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Health Of London In 1859

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right; they mean only that the licentiate of an Apothecaries' Company shall practise medicine, the member of the College of Surgeons shall as such practise surgery."

#### POOR-LAW MEDICAL REFORM.

##### MEETING OF MEDICAL STUDENTS.

The students of University College, London, held a meeting on March 16th, for the purpose of assisting the efforts of the Poor-law Medical Reform Association; Dr. EDWYN ANDREW, Resident Medical Officer to the Hospital, in the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN briefly explained the object of the meeting; after which the following resolutions were unanimously carried:—

1. Proposed by Mr. BASTIAN, and seconded by Mr. HILL—"That the medical students of University College, London, heartily approve of the efforts of the Poor-law Medical Reform Association, and determine to lend their aid in furthering its objects."

2. Proposed by Mr. HICKMAN, and seconded by Mr. HILL—"That the medical students of University College, London, petition Parliament in favour of the amendment of the laws relating to the administration of Medical Relief to the Poor."

3. Proposed by Mr. DAWSON, and seconded by Mr. CASE—"That this meeting deeply sympathises with Mr. Griffin in his unceasing effort in behalf of Poor-law Medical Reform."

4. Proposed by Mr. WINTERBOTHAM, and seconded by Mr. WILKINSON—"That a subscription be raised in order to form a fund for defraying the expenses of the Student Branch of the Association."

With a vote of thanks to the Chairman, the meeting dissolved.

#### HEALTH OF LONDON IN 1859.

THE Registrar-General, in his summary of the weekly tables of births and deaths in London for 1859, makes the following remarks:—

The natural increase of the population was 30,939. That was the excess of the registered births over the registered deaths. Besides the increase by natural growth, London receives other accessions; every county of the United Kingdom sends its quota to the metropolis, and the aggregate number of the immigrants, according to the best estimate, exceeded 23,000. The probable increase of the population was 54,000 in the year; or more than a *thousand weekly*. There is a further movement of the population of the metropolis: the natives leave in large numbers, and are replaced by persons born in other parts; and again, many immigrants who come to London return to their homes or wander elsewhere. The greatest migrations take place at the ages 20 to 30; when young people, unsettled, still maintain a connection with the homes of their childhood. Of 1,394,963 inhabitants of London of the age of 20 and upwards at the last census, 749,853 were born beyond its bounds. The population of London in the middle of the year 1859 was probably 2,774,338; comprising about 1,299,602 males, and 1,474,736 females; for there are 175,134 more females than males. This is the result of the excess of female over male immigrants, and of the higher mortality to which men are exposed. The number of children whose births were registered in the fifty-two weeks amounted to 92,556, of whom 47,189 were boys, 45,367 girls. Thus the boys born exceeded the girls by 1822. The births were at the rate of 1,780 weekly, 254 daily. The births exceeded by nearly 4,000 the births in the previous year, and by 26,672 the births registered in 1845. The deaths were at the rate of 1,185 weekly, 160 daily. 31,451 males and 30,166 females died. The deaths do not increase at the same rate as the births; yet their numbers have increased since 1845, when the deaths of 24,496 males, 23,836 females, were registered. Upon comparing the deaths with the estimated population, it is found that to 100,000 living, 2,229 died in the year; the average deaths of the last eighteen years being 2,439. Thus the mortality is nearly at the rate of 22 in the 1000, in lieu of 24 in 1000. The number of births varied weekly; 1,980 children, the greatest number, were registered in the fourth week of January; 1,578, the least number, were registered in the last week of September. The first number is 200 above, the last number 202 below, the average. The deaths fluctuated differently; in a week of June, towards the middle of the year, they fell to 913, and in a week of October to 902, or 283 below the average; in the last week of December they rose to 1,677, or 492 above the average. The reproductive force thus acts

236

most steadily; the destructive forces having a greater range, and while they allow the mortality to subside to some extent below, raise it at intervals much above the average. The mortality was raised above the average by the extremely cold weather of January and December; the mean temperature of the first two weeks was low (35° and 39°), and the deaths rose to 1,338 and 1,420; again the temperature fell in the last two weeks but one of December to 28° and 33°, and the deaths rose to 1,548 and 1,677 in the two weeks following. During the latter part of the year the chief masters and the men in the building trades of London were in a state of open war. The masters closed their establishments on August 6th, and afterwards only employed men who would sign a document. The men refused, to the number, it was said, of 20,000. The conference of the trades societies distributed certain sums among their members; and in the sixth week as many as 14,000 of them received allowances. These allowances were, however, inadequate; the means and credit of many failed; the small shopkeepers instead of £9 or £10 took no more than £2 or £3 a week from the families of the workmen. The distress became in some cases urgent, yet the struggle was protracted through the rest of the year. The wives evidently thought their husbands in the right, and suffered with them the pangs of hunger. This distress produced ultimately a sensible effect on the mortality of the men and their wives. As long as there was bread, the poor children, however, apparently had it; until weakened, cold, ill-clad, they at last died in unusual numbers as the severe weather came on towards the close of the year. The mortality in 100,000 living was at the rate of 2,229 deaths from all causes; of which 592 were by diseases of the zymotic class.

It may be instructive to compare the fatality by some of the diseases of London now and in the seventeenth century. In the twenty years 1660-79 the mortality in Southwark and in the city within and without the walls was at the rate of 7 or 8 per cent.; so the mortality within the Bills may be set down at the rate of 7,000 annually in every 100,000 living, of which 3,400 were by zymotic diseases. The diseases were not always distinguished accurately. But by putting them in groups any fallacy from this source will be obviated, and the decrease of some of the worst forms of mortal disease will be placed beyond doubt. To render the comparison easy, the number living is taken to be the same in the two periods—100,000 in 1660-79 and in 1859. The annual deaths by small-pox were 357 in the first period, 42 in the second period; by measles 40 and 47 in the two periods. Medical science was imperfect, and the science existing in that century was very imperfectly applied. Croup and scarlatina were not generally recognised, but were confounded with measles and fever. The mortality by fever, continued or remittent, and ague was at the rate of 749 and 59 in the two periods; or, including scarlatina, quinsy, and croup, the mortality was 759 and 227. Thus a person was in four times as much danger of dying of these diseases at the Restoration as a person living in London now. Women are not yet entirely exempt from peril in childbearing; the mortality by that disease is now 17, it was then 86. Again, a few (8) in 100,000 die now of dysentery; then, out of the same number, 763 died annually of that disease. By diarrhoea, a milder form of disease, 11 died then, 120 die now; cholera was fatal in 1859 to 7, and in the 20 years 1660-79 to 130 annually. Syphilis was twice as fatal as it is, the numbers being 21 and 12. Scurvy and purpura bear testimony to the imperfect nutrition of the population; the annual deaths were then 142 and are now 2. Vegetables, fruit, and fresh meat could with difficulty be procured in winter. Worms and all parasitic creatures that crawl over, bite, and prey on the body of man were prevalent; 10 deaths were ascribed to worms. Dropsy, a result and sign of scurvy and fever, was exceedingly fatal; 298 died of that disease then, and 26 now. Apoplexy, paralysis, epilepsy, affections of the brain, and suicide are more fatal now, according to the returns, than they were in the proportion of 57 then to 151 now. Consumption and diseases of the breathing organs were uncommonly fatal; 1,079 then, and 611 now are the figures of the mortality. Diseases of the digestive organs were fatal then and now in the proportion of 146 and 95. Stone and diseases of the urinary organs are now as fatal as they were then; the deaths being 21 and 30. Children were rapidly cut down; of convulsions and teething 1,175 died then, 136—too many—now. Of the violent deaths some are now more frequent, as the forces by which they are occasioned are greater; of fractures and wounds 19 died then, 25 now; of poison, more accessible, 2 now, and then only 1; of burns, as fires are probably more common and dresses more

inflammable, now 13, then 3; drowning and suffocation were then twice as fatal (23 and 20) as they are (10 and 10) in the present day. Five in 100,000 of the people were executed then annually; now 1 in the whole population. In addition, the inhabitants of London were then destroyed by the terrible plague; which upon an average of the 20 years, carried off 1,132 lives. In 1665 nearly a third of the population perished by plague. It is difficult to conceive this frightful destruction of human life; the imagination, the wailing notes of writers, the details of Defoe in a work which would have immortalised any writer, fail to bring all the horrors before our minds. The mortality was at the rate of 7 per cent. on an average during the 20 years. If the mortality of London had been at the same rate in the last year, instead of 61,617 about 194,204 deaths would have been registered. The plague was the more appalling as the mortality overwhelmed the people in particular years; thus the burials from 15,356 in 1663 rose to 97,306, "whereof 68,596 were by plague," in 1665; and this was equivalent to more than 600,000 deaths by plague in the present population of London. In the third week of September 8,297 deaths were registered, which represents a rate of mortality equivalent to about 85,000 deaths in a week on the actual population of London.

**THE LATE SIR JAMES M'GRIGOR.** An obelisk to the memory of the late Sir James M'Grigor has just been erected at Aberdeen, in the quadrangle of Marischal College, within the venerable walls of which building the deceased baronet was educated. This testimony of respect to his memory is one of a local nature, having no connexion whatever with the memorial which owes its origin and much of its success to Sir James M'Grigor's admirers south of the Tweed. The Aberdeen obelisk is 72 feet high, and the material of which it is composed is highly polished granite, of a red colour, with the exception of a slab of grey coloured granite, which has been introduced in the pedestal for the purpose of containing the following inscription:—"This obelisk is erected to the memory of Sir James M'Grigor, Bart., M.D., K.C.B., F.R.S., etc., for thirty-six years Director-General of the Army Medical Department, and several times Lord Rector of Marischal College, Aberdeen. He was born in Strathspey, North Britain, on the 9th of April, A.D. 1771. He entered the army as surgeon of the Connaught Rangers in 1793, and served the two following years in the campaign of Holland. He was afterwards medical chief in the expedition against the Island of Grenada; in the expedition under Sir David Baird, from Bombay through the deserts of Thebes and Suez to Alexandria; and also in the Walcheren expedition. He was chief of the Medical Department of the Army under the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsular war, from the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo in the year 1811 to the final battle of Toulouse in 1814. He was favourably mentioned in the despatches of all the Generals under whom he held these responsible posts, and was repeatedly noticed in those of the Duke of Wellington, who, on the 26th of July, 1814, referring to the manner in which Mr. M'Grigor had conducted the department under his direction, wrote thus: 'I consider him one of the most industrious, able, and successful public servants I have ever met with.' In the course of fifty-seven years of active service, he was exposed to the vicissitudes of war and climate, besides encountering shipwreck and other dangers at sea; yet he lived to attain a tranquil and happy old age. He died in London, on the 2nd of April, A.D. 1858. This memorial is erected near the place of his education and the scenes of his youth." The base of the obelisk is surrounded by a platform of grey coloured granite from the neighbourhood of Aberdeen.

#### HEALTH OF LONDON—MARCH 17TH, 1860.

[From the Registrar-General's Report.]

	Births.	Deaths.
During week .....	{ Boys..1046 } 2023 .. 1563	{ Girls.. 977 }
Average of corresponding weeks 1849-58 .....	1724 .. 1362	
Among the causes of death were—	bronchitis, 267; pneumonia, 140; phthisis, 171; small-pox, 29; scarlatina, 33; measles, 24; diphtheria, 10; whooping-cough, 45. The deaths from pulmonary diseases (exclusive of phthisis) were 450, being 145 above the corrected average.	
Barometer:	Highest (Sat.) 29.936; lowest (Wed.) 29.827; mean 29.585.	
Thermometer:	In sun—highest (Fri.) 90.7 degrees; lowest (Mon.) 60.0 degrees.	
	In shade—highest (Sat.) 56.5 degrees; lowest (Sun.) 28.7 degrees.	
	Mean—40.2 degrees; difference from mean of 43 yrs.—1.6 degree.	
	Range—during week, 27.8 degrees; mean daily, 15.6 degrees.	
	Mean humidity of air (saturation=100), 80.	
	Mean direction of wind, Var.—Rain in inches, 0.32.	

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications have been received from:—MR. A. M. EDWARDS; DR. ALLEN DUKE; DR. BEGLEY; L.S.A.; DR. W. LEISHMAN; DR. W. GORMAN; MR. J. DIX; MR. R. P. BELL; MR. T. M. STONE; A POOR-LAW MEDICAL OFFICER; DR. T. INMAN; DR. T. HAYES JACKSON; DR. R. U. WEST; DR. THUDICHUM; MR. I. T. BECK; DR. P. H. WILLIAMS; and MR. G. REID.

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