

**MORE PEOPLE AND PLACES
IN
IRISH SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Edited by
**Charles Mollan, William Davis
and Brendan Finucane**

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Robert James Graves. Sculpture in marble by Albert Bruce Joy. By courtesy Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. Photograph by D. Davison.



Dominic John Corrigan. Sculpture in marble by John Foley. By courtesy Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. Photograph by D. Davison.

within the narrow confines of the island that is Ireland, but beyond in the broader intellectualism of international science.

Further reading:

- E. O'Brien, *Conscience and conflict—a biography of Sir Dominic Corrigan, 1802–1880* (Dublin, 1983).
- E. O'Brien, A. Crookshank and G. Wolstenholme, *A portrait of Irish medicine — an illustrated history of medicine in Ireland* (Dublin, 1984).
- W. Stokes, 'The life and labours of Graves'. In W. Stokes (ed.) *Studies in physiology and medicine by the late Robert James Graves* (London, 1863), 9–83.
- J. F. Duncan, 'The life and labours of Robert James Graves'. *Dublin Journal of Medical Science* 65 (1878), 1–12.
- S. Taylor, *Robert Graves. The golden years of Irish medicine* (London, 1989).

DOMINIC JOHN CORRIGAN *Physician*

1802-1880

Born: Thomas Street, Dublin 1802**Died:** Merrion Square, 1 February 1880**Family:** Son of John Corrigan, merchant, farmer, shop-keeper, chapman and collier-maker, and Celia O'Connor, a descendant of the clan O'Connor**Addresses:**Merrion Square, Dublin
'Inniscorrig', Colliemore Road,
Dalkey**Distinctions:**Graduated M.D. Edinburgh University 1825
Physician to the Charitable Infirmary,
Jervis Street 1830
Physician to House of Industry Hospitals 1840
Physician-in-ordinary to Queen Victoria in
Ireland 1847
Senate of the Queen's University 1850
President of King's and Queen's College of
Physicians 1859-63
Baronet of the Empire 1866
Member of parliament for the City of Dublin
1870
Vice-chancellor of the Queen's University 1871
Corresponding member of Académie de
Médecine de Paris.

Dominic Corrigan was the first of the Catholic middle-class to rise to fame in Dublin medicine. Appointed to the staff of the Charitable Infirmary in the year after Catholic emancipation, he quickly fulfilled the promise he had already shown with his famous paper on 'Permanent patency of the aortic valve', a condition which now bears the eponym 'Corrigan's disease'.

As a leading member of the Central Board of Health during the Great Famine, he incurred the wrath of his professional colleagues, most notably Robert Graves, for making what was considered to be a derisory five-shilling-a-day award to doctors working in the famine areas. He was black-balled ignominiously for the honorary fellowship of the College of Physicians but was later made president of the College for an unprecedented term of five years, during which time he instigated the building of the College Hall in Kildare Street. Government rewarded his commitment to the famine cause by making him physician-in-ordinary to Queen Victoria in Ireland and later a baronet of the Empire.

He was a member of the Senate of the Queen's University and a commissioner for national education, and in these roles he advocated much needed reform in education.

He was elected a Liberal M.P. for the City of Dublin in 1870. At Westminster he supported the temperance cause, but his greatest efforts were directed to the issue of university education in Ireland. With remarkable courage and foresight he advocated non-denominational national university education believing that race and creed should not be considerations in third-level education. This stance brought him into bitter conflict with the hierarchy of his church. Corrigan refused to compromise his liberal principles for what he saw to be doctrinaire Catholicism. He feared that the Protestant religious bigotry to which Ireland had been subjected for so long might, with emancipation and the disestablishment of the Church, be replaced by an equally pernicious form of religious intolerance. This conflict with the Catholic Church left him disillusioned and he did not seek re-election to parliament.

He died on 1 February 1880 and was interred in the family vault in St Andrew's Church in Westland Row.

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