A Day in Georgian Dublin

by Eoin O'Brien

The Charitable Infirmary,
Jervis Street,
Dublin

The year is 1810, the fiftieth year of George the Third's reign and we are to picture ourselves as a small group of medical visitors from another land—as indeed we are from another age—on a brief visit to the city of Dublin. It is our wish to meet the notable doctors of the day, to see the city and to visit some of its medical institutions. Accordingly an eminent member of the profession, who also happens to be a close friend of one of our group, has planned a pilgrimage at the end of which it is hoped we shall depart with an awareness as to Dublin's medical achievements in the eighteenth century.

Thomas Molyneux

Without further ado—for time is short and we have much ground to cover—let us set off by coach and four down York Street, a fashionable residential area occupied by many of the City's leading doctors. Crossing Aungier Street we shall come to Peter Street and pause for a moment outside the residence of the late Thomas Molyneux (1641-1733). Known as the "father of Irish medicine", he was one of Dublin's most eminent Georgian figures. The resplendent Molyneux Mansion was built in what had been a fashionable area—alas now deserted—in 1711 at a cost of £2,310.4s.5½d., the furnishings costing an additional £2,341.5s.7d—and although not a large house it has a tasteful and well proportioned exterior and boasts a fine staircase with barley sugar balusters. Gazing from our carriage at the house, we might note with some curiosity equestrian comings and goings from the rere of the house and on enquiring from our cabby as to what this signified, we would learn that when the area became deserted, the family mansion was let to a *Mr Astley*, who built at the rere of the dwelling house his Amphitheatre, where he amused the public for many years with feats of horsemanship. Sir Thomas Molyneux, a man with many cultural interests was an accomplished archaeologist and zoologist, who had held the office of President of the College of Physicians on four occasions in addition to being Professor of Physic in the University, State Physician and Physician-General. He had furthermore been created a baronet in 1730 and was the first medical personage to receive this honour in Ireland.

John Timothy Kirby

But lest we become preoccupied with the past, let us proceed to the residence of John Timothy Kirby (1781-1853) at Number 29, Peter Street. Outside the house we could not fail to observe an elegant chaise with a coachman clothed in bright azure livery and silver lace. In the drawing room we would meet Mr Kirby, a rather obsessional and slightly self-opinionated man

whose day was already well advanced though the hour is yet early; rising at five in the morning it was his custom to meet the first private pupil of the day to whom he would lecture until seven, after which time he would go to his School of Anatomy to lecture and demonstrate until one o'clock. Today he has broken his routine to meet us, but as many students await him and he is booked for private classes until ten o'clock tonight, we must not delay the Anatomist too long. So we proceed to his famous Theatre and School of Surgery situated at the back of his house and adjoining which is a small hospital and the lecture theatre in which we shall attend a discourse on gunshot wounds. Seating ourselves among the students, we witness Kirby dressed in remarkable finery and wearing breeches and silk stockings enter the crowded theatre holding in his hand a pistol. This strange scene is rendered the more bizarre by the macabre spectacle of a number of cadavers standing against the wall behind the lecturer, and facing towards the class. Kirby waving his pistol as another might his chalk, dissertates on the trauma inflicted by the bullet and the difficulties in determining the track, and the problems associated with extraction of the offending missile. Then with a flourish of his head he takes a few paces towards us, turns, raises his arm, aims the pistol and fires at one of the bodies which falls to the floor with a dull thud. A loud round of applause greets this performance which is followed by dissection of the cadaver to determine the damage inflicted. Leaving the smoky atmosphere of Kirby's school we would wish to learn a little more of this eccentric individual.

Having served for two years as Demonstrator in Anatomy to Professors Colles and Dease he had a disagreement with these gentlemen, the basis of which seems to have been financial and after a number of ventures, he finally opened the school of Anatomy in 1809. Most of his students study for the army and he provides a complete course of education. At one time, his certificates were extensively forged in London and sold at high prices, thus permitting twenty men to enter the Services. Kirby's industry will later be rewarded by the Presidency of the

Royal College of Surgeons and the Chair of Medicine in that institute.

The Meath Hospital

Leaving Peter Street which has yet to house the Ledwich School (1836) and the Dublin School of Medicine (1832), we now pass down Bride Street, past St Patrick's Cathedral and the Archbishop's Palace to Kevin Street and the Lower Coombe; en route to the Upper Coombe and our next destination, the Meath Hospital, we pass through the Liberties of Dublin and witness a lively but deceptively carefree scene. Heavy carts and four-horse wagons trundle down the streets. Women in brightly coloured shawls and petticoats walk barefoot, and in the faces of the older women we see the ravages of poverty and multiparity. Half naked urchins run hither and thither attempting from time to time to cling to our carriage, hawkers cry their wares and beggars plead with those wealthier than they to part with alms. Ballad singers entertain those willing to listen and we might be fortunate enough to see and hear the blind *Michael Moran*, better known as Zozimus now in 1810 a young man but later to become one of Dublin's most famous ballad singers. Were our visit some years earlier in the Georgian reign, we might have chanced upon *Billy in the Bowl* propelling himself through the Liberties. Billy born without legs and appreciating that survival in this part of the world depended to a great extent on mobility, had devised a method of propulsion in a wooden bowl shod with iron. "A universal favourite", he was despite his deformity a fine looking fellow with "dark eyes, aquiline nose, a well formed mouth, dark curling locks, and a body and arms of Herculean power." But he was, Dr Widdess tells us, capable of terrible treachery and would if the opportunity arose waylay and rob with violence unsuspecting persons and it was for such an assault that he was sentenced to hard labour for life in Green Street Gaol.

Arriving at the Meath Hospital we are greeted in the courtyard by the Senior Surgeon *Solomon Richards* (1760-1819) and welcomed to his hospital which is now almost forty years in its present location and the building of which is later to become the Coombe Lying-In Hospital. Officially constituted in Parliament as the County of Dublin Infirmary, it is more commonly known as "the Meath" after the Earl of Meath. We find Richards, or Sol as his friends would call him, a genial and corpulent figure who boasting the reputation of being the fattest surgeon in the United Kingdom, can only enter his carriage sideways. President of the Royal College of Surgeons for three terms, he is one of the most respected surgeons in the city. A wealthy man he owns vast tracts of land in the Counties of Wicklow and Dublin and his personal wealth had been enhanced by the receipt of a lottery prize of £10,000 We now meet *Richard Dease* (1774-1819), Surgeon to the Meath Hospital and son of the famous surgeon William Dease (1752-1798) who had also been attached to the Meath. Richard had succeeded his father to the Chairs of Anatomy and Surgery in the College School. A cultured, well educated man he has a reputation as an accomplished anatomist and skilled surgeon. He lives in the house he inherited from his father in the fashionable Sackville (now O'Connell) Street.

Philip Crampton (1777-1858), also a surgeon to the hospital at the time of our visit is in his thirty-fourth year and destined for greatness. Already he is regarded as one of the leading anatomists of the day. He teaches from a dissecting room and lecture theatre at the rere of his house in Number 24, Dawson Street. His appearance has been described by Erinesis in the Lancet—"About six feet in height, slightly formed, elegantly proportioned, and elastic as corkwood; and if instead of the gothic fabrics by which his graceful figure was distorted, he had been habited in flowing robes of Lincoln green, he might doubtless have posed for the model of James Fitzjames. A blue coat with scarcely anything deserving the name of skirts, a pair of doe-skin breeches that did every justice to the ingenious

maker, top boots, spurs of imposing longitude, and a whip, called a blazer in his country, completed the costume of this dandy Nimrod." Shortly to become President of the Royal College of Surgeons and Surgeon-General, he will later be knighted by Queen Victoria and commemorated by a somewhat crude bronze fountain which stood until recently in College Street. Particularly interested in opthalmic surgery, a muscle of the eye was for a time named *musculus cramptonius.*

We shall meet *Cusak Roney* (1782-1849), another surgeon to the Meath who will no doubt attempt to engage us in conversation about the stock market, for investment speculation is Cusack's great interest; heavy losses in misguided specualtion are shortly to force a temporary absence from Dublin. He is immortalised in Charles Lever's *The Confessions of Harry Lorrequer.*

The physicians to the hospital are *Dr George Frank Todderick* and *Dr Thomas Egan* (1752-1818). The former is obsessed with ventilation, the lack of which he regards as the cause of most illnesses, and he is only to remain a short time on the staff of the hospital; he will later move to Paris to indulge himself in religious matters. Dr Egan is successor to the famous John Cheyne, but the Meath yet awaits its greatest physicians—Whitley Stokes in 1818, Robert Graves in 1821 and William Stokes in 1826.

Accompanied by the staff on a round of the hospital we are impressed by the four spacious and airy wards which contain forty beds and we note that throughout the greatest attention to neatness and cleaniness prevails. Solomon Richards tells us that in the previous year 395 patients were admitted to the wards, of whom 19 died. In a busy out-patients department we see two medical and surgical pupils assisting in the dressing of wounds. After morning coffee in the Board Room we take our leave of the staff of this small hospital which has yet to contribute so much to what we now regard as the "Golden Age of Dublin Medicine"—the mid-nineteenth century.

Dr Steevens Hospital

Our carriage now takes off up Francis Street and turning left at the Cornmarket we pass down Thomas Street to James Street, at the end of which we turn right into Steevens Lane to arrive at the charming quadrangle of Dr Steevens Hospital. Situated at this time on the city boundary and surrounded by green countryside, much of which is in pasture, we can see in the distance the impressive building of the Royal Hospital, and almost next door to Dr Steevens Hospital is St Patrick's Hospital, more commonly known as Swift's Hospital after its founder Dr Jonathan Swift, Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral.

Dr Steeven's Hospital had opened in 1733, having been built with the monies bequeathed by Dr Richard Steevens, a physician of Dublin who died in 1710. His sister Griselda Steevens had been the driving force in the project and lived in the hospital until her death in 1747. One of the most generous benefactors had been Mrs. Esther Johnston, the celebrated Stella whose name was so closely linked with that of Jonathan Swift and after whom a ward in the hospital is named. The building was designed by Thomas Burgh whose greatest architectural achievement was the Library in Trinity College. The frontage of the hospital is plain and unornamented but the most striking aspect is the quadrangle surrounded by piazzas from which one gains access to the wards and other departments housed within the three storey building, the third storey being contained in an elevated roof which gives the whole a quaint and distinctly characteristic appearance. From the quadrangle we are conducted to the splendid Worth Library and Board Room to meet the staff of the hospital. Those of us interested in books will be most anxious to spend a little time browsing through some of the 4,500 volumes which had been bequeathed to the hospital by *Dr Edward Worth* (1688-1733).

In the Board Room we are met by the Senior Surgeon *Samuel Croker King* (1728-1817) now in his 83rd year and the doyen of Dublin surgery. This gracious elder was the first President of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland in 1784. Reputed to be a skilled surgeon he had successfully treated the

Duke of Wellington when as a child recovery had been deemed most improbable. Married to a celebrated beauty Miss Obrē, he lived in the then fashionable Jervis Street.

We would next meet *William Harvey* a graduate of Edinburgh and at present serving his sixth term as President of the Royal College of Physicians. One of the most respected members of the profession he is also Physician-General.

And now we are introduced to *Abraham Collis* (1733-1843), aged thirty-seven years and destined to become one of Dublin's greatest doctors; although he has not yet in this year of 1810 made his impact on the international medical scene, he has already served as President of the Royal College of Surgeons and is joint Professor of Anatomy and Surgery with Richard Dease. Born in Millmount, Kilkenny, he had received his medical education at Trinity College and the Royal College of Surgeons from which he received Letters Testimonial in 1795. He then went to Edinburgh and London and worked with Astley Cooper. Appointed to Dr Steevens Hospital at the age of twenty-six years, his starting salary had been £5 a year but now as a successful surgeon he was earning in excess of £6,000 annually. He has yet to produce the famous writings which will earn for him eponymous immortality—Colles' fracture, Colles' ligament, Colles' fascia, Colles' Space and Colles' Law.

Ralph Smith Obré—a surgeon with an interest in venereal disease and inventor of a double tracheotomy tube is a colleague of Colles. His sister is married to Samuel Croker King. Obré was a great friend of Solomon Richards, the pair together forming quite a contrast, 'Sol' being enormous whereas Obré was particularly small. We would probably have heard the story then going the rounds of Dublin hospitals about these surgeons. One night returning from an operation in the country their carriage was stopped by highwaymen and Obré immediately hid himself behind the corpulent Richards who was relieved of his money, watch and case of surgical instruments. As the carriage was about to continue Richards drew the robbers attention to Obré who was duly relieved of his valuables and surgical implements. Richards then suggested to the highwaymen that as

it was his kindness which had rewarded them with Obré's valuables, they might in appreciation for this gesture return his watch and case of instruments which had little monetary value. The suggestion agreed to, the pair continued on their journey and Obré expressed to Richards that in his view his conduct had been to say the least ungentlemanly, to which the latter quietly retorted "Do you think that I was going to allow you to boast in the Club tomorrow how you got off while Richards was robbed."

The mewing of cats might draw out attention to *William Hartigan* (1756-1812) ex-president of the Royal College of Surgeons and Professor of Anatomy and Chirurgery in Dublin University. A lover of the feline breed he brings his pets everywhere with him and a number of kittens are always to be found in the deep pockets of his greatcoat. Popular with his students and colleagues we will find him a genial, if somewhat eccentric figure.

A tour of the hospital will take us to the wards and chapel but our attention is particularly directed towards the special "fluxing" or "salivating" wards. Here patients with venereal disease for whom a mercurial course is deemed necessary receive treatment under special nursing care. The mercury is administered either by mouth or by unction; in the latter event, the patient stands before a good fire and the part to which the ointment is to be applied is rubbed with a dry hand until red; then ointment—often containing turpentine and fresh hog's lard in addition to mercury—is applied. An alternative treatment is the administration of mercury vapour by stoving or fumigation but this is not without hazard. We would see patients being prepared for mercury treatment by bleeding, purging and the administration of emetics. Beside the beds of salivating patients are pewter mugs for collecting and measuring the amount of saliva produced each day. Indeed it is on the quantity of saliva that the efficacy of treatment is based—a satisfactory ptyalism is considered to be the spitting of from three to six pints in the twenty-four hours and a course of salivation is normally conducted for three to four weeks.

The Royal Hospital

Taking leave of our friends at Dr Steevens Hospital we continue our journey down Steevens Lane towards the River Liffey which is banked on both sides by green fields and turning left up the new Military Road we pass along Lord Galway's Walk to cross over the Camac River, and in so doing we also pass across the city boundary and enter the grounds of the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham. This beautiful rectangular building designed by the Irish architect *William Robinson* and not as is often stated by Wren, is built on an elevation and presents four good fronts to view, each being three stories high, the third of which is lighted by dormer windows in an elevated roof. From its northern aspect we see the Liffey flowing in full placid stream through the valley lying beneath the Phoenix Park and beyond stands the Soldiers' Hospital, the Magazine and Salute Battery; looking to the west our gaze is drawn from the quiet countryside extending as far as the eye can see to a burial ground lying within the hospital grounds—the infamous "Bully's Acre" where the poor of Dublin are buried without charge but where there is every likelihood of the deceased falling prey to the "resurrection men" or "sack-em-ups", to finally end their days on the anatomy tables of the Royal College of Surgeons. On its southern front the hospital looks out on meadows extending beyond the Grand Canal but the vista is already disturbed by scattered buildings along Kilmainham Lane and from the south-eastern corner, the City Workhouse is visible. From the eastern wing our gaze passes over meadows and the Camac River, to Dr Steevens Hospital and St Patricks Hospital just within the city boundary, and beyond is the Liberties guarded over in the distance by the spires of the twin cathedrals.

Prior to the reign of Charles II, Ireland had enjoyed many years of peace during which the army had, without the administratively useful expedient of warfare, grown considerably in size and a number of soldiers had reached an advanced age. These old men were totally unfit for active service and because of their avocation were mostly unskilled,

and by virtue of their age incapable of hard labour. These unfortunates if dismissed by the army would have perished just as surely as if thrown into combat, and so in about 1675 there were suggestions for a Royal Hospital and in 1679, the Duke of Ormond had plans drawn up, the foundation stone being laid on 29th April, 1680. The hospital opened four years later having been built for the modest price of £23,559.16s.11¼d., most of the expense being defrayed by a deduction of six pence in the pound from the pay of all officers, soldiers and other persons on the military list of the kingdom.

Driving through the arched gateway we enter the interior court of the hospital neatly laid out in grass plots and gravel walks and surrounded on three sides and part of the fourth by a piazza flanked by fifty nine semicircular Doric arches. Our attention will be drawn towards the centre of the north front which is decorated by an angular pediment supported by four Corinthian pilasters of hewn stone and over which is the steeple, consisting of a square tower of plain masonry lighted by four circular-headed windows which have a Gothic appearance; over this tower rises a second of smaller diameter containing the clock with four dial-plates and a steeple terminating in an octagonal spire with a bull and weather cock. In the centre of this courtyard our hosts, the surgeon *George Renny* (1757-1848) and the physician *Charles William Quinn* wait to greet us.

Renny a tall, broad-shouldered Scotsman is wearing a blue long tailored coat furnished with bright brass buttons and we may be amazed by the copious volume of snuff which he continually sniffs. A graduate of Edinburgh, he had for a number of years been surgeon to the army but when the government decided to send his regiment to India, (a move apparently contrary to the conditions under which it had been recruited) the officers mutinied and Renny came to Dublin in 1783 on half pay and was appointed Surgeon to the Royal Hospital at a salary of £365 per annum with apartments and grazing rights. Shortly afterwards he was appointed Director-General of the Army Medical Department in Ireland and he was

also appointed Governor of the infamous Foundling Hospital where he soon observed that many of the unfortunate children suffered from venereal disease; so severe was this that during a seven year period six hundred children afflicted with this disease had with one exception perished. Renny had instituted a policy of segregating diseased from healthy children on admission and thereby dramatically reduced the mortality; then he had the hospital staff dismissed and the board reorganised. Renowned for his business acumen, he at one time interested himself in the water supply of the city which was singularly inadequate until he persuaded the authorities to erect forty street fountains which drew water from the Grand Canal. He had negotiated the purchase of the present site of the Royal College of Surgeons from the society of Quakers for £4,000 in 1805, and was one of the main instigators in influencing the Government to give liberal grants—no less than £6,000 in 1805—to the College for its new buildings. Renny tells us that he had just commenced sitting for a portrait with the artist William Cumming, a full length portrait having been commissioned by the College at a cost of forty guineas. (This portrait today hangs in the Board Room.)

Renny's colleague *Charles William Quinn*, an ex-president of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland is Physician-General and in addition to his post at the Royal Hospital also has charge of the Military Hospital which treats the sick of Dublin garrison comprising in 1810, five infantry and one cavalry regiment. Quinn's father had been King's Professor of Physic at Trinity College and had excelled in music as a harpsichord player in Lord Mornington's Musical Academy of Amateurs who were to be heard in the celebrated hall in Fishamble Street in which on April 13th, 1742, Handel's Messiah had for the first time been performed with the choirs of both St Patrick's and Christ Church to an audience of over seven hundred persons; accommodation had been possible only by the ladies foregoing their hoops and the gentlemen their swords; the proceeds of the performance went to the support of Mercer's Hospital and the Charitable Infirmary. Quinn had in the year of his graduation

from Edinburgh in 1779 attended a lecture in Stourbridge at which he heard of the beneficial effects of foxglove—first tried by the Birmingham physician William Withering in 1775. But it was not until Withering published his classical *Account of the Foxglove* in 1785 that Quinn had decided to use this preparation in soldiers with dropsy and he is the first in Ireland to have recorded the effects.

Renny and Quinn showing us around the hospital tell us that it at present accommodates about 260 old men and that there are an additional 3,000 pensioners attending on an extern basis. We observe that the men are comfortably lodged and well fed, each having a weekly allowance of one pound of bread and two quarts of beer daily, eighteen ounces of mutton on two days and eighteen ounces of beef on three days of the week, with a half pound of cheese on the remaining days. In addition each man is allowed eight pence per week tobacco money and a sum of a £100 per annum is fixed on the widows of the old men. But as Renny tells us there are rules to be obeyed and drunkeness, duelling, begging and the like are strictly forbidden and moreover if a soldier should marry or attempt to sell wine, ale or spirits in the hospital, the penalty is immediate expulsion. Time permits but a brief visit to the dining hall flanked on both sides by portraits which include those of King Charles, Queen Mary and Narcissus Marsh. The chapel, constructed in part from the ruins of the chapel of the priory of Kilmainham has a tranquil air and the ceiling beautifully adorned with rich heavy foliage in stucco will capture our admiration. Leaving Renny, Quinn and the Royal Hospital behind us our coach now takes us back through Lord Galway's Walk and passing down the Quays we will cross over the Liffey via Essex Bridge and turn right down Lower Ormond Quay to Batchelor's Walk. We may wish to pause here for a moment and reminisce on "Dr Achmet's Royal Baths"—alas no longer in existence. Sir Jonah Barrington tells us that *Dr Achmet Borumborad* had fled from Constantinople to Dublin where he set about establishing "Hot and Cold Sea-Water Baths" which apart from offering free ablutions for the poor of Dublin would moreover have the distinct

honour of the good physician's presence and when indicated his advice without fee. Dr Borumborad was quite the first Truk to stride through the streets of Dublin in full regalia—considerably greater than six feet in height he sported an immense black beard covering the chin and upper lip and on the head sat a colourful turban blending with a multi-coloured flowing robe. All in all a striking figure in the Liberties followed at a respectful distance by a band of young children and idle strollers. To the gentlemen of the city he presented if not a challenge, a contrast which they had difficulty in ignoring—for as Barrington tells us "Many a smart, snug little husband who had been heretofore considered 'quite the thing'—despotic in his own house, and peremptory commandant of his own family, was now regarded as a wretched, contemptible, close-shaven pigmy, in comparison with the immensity of the Doctor's figure and whiskers." Dr Borumborad depended for support for his baths on Parliament which provided him with generous enough annual grants and the doctor to show his gratitude was given to throwing an annual dinner in his spacious salon for those Members of Parliament who supported him. On one such occasion the wine and champagne had not been without effect and the doctor was prevailed upon to seek another dozen or so bottles from his cellar. Whilst Dr Borumborad was away instructing his servants in this matter, Sir John S. Hamilton arose to leave much against the wishes of his more inebriated colleagues who clung to his personage as he burst from the dining room but alas through the wrong door and straight into Dr Borumborad's dimly lit cold salt-water bath followed by a number of his friends; when the doctor returned he was dismayed to behold eighteen or nineteen Irish Parliamentarians "either floating like so many corks upon the surface or scrambling to get out like mice who had fallen into a basin." The tragedy was compounded by the fact that the doctor being a Turk, did not possess a Christian wardrobe and the distinguished guests were greeted with characteristic Dublin repartee as they were whisked home, looking and no doubt feeling ridiculous in Turkish costume or in bathing shift "cursing all

Turks and infidels, and denouncing a crusade against anything coming from the same quarter of the globe as Constantinople." Poor Dr Borumborad lost his parliamentary support as the stories of the incident went the rounds of Dublin and the future of the Baths became extremely doubtful. But now the Turk fell in love with a very "neat" young lady who happened to be the sister of the well known Dublin surgeon William Hartigan but neither would consider Dr Borumborad's plea for matrimony till – "he had shaved the chin at least, and got a parson to turn him into a Christian or something of that kind." Upon those terms only would Miss Hartigan surrender her charms–and her money which may have been of quite some interest to the doctor. Achmet could stand it no longer and shaving his beard and donning common garb, he prostrated himself at the feet of his beloved, declaring himself to be none other than Mr Patrick Joyce from Kilkenny–"the devil a Turk anymore than yourself, my sweet angel!" So Patrick Joyce married Miss Hartigan but the *denouement* resulted in the decline of the baths.

Bestirring ourselves from these reminiscences we are pleasantly surprised by the appearance of Sackville Street into which we have now entered. Extending from Henry Street to Great Britain Street (now Parnell Street), tasteful mansions house the nobility, Members of Parliament and members of the medical profession, among the latter being Whitley Stokes and Richard Dease. The going price for one of these houses might be in the region of £1,600 subject to £60 per year rent. The street is well laid out, having a central mall forty eight feet wide planted with forest trees and enclosed by a dwarf wall surmounted by a low iron railing. Ladies of glamour and gentlemen sporting the latest in fashion are to be seen strolling and that popular mode of transport, the sedan-chair, will not escape our notice; sedan chairs were either owned by individuals privately or might be hired if desired and provided a ready means of negotiating the rather rough terrain of many streets. Sedan-chairs also served as a source of income for the Government as the Municipal Authorities were authorised to "collect and levy the sum of thirty five shillings and sixpence sterling for every sedan-chair

which any person should keep in his or her possession in the city of Dublin or within one mile thereof", and once ten shillings had been deducted for the cost of the city police, the balance was donated to the Rotunda Hospital. All streets were not, however, as serene and peaceful as Sackville Street in this year of 1810 and many hazards awaited the unsuspecting pedestrian in Dublin. Footpads could waylay the unwary stranger particularly in the side streets, and beggars as we have already noticed were commonplace. Footpads convicted of assault and robbery were hanged and we might have heard of the execution of five footpads some years earlier, their fate being rendered most "distressing to every person capable of feeling for the misfortunes of their fellow creatures. In about a minute after five unhappy criminals were turned off, the temporary gallows fell down, and on its re-erection, it was found necessary to suffer three of the unhappy wretches to remain half-strangled on the ground until the other two underwent the sentence of the law when they in their turn were tied up and executed." The 'Bucks' and 'Bloods', young men of fashion with time on their hands could be a source of extreme annoyance to a gentleman or lady ambling peacefully through the city. Many of the 'Bloods' were known as 'Sweaters' and 'pinkin-dinkers', the former amusing themslves by forcing their victims to deliver up their arms; the latter sauntered through the streets and with the naked point of their swords protruding through the cut end of the scabbard spent their time prodding or 'pinking' innocent passers-by. At the end of Sackville Street a gathering outside one of the buildings would attract our attention and enquiring as to its nature we would learn that this was the Cow-Pock or Vaccine Institution where the public receive vaccination on the deposition of a small sum of money taken not as a fee but to guarantee their return to the Institution after vaccination.

The Rotunda Hospital

And now as we enter Great Britain Street we see before us the creation of *Bartholomew Mosse*—the Lying-In Hospital

known more popularly as 'The Rotunda'. Mosse, an amiable philanthropist with remarkable organisational ability and a flair for architecture and beauty had in 1745 opened a large house in George's Lane as an asylum for poor lying-in women. This unique establishment was the first maternity hospital in the Kingdom but it did not accommodate the demands of Dublin's pregnant females for long and Mosse with plans for expansion purchased ground in Great Britain Street in 1750 on which he proposed to build a larger institution. He invested his private wealth in laying out carefully planned and elaborate gardens from which he hoped to raise the money to build his new hospital. Dr Mosse spent lavishly on the 'New Gardens', as they were known, and in addition to the usual amenities of a well planned garden there was an artificial waterfall lit with 'artificial moonlight' and the artist Van Nost, a Dubliner of foreign parentage was employed to execute figures in marble and metal; a coffee room and pavilions were all that were necessary to attract the fashionable of Dublin to come and enjoy themselves whilst at the same time providing monies for Dr Mosse's venture. Finally, with £8,000 raised from this source and lotteries and a grant of £6,000 from Parliament, Mosse erected a building to the design of *Richard Cassals*, a German architect who had been brought to Dublin by *Sir Gustavus Hume* in 1727 and whose influence on Irish architecture is to be seen in Clanwilliam House, the Printing House and Dining Hall in Trinity College, Tyrone House, Kildare (now Leinster) House and the country houses of Powerscourt and Carton. The hospital was opened by the Duke of Bedford in December 1757 and "fifty two women, great with child... were received." Mosse died two years later leaving Dublin with one of its finest buildings which continues to serve the lying-in women of the city.

Regrettably the beautiful edifice does not—as Mosse originally wished—face Sackville Street and full appreciation of its pleasing architectural qualities—centre building of mountain granite faced with four semi-columns of the Doric order surmounted by the entablature and pediment—is not possible.

On entering the spacious hall our attention is drawn towards the grand staircase of Portland stone with an iron balustrade of open work, the whole being lighted by a large Venetian window decorated with Ionic columns between which stands a marble bust of the founder.

Here we are greeted by the Ninth Master, *Francis Hopkins* (1752-1819) the first practitioner in midwifery to receive the licence in medicine from the Royal College of Physicians—an achievement which ended an attitude that had prevailed in the College for many years whereby it was not possible for a practitioner of midwifery to become a licentiate. Not only did Hopkins become a licentiate, he was shortly afterwards admitted to the Fellowship and became President of the College on no less than six occasions. An industrious Master he is at the time of our visit working on the Midwifery Vade Mecum which will be published in 1811 in London.

At about this time the notorious *John Brenan,* known as the "turpentine" or "wrestling" doctor would have been making his rather unpleasant presence felt in medical circles and notably in the Lying-In Hospital where he was to advocate and employ against the wishes of the authorities, turpentine in the treatment of puerperal fever. Those who opposed Brenan's panacea, were not forgotten by the "turpentine" doctor who in 1812 was to become editor of "The Milesian Magazine, or Irish Monthly Gleaner" in which he lampooned the eminent medical personalities of the day with the greatest scurrility. Of Hopkins he had this to say—

"Twas Hopkins who might have most justly replaced
Th' dethroned wooden men who old Essex Street graced,
And if for the pedestal Henthorn sued
From the igneous claims that his head could obtrude;
And that Paddy Rooney and Boyle and such names
Urged the voice of the people as gods for their claims,
Placing Ferguson, Cleghorn, Cheyne and such Scots,
Whose effrontery passed for genious with Sots;
The judge of puff'd checks would most justly decree,
O Hopkins, that none could show title with thee."

The Assistant Master, *John C. Douglas* will tell us of his interest in puerperal fever, a cause of considerable maternal mortality in this and many other lying-in hospitals, and as yet awaiting the teaching of Semmelweis. Douglas tells us that he believes over-crowding and lack of ventilation to be factors of importance and suggests that "persons much engaged in hospital duty at a time when its atmosphere is heavily loaded with the peculiar effluvium" carry the illness on their persons from one patient to the next. He is, we find, an advocate of Dr Brenan's turpentine treatment.

We are introduced to *Samuel Bell Labatt* an ex-assistant master and future master of the Rotunda and who is at present Secretary and Inoculator to the Cow-Pock Institution which we passed by in Sackville Street. Labatt was an authority on vaccination and corresponded regularly with Jenner and it was he who had firmly established the practice of vaccination in Ireland. In three years the Dublin Cow-Pock Institution vaccinated 2,966 persons and in addition issued vaccine to 3,240 civilian practitioners and 634 army surgeons.

Thomas Evory (1758-1828) an ex-master of the hospital (1794) will be there to meet us and we will, no doubt, be told the pun which did the rounds at the time of his successful application for the Mastership; referring to his selection from five candidates the Freeman's Journal stated that "Evory.... one of them were elected."

William Harvey, physician to the hospital and *Samuel Croker King*, the surgeon, have been already introduced to us at Dr Steevens Hospital. Before setting out on a tour of the hospital we shall partake of tea, cake and scones in the Board Room under the watchful eye of the Housekeeper and Matron, *Mrs Hincks*. The wards we shall find airy and spacious and the 87 patients will present a colourful, if somewhat uniform appearance, all being clothed "in a blue Calaminco gown, a red petticoat, shift, handkerchief, cap and apron." The elegant chapel with a ceiling exhibiting some fine figures and ornaments boldly executed in stucco, and the Gallery ornamented with iron open work cannot fail to fill us with admiration for Dr

Mosse and his chosen artists. At the back of the hospital we shall take a brief stroll through the Hospital Gardens, beautifully designed with a variety of walks, and on the north side we may see a game of bowls on a green surrounded by thickly planted mature elm. Attached to the hospital we see the 'Rotunda' with its striking exterior Wedgewood frieze and the Master tells us that in its splendid circular room weekly concerts, subscription balls, card assemblies and masquerades are attended by the nobility and gentry of the city, the proceeds of these functions being contributed to the hospital. Another lucrative acitvity, we are told, had been the Sunday concerts which unfortunately for the hospital finances had been stopped some years earlier by the "Society for promoting Religion and Virtue".

And so departing the Rotunda our carriage takes us slowly through the evening of Dublin to the residences of our hosts, where we may after a rest and some refreshment, dress and reassemble at a reception in our honour at the Royal College of Surgeons on St Stephen's Green. Here it is hoped we will meet the members of the profession not already encountered on our tour around the city hospitals.

The Royal College of Surgeons

Approaching the College from the south side of the city we see St Stephen's Green lit by a number of lamps and having the reputation of being Europe's largest public square. Surrounded by a wall of plain masonry and immediately within this is a gravel walk separated from the interior by a deep ditch much of which is filled with water, becoming in winter the haunt of snipes and hunters—the latter being a danger not only to their prey but to those strolling on the gravel walks. Executions were until some years earlier carried out in Stephen's Green and in 1766 four pirates were hanged, their bodies to be later suspended by chains on the South Wall and afterwards removed to the Muglins, a cluster of small rocks near Dalkey Island.

The College occupies a main thoroughfare facing Stephen's Green, this site having been until recently a Quaker burial ground. Tastefully built and structurally sound, the basement storey is of mountain granite with a superstructure of Portland

stone. The facade is plain but elegant with six Doric columns (Plate IX), and the whole is surmounted by a triangular pediment. As 'Erinensis' writing in the *Lancet* was to describe it—"solid and substantial, no gew-gaw of the sculptor's art disfigures the simplicity of its style... the pride of Irish surgery, and the terror of many a candidate, whose fate often depends upon its decrees." This buiiding has only just been completed at the time of our visit and has taken five years to build at a cost of some £40,000. We are escorted through the entrance hall and up a staircase of most elegant proportions to the board room which entends the entire length of the upper storey. Here we are greeted by the President, *John Armstrong Garnett* (1767-1831), an expert chemist, surgeon to Swift's Hospital and Professor of Surgical Pharmacy in the College, he was also the first Librarian to the College. He had attended *Lord Edward Fitzgerald* in Newgate prison in June 1798 and had kept a diary of the event. Fitzgerald had been arrested by Major Sirr at Number 153, Thomas Street, and after a desperate resistance during which he killed one of his captors he was wounded and became critically ill in prison. As Garnett tells us—"His countenance showed a great degrec of wildness, mixed with that kind of expression that accompanies pain... His tongue was a little foul and his pulse frequent and fluttering." Later he was seized by a "state of excessive agitation; his tongue was thrust forward between his teeth and his jaws were closed by the most rigid spasm. I forced his jaws asunder with some difficulty by means of a spatular covered with linen, and thus defended his tongue from any further wound than it had already suffered. After about half an hour's attendance the spasm subsided, and he spoke; he complained of the involuntary protrusion of his tongue and of a troublesome catching about his jaws; his wounds also, he said were painful..." And later he "begged that I would do something to allay the catching about his jaws... His pulse is rapid, attended with convulsive twitchings; he bites his lips, and his eyes roll incessantly, and his countenance is flushed to a high degree." After two days the ill-fated young man died in Newgate prison and with the aid of Garnett's excellent

account, the modern reader will have little difficulty in diagnosing the terminal illness as tetanus.

Indeed Garnett must have had another connection with the insurrection of 1798, as in his capacity as surgeon to Swift's Hospital he would also have known *Dr Robert Emmett*, State Physician and Physician to the hospital, but perhaps better known as the father of a son by the same name who like Lord Edward Fitzgerald became involved in an abortive insurrection and was hanged on the gallows opposite St Catherine's Church in Thomas Street in 1803.

But returning to the present, we are introduced to the Professors of the College—*Abraham Colles* and *Richard Dease*, Professors of Surgery, Anatomy and Physiology, John Creighton Professor of Midwifery and Walter Wade, Professor of Botany. Richard Dease, immediate past-president, whose acquaintance we have already made at the Meath Hospital succeeds his illustrious father who was President in 1789. An air of mystery still surrounds his untimely death. It had been rumoured that such was his grief on mistakenly opening an aneurysm which he had diagnosed as an abscess, he had committed suicide. A rather unlikely explanation for his death was the accidental severence of his femoral artery with a sharp instrument. Perhaps, William Dease was as a number of reports stated a member of the United Irishmen and that he had on learning of his impending arrest taken his own life. A respected figure, his major contribution to medicine was a *Treatise on Surgical Injuries to the Head.*

John Creighton, Professor of Midwifery was one of the founders of the Cow-Pock Institution which he served for many years. He had a large private practice among which was the family of the great Duke of Wellington, when as Sir Arthur Wellesley, he was Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant. Creighton's lectures were renowned for his adulation of women and their *role* in nature, styling them "the loveliest things of God's creation".

Walter Wade, Professor of Botany a distinguished botanist is also Professor to the Dublin Society (now the Royal Dublin

Society). The first record of a purchase of books by the College Library is a subscription to a work by Wade, *Flora Dublinenis* which was never in fact published.

We now meet *Sir Gustavus Hume* (1730-1812) who is in his 80th year and to be remembered for his architectural rather than medical achievements.

"Gustavus Hume in surgery excells,
Yet pride of merit ne'er his bosom swells;
He adds to Dublin every year a street,
Where citizens converse and friendly meet."

Thus did John Gilborne see Gustavus Hume. Gilborne achieved lasting fame for his *Medical Review: a Poem; being a Panegyric on the Faculty of Dublin—Physicians, Surgeons and Apothecaries, marching in procession to the Temple of Fame.* Published in 1774 this poem devotes verses to no less than sixty one medical gentlemen and serves as an informative and often amusing social document of the times. Hume had brought the architect Richard Cassels from Germany to Dublin and as we have already seen in connection with the Rotunda Hospital, Cassels was a considerable influence on Dublin architecture. Hume was responsible for constructing many houses—Hume Street, Ely (formerly Hume) Place, and a number of fine houses in other streets, not least his own splendid mansion at Number 63, Dawson Street. On May-day, in 1795, accompanied by Adrien also a surgeon, he had examined the body of the *Reverend William Jackson* in the dock at the King's Bench, Christ Church, where he had collapsed after swallowing poison, and thus cheated the gallows.

We might notice a rather shy reticent Scotsman, recently arrived in Dublin and eagerly seeking his advantage. This is *John Cheyne* (1777-1836) later to be immortalised by Stokes in Cheyne-Stokes respiration but at present offering himself "as a candidate for public favour in Dublin... neither expecting nor indeed wishing for rapid advancement; what is easily acquired is little valued and not infrequently soon lost..." Later to become first Professor of Medicine to the College he was also to achieve the rank of Physician-General and an income of about £5,000

per annum.

Another physician not yet established in Dublin's Georgian Medical hierarchy is *Whitley Stokes* (1763-1845), a Fellow of Trinity College and reputed to be a member of the United Irishmen as a result of which he had been suspended from his fellowship for one year being deemed "a most improper person to be entrusted in any degree with government or direction of any College", but regarded by Wolfe Tone as "the very best man I have ever known". A scholar with broad cultural interests he published the Acts of the Apostles in alternate columns of English and Irish so as to make Holy Writ available to the large Irish speaking populace, and he also printed an English-Irish dictionary. A poet of modest ability he spoke a number of languages and did some good translations. His medical contributions have not stood the test of time and he is remembered in medical circles for his son William. We might discreetly—very discreetly—ask if he knew the whereabouts of *Patrick Lawless* (1764-1825) who in 1799 when Professor of Anatomy and Physiology had been expelled from the College for being "notoriously engaged in the late rebellion". An active member of the United Irishmen, he had been forewarned of his impending arrest and had fled Dublin. Stokes might quietly inform us that Lawless, "because of a taste for arms and an aversion for the English" had on fleeing Ireland joined Napoleon's army where he had achieved the rank of *Marchal de Camp.* Badly injured in the leg at the Battle of Dresden a below-knee amputation had been performed by Bonaparte's surgeon Larry, and Lawless aware of the dangers of sepsis in army hospitals had on completion of the operation mounted his horse and ridden to Mainz without changing the dressings. Stokes might furthermore tell us that the peripatetic surgeon had only some months earlier fallen into the hands of the British at Walcheron where, in spite of his disability, he had escaped his captors by plunging into the waves draped in the colours of his regiment and amidst a shower of bullets had reached the safety of a boat.

Robert Percival (1756-1839), Professor of Chemisty in the

University, later Professor of the College of Physicians, also reached the rank of Physician-General (1819). It was chiefly due to him that the contentious will of *Sir Patrick Dun* was realised eventually in the building of a hospital now known by his name. *Dr Edward Hill*, a botanist and Regius Professor of Physic, who had seen the old physic garden at the University replaced by buildings was understandably anxious that a replacement be provided and that the Patrick Dun legacy be so appropriated. Percival, seeing greater advantages in the provision of a hospital for the teaching of clinical medicine fought a protracted legal battle with Hill and eventually ensured the erection of Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital which was opened in Blind Quay (now Wellington Quay) in 1792, (the present hospital was opened in 1808).

Percival had studied on the Continent where he had been much influenced by the new chemistry of Lavoisier and had formed a body known as the *Neosophers* in 1783, whose object was the cultivation of the new science and this body joined with the *Paleosophers*, consisting of students of humanities, to form the Royal Irish Academy in 1783.

Charles Hawkes Todd (1782-1826) is twenty-eight years old at the time of our visit, and in his first year of office as surgeon to the House of Industry where he also lectures in anatomy and surgery. We should find him a genial fellow of "robust frame, rustic features and ruddy complexion" whose reputation as a lecturer is at odds with his physical appearance, for we are told that a "doleful voice, scarcely audible, sounding like the melancholy moan of the mid-night breeze, which so few have heard, informs you that the person you have supposed destitute of the organs of speech, possesses in some respects the faculties of speaking." Such was his attention to detail as an anatomist that it was said that "the vertebral and other ligaments expanded to a degree beyond what nature had intended." Later to become President of the College of Surgeons (1821) and Professor of Surgery (1819), it was his second son *Robert Bentley Todd* who was to achieve international fame as Professor of Anatomy and Surgery at King's College Hospital Medical School.

Todd's colleague, *Richard Carmichael* (1776-1849), a tall imposing figure with a face showing strength of character but at the same time kindness, has not yet joined the House of Industry and is Surgeon to the Lock Hospital, and to St George's Hospital and Dispensary. Later to become President of the College of Surgeons (1813) he is best remembered as a force in medical reform and education. He is destined to die tragically by drowning on the treacherous strand between Clontarf and Sutton in 1849 when taking a short cut on horseback to his home across the strand at Sutton.

We would be anxious to meet another young surgeon with a growing reputation as an anatomist—*Samuel Wilmot* (1772-1848), Surgeon to Mercer's Hospital and later to become Professor of Anatomy and Surgery to the College of Surgeons (1826). His future rival *James Macartney* (1770-1843), perhaps the greatest anatomist and physiologist to emerge from Ireland, has not yet returned to Dublin from St Bartholomew's Hospital There are so many with whom we would like to spend time—*John Adrien* (1760-1827) later to become the first Professor of Jurisprudence (1829) and the first surgeon to attend Lord Edward Fitzgerald after his arrest in Thomas Street in 1798; the Surgeon-General to the Forces, *George Stewart*, (1752-1813) a past-president of the College, had also attended Lord Fitzgerald in Newgate Goal; *Francis L'Estrange* (1756-1836) Surgeon to Mercer's Hospital was interested in Obstetrics and had been accoucher at the birth of the poet, *Thomas Moore*, in Aungier Street on 28th May, 1779; *Sir Henry Jebb*, another distinguished accoucheur, whose brother Frederick had been Master of the Rotunda in 1773, had been knighted in 1782 for his obstetrical services to the city of Dublin and was said to have rivalled Gustavus Hume as a builder.

The hour is now late. The hospitality has been generous and it is time to bid farewell to our Georgian predecessors, aware that their achievements, although not as spectacular as those of their Victorian successors were every bit as important to the development of Irish medicine.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

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