

A sketch of the life of Dr. Duncan Liddel, of Aberdeen / [Anon].

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Publication/Creation

Aberdeen : J. Sibbald, 1790.

Persistent URL

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D. Duncan Liddel, M.D. Æt. LII.

Engraved by I. Beugo from an outline on tin

A
S K E T C H
OF THE
L I F E
OF
DR. D U N C A N L I D D E L,
OF A B E R D E E N,

PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS AND OF MEDICINE
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF HELMSTADT.

A B E R D E E N:

PRINTED BY J. CHALMERS & CO.

SOLD BY MR. JAMES SIBBALD, EDINBURGH; AND
MR. J. EVANS, PATER-NOSTER ROW, LONDON.

1790.

S K E T C H

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OF ABERDEEN

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ABERDEEN

PRINTED BY J. G. & CO. LTD.
AND
MR. J. K. & CO. LTD. LONDON.

1920.

S K E T C H

Of the L I F E of

D U N C A N L I D D E L, M. D.

DR DUNCAN LIDDEL, son of John Liddel a respectable citizen of Aberdeen, was born there in the year 1561¹. He received the first part of his education in languages and philosophy at the schools and university of Aberdeen².

¹ *Tabula aenea in Eccles. Aberdon. conservata.*
² *Oratio habita Aberdon. 1696. MS.*

1579. About the age of eighteen, Liddel having a great desire to visit foreign countries, went from Scotland to Dantzic, and from thence through Poland to Frankfort on the Oder, where John Craig, afterwards first physician to James the VIth King of Scots, then taught logic and mathematics³. Here Liddel, doubtful what course to pursue, and despairing of his future fortune, was kindly received by his countryman Craig, who afforded him his advice and assistance in the prosecution of his studies: an obligation which Liddel gratefully acknowledges in a dedication to him of the first volume of his medical disputations⁴. He was thus enabled to continue at the university of Francfort for three years, where he applied himself very diligently to mathematics and philosophy, under Craig and the other professors, and also entered upon the study of physic⁵.

³ *Jo. Caselij ad Jo. Craigium Epistola Ded.*

⁴ *D. Liddellii Disput. Med. Helmstad. 1605.*

⁵ *Jo. Caselij Epist. Ded.*

1582. At this time, Dr. Craig being about to return to Scotland, sent his young countryman to prosecute his studies at Wratisslaw or Breslaw in Silesia, recommending him to the care of that celebrated statesman

A

Andreas

Andreas Dudithius†. During his residence in this university, Liddel is said to have made uncommon progress in his favourite study of mathematics, under the direction of a very eminent professor, Paulus Wittichius⁶.

6 Jo. Caselii
Epist. dea.
Ty. Brahe
Epist. Astron.
Lib. 1. p. 296.
Norib. 1601.

1584. Mr. Liddel having studied here for more than a year, returned to Frankfort, and again applied himself to physic. He also began at the same time to receive pupils, whom he instructed in various branches of mathematics and philosophy⁷.

7 Caselii Epist.
ded.

1587. He now remained at Frankfort for about three years, when a contagious distemper having broke out there, and dispersed the students, he retired to the university of Rostock, where, says Caselius, his company was most acceptable to all, but especially to Brucæus ‡, and myself, as well on account of the various learning which the young man possessed, as his modesty and unwearied assiduity in studying and teaching⁸. Here he renewed his studies rather as a companion than a pupil of Brucæus, who though an excellent mathematician, did not scruple to confess that he was instructed by Mr. Liddel in the more perfect knowledge of the Copernican system, and other astronomical questions⁹. For Caselius likewise observes, that as far as he knows, *Mr. Liddel was the first person in Germany, who explained the motions of the heavenly bodies, according to the three different hypotheses of Ptolemy, Copernicus, and Tycho Brahe*¹⁰.

9 R. Diephol-
dii Orat. qua-
tuor funebr.
ada Helmæst.
1622.

10 Caselii
Epist. ded.

It was probably during Mr. Liddel's residence at Rostock, that he first became acquainted with the Danish astronomer, who had formerly studied in this university, and afterwards maintained a frequent correspondence with Brucæus¹¹. For that Liddel was well known to this illustrious person,

11 Gassendi in
vita Ty. Bra-
he, lib. 5.

† As some readers may be ignorant *who* Dudithius was, it may not be improper to mention, that he was a bishop of the Romish church, and ambassador from the emperor to the council of Trent: that he afterwards embraced the protestant religion, and at length became one of the sect of Socinus. He died in 1549. 09.

‡ A Scotsman might naturally enough imagine that *Brucæus* was *Bruce* latinized, and thence claim an interest in this professor as his countryman. He was however a native of Alost in Flanders, and is celebrated by his contemporaries as an eminent physician and philosopher. Having first read lectures at Paris and Rome, he finally settled at Rostock, where he died 1593.

person, and paid him several visits in the course of his journeys to Scotland, appears from various authorities to be unquestionable ¹².

12 *Casellii*
Epist. ded.
Diepholdii
Orat. Funebr.

In this university, Mr. Liddel had conferred on him the degree of master of philosophy, which probably is the same with what is now called master of arts ¹³.

13 *Casellii*
Epist. ded.

1590. About this time, having greatly improved himself at Rostock in the studies of medicine and mathematics, he returned once more to Frankfurt, at the request of two Livonian young men of quality, who were probably his pupils [†] ¹⁴. But having there heard of the increasing reputation of the *Academia Julia* established at Helmstadt in 1576 ¹⁵, by Henry Julius Duke of Brunswick, Mr. Liddel and his companions soon removed thither. His friend Caselius also, after having taught philosophy for twenty five years at Rostock, was now settled there, having been invited by duke Julius to the same chair in his new university. This was an additional motive for Mr. Liddel's journey to Helmstadt, where he no sooner arrived, than he waited upon Caselius, with whom from that time he became very intimate, having lodged in his house for several years ¹⁶.

14 *Casellii*
Epist. ded.
15 *Conringius*
de antiquitat.
Academ.

1591. Soon after his arrival, the first or lower professorship of mathematics becoming vacant, by the removal of Parcovius to the faculty of medicine §, Mr Liddel had the good fortune to be appointed to it, chiefly by the recommendation of Caselius, and Henry Grunefeldt an eminent lawyer ¹⁷.

16 *Casellii*
Epist. ded.

1594. Having taught with much reputation in this lower department, (upon the death of Erhardus Hoffman) Mr Liddel now succeeded to the second and more dignified mathematical chair, which according to the testimony of many of his colleagues and contemporaries, he occupied

17 *Casellii*
Epist. ded.
N. Frobesii
Professorum in
Acad. Julia
memoriæ
resuscitatæ.
1747.

† It is probably to these young Livonians that Liddel dedicates his *Thesis*, upon obtaining the degree of M. D. at Helmstadt in 1596. He calls them *John & Magnus a Nolden*, brothers, knights of Livonia, the elder engaged in civil pursuits at home, the younger then fighting in the imperial army against the Turks.

§ In this university there are four *faculties*, law, divinity, physic, and philosophy. The professors, when admitted into any of these faculties, are termed *ordinarii*, before such admission *extraordinarii*, and they who belonging to a particular faculty, give public lectures, *publici*.

ed for nine years, with much credit to himself and to the Julian academy.

¹⁸ During this period, he gave repeated courses of lectures on geometry, astronomy, and universal geography; instructing his pupils in the whole circle of mathematical science, and particularly in the new theories of the planetary system, which untill his time were very imperfectly understood or taught in that country ¹⁹. †

1596. He obtained the degree of M. D. was admitted a member of that faculty, and began publicly to teach physic. Nor was he less distinguished in this new profession than he had been in the former. Caselius observes, "*ut cum se nemini collegarum præferret, nemini tamen in hac dignitate se inferiorem gesserit*" ²⁰. It is farther said of him, that by his teaching and writings, he was the chief support of the medical school at Helmstadt, was employed as first physician at the court of Brunswick, and had much practice among the principal families of that country ²¹.

1599. He was chosen dean of the faculty of philosophy, and while he held this honourable office, he is said to have conferred the degrees of master of arts and doctor of philosophy, upon twenty pupils, some of whom became afterwards very eminent; particularly Jo. Nendorfius of Goslar, and Henn. Arnifæus and Joan. Wolfius, both celebrated professors of medicine ²².

1603. Altho' Dr Liddel had been admitted into the faculty of physic in 1596, and had from that time publicly taught in this faculty, yet he continued to give lectures in mathematics until the present year, when he resigned that chair, and was succeeded by Henr. Schaperus ²³.

1604. Having been several times elected dean of the faculties both of philosophy and physic, he had the honour this year of being chosen pro-rector of the university ²⁴.

1607. But neither academical honours, nor the profits of an extensive practice abroad could make Dr. Liddel forget his native country. Having

† His title then was, as appears from his public disputations—"D. Liddellius Scotus mathematicum Professor primarius",—or—"superiorum mathematicum Professor"—to which he afterwards added—"M. D. & Medicinæ Professor Publicus."

¹⁸ Caselii
Epist. ded.
N. Frobesius.

¹⁹ Caselii
Epist. ded.
Diepholdii
Orat. antea
citat.

²⁰ Caselii
Epist. ded.

²¹ Caselii
Epist. ded.
C. A. Bodii
Funeralia &c.
MS.
R. Diepholdii
Orat.
J. C. Boehmer
memor. Pro-
fess. Helmæ-
stad. prolusi-
ones. Guelpherb.
1719.
²² Bodii Fu-
neralia &c.
Frobesii opus
antea citat.

²³ Frobesius.

²⁴ Frobesius.

ing already made several journeys to Britain during his residence at Helmstadt, he now determined to retire thither for the remainder of his life ²⁵. Accordingly in the beginning of this year, he took a final leave of the *Academia Julia*, and after travelling for some time thro' Germany and Italy, he at length settled in Scotland † ²⁶.

²⁵ *Probesius*
Casellii Epist.
ded.

²⁶ *Oratio ha-*
bita Abredon.
MS. 1696.

Several reasons may have induced him to retire thus early from public life. Casellius ascribes it in part to the solicitations of his friend Dr John Craig, but chiefly to the unsettled state of the university; for such were the troubles in Germany during the former year, that many students unwillingly left it, and among others a nephew of Craig's, under the tuition of Liddel, who on that occasion was sent by him to Padua ²⁷. Casellius says farther, that Dr. Liddel went away without the permission of the Duke of Brunswick, and that had he been informed of his intention, he would not probably have allowed such a valuable member of his favourite academy to have left it ²⁸.

²⁷ *Casellii*
Epist. ded.

²⁸ *Casellii*
Epist. ad fin.

1612. Where Dr. Liddel resided, or how he was employed during these few years after his return from Germany, no information can now be obtained, only that he was occasionally at Edinburgh, and probably lived chiefly at Aberdeen, among his relations. On the 12th of July in this year he was at Edinburgh, where he subscribed his first deed of settlement of that date, by which he bestows certain lands purchased by him near Aberdeen, upon the university there, in all time coming, for the education and support of six poor scholars. Among a variety of regulations and injunctions for the management of this charity, he appoints the magistrates of Aberdeen his trustees, and solemnly denounces the curse of God against any person who shall abuse or misapply it ²⁹.

²⁹ *Records of*
Marischal
College, Aber-
deen.

1613. Upon the ninth of December in this year, he executed at Aberdeen another deed of settlement, by which he confirms his former donation, and farther bequeaths to the Marischal College, for the endow-

B ment

† In the dedication of his *Ars Medica* to king James, he himself says, "*me quoque in patriam redeuntem POST EXACTOS ANNOS FERE OCTO ET VIGINTI in exterorum regionum academiis--primum in aliis Germanis, postremo in Academia Julia, ANNIS NUNC DECEM ET SEPTEM.*"

ment of a professorship of mathematics, the sum of 6000 merks, which having been afterwards judiciously laid out, by the magistrates his trustees, in the purchase of lands in the neighbourhood, now produces a very considerable salary to that professor. He also bequeaths his whole collection of books and mathematical instruments to the same college, directing a small sum to be expended annually in adding to the collection, and another to be distributed among the poor ³⁰.

This appears to have been the last act of Dr Liddel's life, and was probably executed by him while on his death-bed, for he therein recommends that the deed should be more formally extended, "*thir presents being made upon a suddenty,*" and he died eight days after, December the 17th, in the fifty second year of his age. His body was buried in the west church of Aberdeen, formerly called St. Nicholas' or the old church, where the magistrates placed in memory of him a large tablet of brass, ‡ upon which is engraved a figure of the deceased in his professor's gown and cap, surrounded by books and instruments, and accompanied with a suitable inscription †. They also erected a pillar upon the lands left by him to the College, bearing a modest inscription dictated by himself in his first settlement. *

Dr

‡ It appears from the records of the town of Aberdeen, anno 1622, that this plate was executed at Antwerp, and that the expence of engraving, bringing over, and placing it in the Church, amounted to £. 933. 6. 8. Scots. From this plate the *Head* of the Doctor hereto prefixed is executed.

† *Sub spe beatæ resurrectionis, hic quiescit D. Duncanus Liddelus Doctor Medicus, Jo. Liddeli Civis Aberdon. Filius. Obiit 17^{mo}. Decembr. anno MDCXIII. Ætatis suæ LII—Æternæ memoriæ D. Duncani Liddeli Doct. Medici, quem virtus nascentem excepit, recondita in Medicinæ et omnibus Philosophiæ ac Matheseos partibus, peritia natum excoluit, Liberalitas supra æquales extulit, cui annuum stipendium debet publicus Matheseos in Academia Abredonensi Professor, victumque ejusdem Academiæ sex Alumni.*

Fama posthuma meritorum perpetua testis.

M. H. D. C. 2.

* *Anno a Christo nato MDCXIV. autoritate Regis Ordinumque Regni, hanc Villam agrosque de Pitmedden sex alumnis Literarum Studiosis in academia Abredonensi, dicavit, confirmavitq; Duncanus Liddelius Medicinæ Doctor.*

Sic lux vestra luceat.

Dr Liddel, having never been married, left the remainder of his fortune to his brother John Liddel, and a Sister, both of whom had children, ³¹ and some of whose descendants are still alive in Aberdeen. One son of his brother John is well known to have succeeded Dr William Johnston, in the mathematical chair endowed by his uncle; but the young man having acted imprudently, was according to the author here referred to, most unjustly deprived of his office ³².

³¹ Records of
M. College.

³² Tracts by
Sir T. Urquhart
Edinbr.
1774. p. 126

Of the writings of Dr Liddel, the following, whereof the greater part is still preserved in the Library of Marischal College, Aberdeen, to which he bequeathed his Books and MSS. are all that can be discovered.

1. *Disputationum Medicinalium Duncani Liddellii Scoti, Phil. & Med. Doctoris, et Professoris Publici in Academia JULIA. Helmæstadii 1605.*

This work consists of four volumes in 4to. of *Theses* maintained by himself and his pupils at Helmstadt from 1592 to 1606; among others is that written by him upon receiving the degree of M. D. The subject is "*de Melancholia*," and it is dedicated, in testimony of his esteem and gratitude, to the two brothers *a Nolden* formerly mentioned. To the first volume is prefixed an affectionate dedication to his old friend and first patron Dr. Craig, in which he thankfully acknowledges his obligations to him, and begs his acceptance of the first fruits of his medical studies. Annexed to these *Theses* are also, in the fashion of the times, a number of poems in praise of Dr Liddel and his works, by his colleagues and pupils, of which these few verses will afford a sufficient specimen.* In these *Disputations* appear to be contained the first sketches of all his medical writings, which having afterwards corrected and enlarged, he published separately under a different form. They are full of MS. notes written by his own hand. Another edition of these *Disputations* appears to have been published after the

* "*Te Bruceus amabat, coluit Dudithius, Braba
Demiratur acumen genii Scotigenæ inclutus.*"

"*Te vero Duncane, æternum JULIA amabit,
Æternasq; tibi decernit præmia laudes.*"

the author's death, and is quoted by Mangetus under the following title.

33 Mangeti
Biblioth.
Script. Med.
Genevæ 1731.
voce Liddelius.

"*Universæ Medicinæ Compendium, quod nervosis aliquot Disputationibus in illu-
stri Julia quondam inclusit D. Liddelius Scotus, &c. Helmæstadii 1720.*" 4to. 33.

2. *Ars Medica, succincte et perspicue explicata, auctore Duncano Liddelio
Scoto. Hamburgi 1607.* 8vo.

This work is dedicated to King James the VIth, and was perhaps published under the author's own inspection, upon leaving Helmstadt in this very year. It consists of five books.

Lib. 1. *Introductio in totam Medicinam, Cap. 4.*

2. *De Physiologia, Cap. 15.*

3. *De Pathologia, Cap. 14.*

4. *De Signorum Doctrina, Cap. 10.*

5. *De Therapeutica, Cap. 24.*

Another edition of this work was published at Lyons 1624 in 4to. by Ludovicus Serranus physician there, who in a short preface, finds much fault with the incorrectness, inelegance, and what he calls *'arazija* of that of Hamburg, and boasts of having greatly improved it. Upon comparing it however with the former, and even a later Hamburg edition, there appears no other improvement, than his having reduced the work from five books into four, by throwing the two first into one, under the general title of *Physiologia* †. A third edition of the *Ars Medica* was published at Hamburg 1628, 12mo. by Frobenius a bookseller there, with a dedication to Dr Patrick Dun, principal of the Marischal College of Aberdeen, to whom he acknowledges great obligations, for having furnished him with a copy enlarged and corrected in the author's own hand writing. To this edition is also prefixed the letter from Caselius to Dr. John Craig so often quoted, and which is dated at Helmstadt in May 1607. Frobenius makes no mention of the edition of Serranus.

3.

† Serranus shews a great veneration for his author, and mistaking his christian for his surname, calls him "*DUNCANUS in arte medica vere CANUS, et Medicorum nostri Seculi Decanus*". He also pays him his tribute of poetical praise.

"*Gente Caledonius Duncanus, et arte Pelasgus.*"

"*Divini Hippocratis mysteria clausa recludit.*"

3. *De Febribus Libri tres, Authore Duncano Liddelio Scoto, Hamburgi 1610, 12mo.*

Dr. Liddel dedicates this treatise to Henry Frederic, prince of Scotland and Wales, son of King James the VIth, and subscribes *D. L. Aberdonensis M. D.* It is also republished by Serranus along with the *Ars Medica, Lugduni 1624, 4to.*

4. *Duncani Liddellii Tractatus de Dente Aureo, &c. Hamburgi, ex Biblioth. Frobeniana 1628, 12mo.*

As the subject of this treatise is perhaps not generally known, and is somewhat curious, the following short account of it may not be unacceptable. Jacobus Horstius, doctor and professor of medicine in the *Academia Julia*, at the same time with our author, published a truly ridiculous performance, and dedicated it to the emperor Rudolphus the second; ³⁵ in which from ocular inspection, and by many learned arguments, he endeavours to vindicate the truth of a popular story then current, of a poor boy of Silesia, who at seven years of age having lost some of his teeth, his parents were astonished at the appearance of a new one of pure gold. Horstius seriously looks upon this wonderful tooth as a prodigy sent from heaven to encourage the Germans, then at war with the Turks: from it foretells the future victories of the Christians, with the final destruction of the Turkish Empire and Mahometan faith, and a return of the golden age in 1600, preparatory to the end of the world. This wretched performance Dr. Liddel takes the trouble to refute, as he says, for the honour of the *Academia Julia*, and because the reveries of his colleague were obtaining too much credit in that ignorant age. He appears however ashamed to treat the subject seriously, but employs the powers of irony and ridicule against his unfortunate opponent with much success. He says, he should as soon believe that the whole body of the boy was made of gold as one of his teeth, talks of idle dreams and old women's tales, and hints that the brain of a certain person, whom for the sake of

³⁵ *Ja. Horstii
Tractat. de
aureo dente
Pueri Silesii,
Lipsiæ 1595.*

his reputation, he is unwilling to name, would require a little hellebore. †

36 *Vita German. Medicor. a Melch. Adamo, Heidelberg. 1620.*

There is also another work published concerning this singular controversy, by Ingolstaterus a physician of Nuremberg³⁶, who likewise combats the opinion of Horstius, proving the golden tooth to be monstrous and unnatural, and suggesting that it was most probably the work of the devil. But the imposture, as might be imagined, was soon after discovered to be a thin plate of gold, skilfully drawn over a natural tooth by an artist of that country, with a view to excite the public admiration and charity.³⁷

36 *Van Dale de Oraculis Lib. 1.*

5. *Artis conservandi Sanitatem, Libri duo, a C. D. Doctore Liddelio defuncto delineati, opera & studio D. Patricii Dunæi M. D. &c. Aberdoniæ 1651, 12mo.*

In the preface to this work, Dr Dun, who had studied Physic at Helmstadt under Dr Liddel, says, that having found the MS. among his papers, he thought it a duty he owed to the public and his old master, to complete and publish it, or in his own words, “*ad colophonem perducere, & in aprium proferre.*” ‡

Of the merit of these medical works of Dr. Liddel, the author of this sketch does not consider himself as a proper judge, nor is it now perhaps necessary that it should be estimated with much precision. They appear however to contain the most *fashionable* opinions and practice in the medical art, of the age in which he lived; nor is there almost any disease or medical

† He concludes thus, “*Hæc sunt præcipua istius Libelli de aureo dente fundamenta: cætera enim attingere nunc minime decrevi: sed ut dignitati hujus academix consulatur, seriis illis nostris ista ludicra solum miscere; ac simul ab hujusmodi scriptoribus obnixè petere, ut desinant sua somnia pro Oraculis Imperatori, summisque principibus obtrudere.*”

‡ In *Haller's Bibliotheca*, after Dr. Liddel's other writings, is mentioned the following, but being anonymous, cannot certainly be ascribed to this author. “*Universæ Medicinæ Synopsis in tabulis quatuor methodice collecta. Item libri sex Galeni de morborum & symptomatum differentiis & causis, &c.*” *Vicetia 1595 fol.*

medical subject then known, of which he has not treated in one or other of his writings. His frequent quotations from Hippocrates, Galen and Aristotle, point out the school in which he had been educated, while those from the Greek and Latin Classics, show that their works were also familiar to him. But the chief testimony in favour of his writings is, that besides receiving the distinguished approbation of his colleagues and contemporaries, they are also mentioned with respect by succeeding authors. ‡ Of his language it may be sufficient to observe, that the Latin is at least as pure as is generally found among medical writers, and that his style is plain and perspicuous, and sometimes even elegant.

Whether he published any other works than those here enumerated, is somewhat uncertain. Among his academical *Disputations* are two or three short *Theses* upon subjects of the Aristotelian philosophy; but nothing has been found written by him on his favourite science of mathematics. That he was well acquainted with Tycho Brahe, and paid him several visits, has been already observed, yet no traces are now to be found of their having corresponded together, or of any dispute between them upon astronomical subjects.—There is indeed one author, of whose writings the character and authenticity are perhaps somewhat doubtful, who is very decisive on this subject³⁸. “These mathematical blades, says he, put me in mind of that Doctor Liddel, who for his profoundness in those sciences of sensible immaterial objects, was every where much renowned, especially at Francfort de Main, Francfort on the Oder, and Heidelberg, where he was almost as well known as the monstrous Bacchanalian tun that stood there in his time. He was an eminent professor of mathematics, a disciple

38 *Traſts by*
Sir T. Urqu-
hart Edinbr.
1774. p. 125.

‡ Among others are the following. *Thomasinus de Scriptoribus & Literatis claris—Herm. Conringii Introductio in artem medicam, Halæ 1726—passim.* In Cap. 5. 10. he says, “*Nec fraudandus sua laude Duncanus Liddellius, Julæ nostræ decus, doctrina pathologica ut compendiose ita satis exquisite exposita*”—*Alb. Halleri Bibliotheca Med. Prac. 4to. Bernæ 1777 vol. 2.—Schola Hippocratica, pp. 316, 317.* After a full and tolerably accurate enumeration of Dr Liddel’s writings, he says of the *Ars Medica*, “*Plenum opus, quo præter physiologiam, pathologia, therapeutica, morbi a capite ad calcem traduntur, deniq; medicamentorum facultates & compositio, vi&usq; ratio. Ex veteribus caterum collectanea tradit*”—Of the *Treatise de Febris*, he observes, “*plenum & fufum opus ad veterum saporem*”—And of that *De dente aureo*—“*Fraudem fuisse, quam vir nobilis percusso juvene detexerit. Somnia Jacobi Horstii, et portentum excidium imperii Turcici refutat.*”

ciple of the most excellent astronomer Tycho Brahe, and condisciple of that worthy Longomontanus : yet in imitation of Aristotle (whose doctrine with great proficiency he had imbued) esteemed more of truth than of either Socrates or Plato, when the new star began to appear in the constellation of Cassiopæia, there was concerning it such an interhocking of opinions betwixt Tycho Brahe and Doctor Liddel, evulged in print to the open view of the world, that the understanding reader could not but have commended both for all, and yet (in giving each his due) praised Tycho Brahe most for Astronomy, and Liddel for his knowledge above him in all the other parts of philosophy." Upon what authority this last circumstance is founded, cannot be discovered, for there is no mention of it in either of the very full accounts of the life and writings of Tycho Brahe, by Gassendi and Montucla, nor in a large volume written by Tycho himself concerning this new Star ; altho' he there animadverts at great length upon the opinions of many other astronomers, who had also treated of it—Nor could any such controversy have possibly happened *at the time* mentioned by Sir Thomas Urquhart, for the new star there spoken of was observed by Tycho Brahe in 1572, and the account of it published by him in 1573³⁹, when Dr. Liddel was only twelve years of age. There is indeed in the volume of astronomical epistles of Tycho Brahe,⁴⁰ a long letter from him to his friend Rothmannus, chiefly filled with severe reflections upon the publications of a certain Scotsman against his account of the Comet of 1577,* not of the new star in Cassiopæia ; but it appears from Gassendi that this Scottish writer was Dr Craig formerly mentioned, and not Dr. Liddel ⁴¹. *

39 Montucla
voce Ty. Brahe.
40 Epist. Astron. Lib. I. p.
296. Noriberg.
1601. 4to.

41 Gassendi
de vita Tycho.
Brahe Vol. 4.
Lib. 4. Lugd.
1658.

From

* We find from this epistle that the person who had the courage to oppose the Danish Astronomer resided in Scotland, and that the title of his last and principal work was—*Capnuranie rescriptio, seu Cometarum in Æthera sublimationis refutatio*—Of this work and its author Tycho says—" *Is vero qui præ cæteris nostrum in re Cometica studium elevare et oppugnare attentavit, Scotus quidem natione fuit, Medicinæ Galenicæ Doctor, & Aristoteleæ Philosophiæ supra modum addictus, quem hic nominare nolo, ejus honori parcens. Vult quidem is genere nobilis haberi, uti de seipso nonnullibi insinuat, &c. . . . Nec tam Scotice quam Sceptice agit Cum multis enim e Scotia oriundis, tam doctrina quam genere claris mihi res fuit, in quibus eximium candorem pari humanitate conjunctum animadverti ; quibus etiam ingenii et judicii acumen singulare non defuit. At, qui tam ingrato et averso animo, tamq; petulanti lingua, me neaq; incesferet, hæcenus sensi neminem*". Lib. I. Epist. Astronom. p. 296.

From the above view of the life and writings of Dr. Liddel, some judgement may be formed of his general character and merits. It has been shewn that he was well received and patronized by the most eminent scholars in every university where he studied; and that in a foreign country, without fortune or the connections of family, he arrived at the highest honours of his profession, and was distinguished as one of the first physicians and philosophers of his time. He appears to have always entertained a most grateful sense of the favours conferred on him in his youth, and to have been warmly attached to his native country and his friends⁴². That he was also highly esteemed and beloved by them, is evident from the *Carmina Encomiastica* addressed to him in Latin and in Greek, by many of his colleagues in the *Academia Julia* and others—tho' it must be acknowledged that there is none to be found from the learned Professor *Horstius*. †

42 *Dedicatio ad Jo. Craigium.*

Casellius observes, that as Dr. Liddel lived in his house for several years, he had an opportunity of being perfectly acquainted with him, that he was of a modest and agreeable disposition, and entirely free from envy, altho' by no means insensible of his own merit. The same writer likewise informs us, that he never shewed any inclination to matrimony (a subject on which he was sometimes rallied by his companions) ‡ and this circumstance, while it facilitated his departure from Germany, no doubt enabled him also to make the better provision for his future support in his own country. The exact account of his fortune

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cannot

† Among others are found the following—*Jo. Casellius P. P.*—*Albertus Clampus J. U. D.* *Theod. Adamius J. U. D.*—*Henr. Meibomius Poeta Caesarius Acad. Juliae Poet. & Hist. P.* *Joannes Potinius Verdensis*—*M. Adamus Luchtenius*—*Cornelius Martinus Antuerpius in Acad. Juliae Logices Professor*—*Salomon Frencelius in inclyta Julia hōm Professor.*

‡ In a Poem addressed to him by his colleague T. Adamius, are the following verses—

*Quando tibi tade urentur, Duncane, jugales;
(Utque brevi, votis annuat almus Hymen)
Carmina et ipse canam ad grandem composta cothurnum,
Accersam et cunctos in tua capta DEOS.*

cannot now be ascertained; it must however ^{have} been very considerable for those times, since, besides his liberal donations to Marischal College, which he mentions in his will as only "*a part of his worldly substance*," he probably bestowed no small portion of it upon his surviving brother and sister.—But whatever fortune he may have acquired in the exercise of an honourable profession, the benevolent purposes to which he applied it, will long secure to him the grateful remembrance of his native city, while his writings and reputation as one of the first scholars of his age, certainly entitle him to a distinguished place in our Scottish Biography.

FAMA POSTHUMA MERITORUM PERPETUA TESTIS.