which were not regarded as the remains of animals. By this book alone Lister's reputation was established for all time. Blackwall in 1861-4 decorated the titles of his princely Ray Society '*British Spiders*' with quotations from Lister's Latin; and Sundevall in Sweden, already in 1830, had placed him foremost of old arachnologists, and had named *Pachygnatha Listeri* after him. His treatment of the Snails, &c., received from Ferussac and Deshayes in France and from early English conchologists still fuller and wider recognition—the titles *Listera* and *Listeri* appeared and re-appeared in the nomenclature—and indeed a continuous chorus of appreciation has come down to our times. Only for his opinions on the Shell-stones did Malpighi and others take occasion to be a little angry with him. No one before him in England or abroad had exhibited any adequate knowledge of the Spiders and



Snails, and his acquaintance with their structure, habits of life, and general natural history was wonderful. In his preface he tells us that in former days of leisure he betook himself to Lincolnshire, and there spent many months, being wholly engaged in observations. Yet when localities are stated they are more often in Yorkshire, &c., and the following are the only definite records for this county:

#### Spiders, &c.

1. 'Araneus rufus, clunium globatorum fastigio, in modum stellae radiato, sylvicola'. In woods in Lincolnshire, &c.; regarded as rare. [Probably *Theridion formosum*. Cp. Blackwall, p. 179].
2. 'Araneus fuliginosus, & humerorum fastigio, & clunium pictura candida, ad margines denticulata'. In Lincolnshire, &c., in walls and similar places. [*Tetrax denticulata*. Cp. Blackwall, p. 172. An addition to the Lincolnshire Spider-lists of our times].
3. 'Araneus exiguus e candido nigroq. varius sive maculatus, insigniter cristatus, sylvicola'. In woods in Lincolnshire, &c. [One of the Opiliones or Harvestmen].

#### Land Snails.

4. 'Cochlea cinerea, interdum leviter rufescens, striata, operculo testaceo cochleato donata'. In France, Kent and Yorkshire. Also at Burwell Woods in Lincolnshire. [*Cyclostoma elegans*. More abundant on the southern chalk than in this county. Re-found by me in the Burwell Woods (Grisel Bottom) in 1886].
5. 'Buccinum exiguum subflavum, mucrone obtuso, sive cylindraceum'. At Estrope [Aisthorpe] on mossy walls. [*Pupa cylindracea*].
6. 'Buccinum exiguum, quinq. anfractuum, mucrone acuto'. In the same place as the last. [*Cochlicopa lubrica*].
7. 'Buccinum parvum sive Trochilus sylvaticus agri Lincolnensis'. In Burwell Woods in moss at roots of trees. [*Hyalinia fulva*].
8. 'Cochlea pulla, sylvatica, spiris in aciem depressis'. In woods in Lincolnshire; in winter under bark of trees, in summer among herbage. [*Helicigona lapicida*. Not common in the Louth and Burwell neighbourhoods. Found in the Burwell Woods (Grisel Bottom) in 1896].

#### Marine Shells.

9. 'Cochlea rufescens, fasciis maculatis, maxime ad imos orbes distincta'. On the sandy shores of Lincolnshire,



and in the mouth of the Humber. [*Natica catena*].

10. 'Trochus albidus, maculis rubentibus distinctus, 6 minimum spirarum'. On the Lincolnshire coast, &c., and in Humber mouth. [*Trochus zizyphinus*].

Shell-stones.

11. 'Belemnites minimus, fere cujusdam succini instar & pelucidus & coloratus; quibusdam Lapis Lyncurius dictus'. In all the Cliffs as you ascend the Yorkshire and Lincolnshire Wolds for about 100 miles as at Speeton, Londesborough, Caistor, Tetford and Cawkwell. [*Belemnites minimus* Lister of most authors, *B. Listeri* Mant. The abundant fossil of the Red Chalk, along the outcrop of which Lister found it].
12. 'Conchites anomius rugosus, rostro subtereti & insigniter adunco donatus'. In Yorkshire and about Burton Stather in this county. [*Gryphaea incurva*. Abundant in the Lower Lias about Burton Stather, as elsewhere].
13. 'Conchites anomius, rostro prominulo, & veluti pertuso donatus', and
14. 'Pectunculites anomius trilobus'. Both about Gonerby near Grantham, &c. [*Terebratula punctata* and *Rhynchonella tetrahedra*. Both named by Mr. H. Preston, of Grantham; abundant Brachiopoda of the Middle Lias thereabouts].

Lister's other York books and papers would demand extended notice in any general account of his writings. Of the books, 'De Fontibus Medicatis Angliae', 1682, mentions Santon Sands, where *Ochra fossilis lutea* was formerly dug.

Of the smaller works, the following must be noticed:

(i) 'A Letter of Mr. Martin Lister confirming Observations about Musk sented Insects' (Phil. Trans., 1671, p. 2281) mentions certain small Bees 'which Mr. Ray saith, smell of musk, which indeed they do in a high degree'. They were very frequent in the Wolds in Lincolnshire, and about the latter end of April were to be found in pastures and meadows, upon the early-blown flowers of a sort of *Ranunculus*, and likewise on the flowers of *Dens Leonis*, &c. [According to Kirby, *Andrena parvula* 'moscham spirat', and that, Dr. Perkins tells me, was most likely Lister's insect].

(ii) 'Another Letter written of the same Gentleman enlarging his former Communications about Vegetable Excrescencies and Ichneumon Worms' (Phil. Trans., 1671, p. 2284)



tells us something of 'the green Caterpillar so common in our Lincolnshire-heaths'. They appeared equivalent to the Indian silkworm; their *Thecas* were as large, many of them, as a man's thumb, &c. [Evidently *Saturnia pavonia*, Emperor Moth].

(iii) 'A Letter of Mr. Martin Lister concerning the first part of his Tables of Snails together with some Quaeres relating to those Insects' (Phil. Trans., 1674, p. 96) mentions 'Buccinum parvum sive Trochilus sylvaticus agri Lincolnensis', i.e. *Hyalinia fulva*, which was thus early associated with this county.

(iv) 'A Letter from Dr. Lister containing an Account of several curious Observations about Antiquities' (Phil. Trans., 1682, p. 87) describes the remains of a Roman pottery on Santon Sands, where there were what were regarded as ruins of furnaces, many pieces of pots and urns of different shapes, and much slag and cinders; this pottery was within a mile of the Roman Road and had taken up much ground.

In letters to Ray, 1670-74 (Derham, pp. 73, sqq.), Lister wrote: (1) of Willughby's Bees [*Megachile*] that lodged themselves in old willows and there made cases of cut leaves; he found in his *Adversaria* that he had formerly dug out of the ground at Burwell many just such-like cases [*Megachile* or *Colletes*?] made of thin wafers or membranes. In the same place he had frequently met with little hollow balls, of the shape and size of pistol-bullets, of yellow wax [*Spathegaster* or *Trigonaspis* galls?], wherein one small maggot seemed to find both housing and food; (2) of the fish 'they call *Bret* in Lincolnshire' [His *Bret* was undoubtedly the Turbot, though Mr. F. Kime, of Boston, remembers having heard the Brill so named. Cp. Merret's 'Observables in Lincolnshire': 'Here are *Turbuts* called *Brets*']; and (3) of his Tables of Snails: 'Tis true, the second [*Cyclostoma elegans*] is that you and I found about Montpellier; but I have found it in divers places in England since my return, in Kent, in Lincolnshire, &c.' [He found it in the Burwell Woods, as already stated].

vii.

Before the end of 1683, Lister removed to Westminster,



Old Palace Yard. He had, it seems, opportunities for service at the Court of King Charles II (as afterwards at that of King James II) among the domestic physicians.\* In 1684, the University of Oxford declared him M.D., and he was admitted Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians three years later. Yet he delighted most in philosophy, and even now, in the midst of his successes, he was hard at work on the biggest of his books: '*Historia sive Synopsis Methodica Conchyliorum*', 1685-92 [-97], which by William Turton was aptly described as a stupendous effort of genius and industry. The Royal Society, at the first opportunity, elected him to its Council with Sir Christopher Wren, Dr. Grew, Mr. Flamsteed, Mr. Halley, and others. In 1685, he was sworn Vice-President; Samuel Pepys, the President, usually leaving 'Dr. Lister in the chair' during that year. He then urged the Society to print Willughby's *History of Fishes*; and was of the Committee with Ray and others for that undertaking. Moreover he continued to present to the Society (for the *Philosophical Transactions*) numerous and very diverse papers of his own. By his proposal of 1684 that maps of the soils of countries be designed, he made the first known suggestion for the construction of geological maps. Such maps he thought would well repay the trouble; but he left them, as he said, to the industry of future times. No doubt the great *Historia* mostly occupied him, and it is by that work that he is best known. It was a prodigious collection of copper-plates of Shells (with tables of classification, &c.) mostly from drawings ably executed by his daughters Susanna and Anna, whose names have well deserved to descend to posterity with their father's. To the thousand and more plates of Shells were added others of the structure of the animals belonging to Lister's three separate '*Exercitationes Anatomicae*' 1694-96; and he tells us that the work

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\* To the Court Sir Matthew Lister (great-uncle), Susanna Lady Lister (mother), Frances Jennings (half-sister) and her daughter Frances afterwards Duchess of Tyrconnel had been no strangers. Sarah Duchess of Marlborough (sister of the younger Frances) 'when Anne wore the crown' certainly influenced her 'Uncle Lister's' later preferments. Her friendship with the Princess Anne, afterwards Queen, was already notorious.



altogether took him up ten years at least, and that it cost him near £2,000 out of his private purse.

In 1694 and later he published 'Sex Exercitationes Medicinales' and other physic-books. But they were against the grain; the Doctor's great desire being to pursue philosophy among the inferior sort of things. His Anatomies of the Snails (now that he regarded himself as old) had brought him back to the delights of early years. From Edward Lloyd of the Ashmolean he obtained supplies of the living animals, and stocked his Westminster garden with them for observation and dissection. Among them was our *Cyclostoma elegans*, wherein among other things he had discovered that the sexes were separate, and later at Epsom (about 1695) he again found these 'Turbens' in chalky thickets and, with great delight no doubt, saw them pairing.

In 1698 he went to Paris as physician to King William III's Ambassador; but he declared that he took more pleasure in the Physic Garden than in the Court, and was more apt to learn the names of many plants than of a few princes. By his suggestion that he would gladly have exchanged the finest Alley at Versailles for Languedoc's meanest hedge and warm sun, he recalls the troubles of health that had attended him most of his life. His well-known 'Journey to Paris' (though dated 1699) was published before the end of the year.

In the 'Historia sive Synopsis' the English shells were distinguished by the letter A; but Lincolnshire was nowhere mentioned. However, there remain for notice:

(i) 'An Ingenious proposal for a new sort of Maps of Countrys, together with Tables of Sands and Clays, such chiefly as are found in the North parts of England, by the Learned Martin Lister, M.D.' (Phil. Trans., 1684, p. 739). Lister's suggested Maps have already been mentioned. As for sand [or sand-rock] he thought that it was once the most exterior and general cover of the whole earth [the millstone-grit of his northern mountains, no doubt], and that the nakedness of the Wolds of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, &c., was from their finer sands having readily yielded to the rains and winds.



From such considerations he passed to the Tables, and therein mentioned Santon [Blown-sand], Bolingbroke [Kimeridge-clay], and other localities in this county.

(ii) Birch's 'History of the Royal Society', 1757, iv. 268, 387. At meetings of the Society, 1684-5, Dr. Lister observed (1) that 'as to seeing in the night', King Charles I had a man from Louth, who served as a night guide to the Army, and could read a letter in the darkest night; and (2) that Congers were often cast up dead in Lincolnshire, seldom seen alive, as being a high-sea fish, and therefore little eaten.

(iii) 'Johannes Goedartius de Insectis. In Methodum redactus, cum notularum additione. Opera M. Lister', 1685. With this work Lister published four unfinished plates of English Beetles, &c., 'tabulae mutae', which had evidently been intended to illustrate his Beetle MS already quoted. Some of the Beetles, as we saw, had been collected in this county.

(iv) 'F. Willughbeii de Historia Piscium libri quatuor', 1686 ('Mr. Ray's Book of Fishes'). On Lister's authority Ray records the occurrence of 'Rutilus latior vel Rubellio fluvialilis' [the Rudd] in Holderness and not far from Lincoln, in ponds.

(v) 'Part of two Letters wrote to Oxford by Dr. Martin Lister concerning several Plants that may be usefully Cultivated' (Phil. Trans., 1697, p. 412). By some tillage, he thought, even harsh plants might be brought to kinder food: 'the same Asparagus which we eat, grows wild in the Marshes of Lincolnshire, very fair, and not to be distinguished by the Eye from that in our Gardens, but is intolerable bitter; which Garden Culture alone has civilized, and made pleasant'. Others might serve as substitutes of Hemp and Flax; e.g. 'Corona fratrum, of the Thistle kind' [*Cnicus eriophorus*] which 'naturally grows' on the dry Wolds and high pastures of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire and in other barren soils. [The *Herball* of Gerarde, 1597, and of Johnson, 1633, had already recorded *Asparagus* for marish grounds in this county. Lister had evidently consulted Johnson for both plants].



(vi) 'A Journey to Paris in the Year 1698. By Dr. Martin Lister'. By the bitter Sparagrass in Paris Lister was put in mind of 'the *Wild Sparagrass* which grows plentifully with us on the Sea Coast in Lincolnshire. This is very fair to the Eye: yet no culture of our Gardens, by often transplanting, could make it eatable'. [The Lincolnshire *Asparagus* is the cultivated plant escaped. On the Mablethorpe sandhills, &c., it has long been familiar to us].

viii.

In 1699 Lister left Westminster and retired towards the Downs of Surrey. Meanwhile Hannah Lister, 'deare Wife', had died; and in 1705, Lister's old friend Ray (who had never been forgotten) was lost to him. Having re-married in 1698, and being then about 60, he removed first to Leatherhead, and thence in 1702 to Epsom, where he resided till the winter of 1711-12, which was his last. In 1709, Queen Anne (whom he had already served during several years) made him second Physician in Ordinary. But he was seldom at Court, being mostly 'in the Countrie', and there mostly occupied with the writing of more books and papers. As before, these works were on many subjects; but they do not (I think) call for quotation in this place. And thus we take leave of our distinguished countryman, hard at work as always, or happily on a bright morning tending 'the test flower bulbs and roots' in his garden.







