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Progress of Medicine
in NewfoundlandAddress by Dr. L. E. Keegan, President
of the Newfoundland Medical Society—
At the Opening of its Second Annual
Convention on Monday, July 13th,
1925.

It gives me much pleasure to welcome the members of the Profession to their annual Medical Convention, and to assure our outport friends that we of the City are delighted to have them again. We sincerely hope your visit will be pleasant as it is profitable.

At our last convention the Association lost one of its most active and most prominent members. I refer to the late Dr. J. Murphy, of St. John's. His death was particularly sad and grieved us all, especially those who were with him to the last and who saw him in his heroic struggle for the cut down in his young manhood at the beginning of a brilliant career, he is mourned by not only those who were dear to him, but by members of his own profession all over the country. The Clinical Branch of the Association has already forwarded resolutions of sympathy.

Today I find myself, in the uncomfortable position of having to deliver the Presidential Address and while I know it is the honour and privilege to give with the office, I would much rather perform a laparotomy or amputate a limb.

The greatest difficulty is in selecting a subject for an address of this kind, and as recent progress in Medicine and Surgery in other parts of the world is so well known to you all I have decided to stay within the rugged coastline of Britain's oldest colony and attempt to give you an historical sketch of the progress of medicine in Newfoundland.

Medical progress in the great cities of Europe, America, and Canada, helped by Universities and backed up by money has of course been rapid and I do not wish to record the few facts I have dug up, as to our progress, in the way of comparison or in order to depress you, on the contrary I want to encourage you and point out, that, cut off as we are from the great University centres, and even from each other, without money or philanthropic friends to help us in scientific research work, and up against insurmountable difficulties all the time, the marvel is that any progress has been made at all, and instead of being

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downhearted I think we should re-join, that Medicine in Newfoundland is as advanced as it is to-day.

It is to the pioneers who struggled in the dark periods of this country's history, that we must reverently take off our hats, for it is only by dipping into the dusty past, and picking up bits of history here and there, that we can appreciate the great triumph of being able to hold a Medical Convention, here to-day at which the North, South, East and West of Nfld. are represented by highly qualified and efficient practitioners.

To discover the first medical men in Nfld., and when they came here, makes it necessary to go back many years for as far as one can learn, none accompanied the first English colonists. We learn that Guy sailed from Bristol in May, 1610, in the reign of James Ist, he had with him his brother-in-law and 39 colonists, and after a fine passage out in 25 days, he sighted their new home in the deep Bay de Grave, now Port de Grave, in Conception Bay. The selection for the site of the new colony was the land locked harbour of Cupids, and here Guy built three houses besides wharves, stores, and fishing establishments.

From his letters I conclude there was no medical man with him and one in which he refers to the health of his colonists, is conclusive proof of this, it is written ten months after his arrival—He says: "After ten months, of all the number who wintered here, there were wanting only four, whereof one Thomas Percy, died of thought, having slain a man in Rochester, which was the cause being unknown to me until a day before he died, and one John Morris Taylor, miscarried the 1st of February from a bruise, the third, Marmaduke Whittington, was never properly well after he had smallpox, which he brought out of Bristol, and the fourth, William Stone, having at first only a stiffness in one of his knees, kept his bed for ten weeks and would never stir his body, which lameness, brought him to his end. Of the rest, four or five have been sick, some three months, some four, who are now better than they were. All of them, if they had good stomachs to their victuals, would long since have been recovered."

Had there been a Medical man present no doubt he would have reported on these cases, and the fourth case, Stone, would have been diagnosed a focal infection and would probably be living to-day if his colon had been removed.

William Coulston in a letter written in 1612, states that Nicholas Gure's wife was delivered of a lusty boy on March 27th, but we can only assume that she delivered herself.

In 1625 Lord Baltimore was given a charter from James I., and five years later he established a Colony in Ferryland, he did a good deal of fighting with the French, but there is no mention of a Doctor in any of his letters, and I can only conclude that during the reign of Charles I., and the administration of Cromwell, 1625 to 1650, there was no Medical man in Newfoundland, although the British inhabitants had spread themselves, not only around the eastern coast, but some had gone beyond Bonaville as far as Notre Dame Bay and some had made their residence in Placentia.

In the reign of Charles II. in 1662, a French ship, full of men and women, put into Grand Placentia where she landed a great number of soldiers and passengers, who fortified the harbour with 18 guns. Up to this date no Frenchman had lived in Newfoundland during the winter, and the first resident military of any kind were those who garrisoned Placentia in that year.

The place was strongly fortified, was referred to as the Gibraltar of North America, and although attacked by a powerful English fleet under Commander Williams, and others, Placentia was never captured. It is quite probable that a Doctor accompanied the first contingent to Placentia.

It is certain there was one stationed there a few years after, moreover a small Hospital was erected on the town site of Placentia, the site being near the present post office, and the Hospital was maintained for years. We may therefore conclude that the first Medical man and first French Hospital in the Island were both French.

About the beginning of 1703 a permanent garrison was established in St. John's. This garrison was under the command of Major Lloyd, who apparently was a very poor specimen of humanity. He treated his soldiers badly, robbed them of their pay and did many other infamous things. A petition for his removal was sent to the Lords Commissioner for Trade and Plantation in London, and this petition contains the first reference, I can find, to a British Medical Man, for amongst the charges against Lloyd, which numbers seventeen, "the third is put down as his barbarity to the Surgeon."

In 1708 St. John's was attacked by the French and I find that Lloyd and the garrison, including the Surgeon were taken prisoners and marched to Placentia. This Army Surgeon was the first British Doctor stationed here. Later on when the French vacated and St. John's was re-fortified and soldiers of the regular army were here,

there were Army Surgeons with them, moreover any settlers who might be sick, received medical aid from the Doctor of the Ships of War during the codfishing season, and it is likely that Ferryland, Carbonear and Trinity Harbour, where Military were also stationed, had some Army Doctors. In 1762, the second year of George III's reign, there was much fighting here. St. John's, Carbonear and Trinity were captured by the French and recaptured by the English, but towards the end of the Sovereign's reign things improved, and Newfoundland began to arise from the ashes, the old days of tyranny, corruption and violence giving place to the brighter days of civilization and progress. We had our first road built, there was some attempt at education, Representative Government was allowed us, a Court of Justice established, and in this reign we hear of our first Civil Medical Practitioners. The men who practised Medicine in Newfoundland before the year 1800 were:—Jonathan Ogden, Francis Bradshaw, Doctor Mayne, Rev. M. Dingle, David Duggan, John McCurdy, and a Doctor called Moore, who was a Jersey man.

The first and most remarkable of these was Jonathan Ogden, who rose from a humble Hospital position in Halifax, N.S., to that of Chief Justice of Newfoundland. He came here in 1784 bearing a letter of introduction from Major General Campbell, the Governor of Nova Scotia; a few years after he was appointed to the Civil Branch of Ordinance, occupying a room at Fort William, as a Surgeon. I find from a letter dated October, 1792, the following:—"Mr. Jonathan Ogden, surgeon, having represented that the room he occupied at Fort William as a surgery, since his appointment to the Civil Branch of Ordinance, has been appropriated to the Clerk of Works, requests permission to build a room to adjoin the end of the quarters he now occupies, at his own expense. This permission was granted by Governor King."

In 1794 Ogden was made a Magistrate at St. John's. In 1798 he was appointed Magistrate for the Island and keeper of records for the district of St. John's, and later on in the same year it is recommended that he be paid a salary for his services.

In 1799 Ogden was appointed by Governor Waldegrave to the office of Naval officer for the whole Island.

In 1802 three years after this appointment I find the following communication.

"George the third to our trusty and well beloved Jonathan Ogden, greeting, do by these presents constitute and appoint you to be our chief Justice of our Supreme court of Judicature in our Island of Nfld., George Rex, 29th May, 1802."

Shortly after this Ogden's health broke down for I find a letter from Governor Gambier to the Right Hon.

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Lord Hobart asking that Ogden be given leave of absence. This was granted but the ship he sailed on was lost with all hands, and thus ended a remarkable man and a remarkable career.

Doctor Francis Bradshaw was Justice of the peace at Trepassay in 1793 and afterwards removed to Placentia where he practised Medicine, he also had the responsibility of administering the law, for which he received no remuneration. It is an illustration of the difficulties and hardships these men had to endure, always supposed to work for honour and glory and a word of thanks that might be handed out to them from time to time. For eighteen years Dr. Bradshaw did duty as magistrate without pay and then had the temerity to memorialise the Governor asking for some remuneration. His letter is dated June 1813 and the reply of Governor R. E. Keats is as follows:

Fort Townsend,
July 20, 1813.

"I have received your memorial. Though perfectly willing to acknowledge the advantage which the Government and people at large derive from the services of a magistrate, who exercises authority with the same justice and integrity, which I believe you have done, the situation nevertheless is neither without example or totally destitute of those rewards which are peculiarly gratifying to one's feelings and which I doubt not you have often experienced. Though I willingly admit your merit, I cannot acknowledge a parallel in the labours of the magistrate of the populous town and district of St. John's and those of Placentia, and much as I should regret and feel the loss of your services in the Commission of the Peace, I nevertheless cannot entirely approve or consent to recommend to his Majesty's government the memorial.

(Sgd.) R. E. KEATS, Governor.

Within a month the same Governor sent Bradshaw the following interesting Placebo:

"I send you by the 'Phoenix' 2 nine pounder guns together with a proportion of powder and ammunition, which I shall be anxious to hear have been mounted, and which I doubt not the zeal and patriotism of the inhabitants of Placentia, will induce them to make the best use of, in case the enemy should give them an opportunity. You will please to sign and return the receipt by the 'Phoenix'."

I find no record of Dr. Bradshaw's reply to this document. Bradshaw continued to practice in Placentia until 1825.

The Rev. M. Dingle, Missioner and Doctor worked in Bay Bulls and Ferryland in the years 1794. Here he was also in the capacity of Magistrate without pay, in his case the "higher motive complex" was better developed than in Bradshaw, for apparently he did not memorialise anyone, until he was penniless. The man had many hard experiences as the following interesting clipping shows:—

"When in 1796 the French burned Bay Bulls, they took on board their ship Jupiter, Magistrate Dingle, who was also Doctor. Other prisoners were also taken off and brought to St. Pierre, where they were set afloat in boats to find their way home as best they could. Apparently he found his way home but also found that his property was burned and he was penniless. I find that then he petitioned the Governor, Wm. Waldegrave, for remuneration for past services. The Governor, who apparently did not believe in hard cash transactions, wrote to His Grace, the Duke of Portland, the following magnificent letter:

"That Mr. Dingle's character in Newfoundland is that of a man equally honest and unfortunate. He has performed the duties of Magistrate for many years in the Island to the satisfaction of the inhabitants, and lost his whole property while holding that office, when the French invaded, and has some claim for his loss. If your Grace will recommend him to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, if found qualified for the examination for the post of missionary, it would relieve a worthy man from misery, and second the view of the Society."

WM. WALDEGRAVE, 1799.

To His Grace the Duke of Portland.

As to David Duggan and John McCurdy both of them were practising at St. John's in 1797, the former is chronicled as acting surgeon to the Royal Nfld. Regiment, I have copies of petitions from both these men asking the Governor for permission to "enclose pieces of ground." Dr. Mayne practised in Bonaville town in the year 1799.

Coming then to the early part of 1800, we find the name of Doctor William Carson, and he figures among the supermen of our profession who unhonoured and unused have passed away.

Born in Kircubrightshire, Scotland, he graduated at the University of Edinburgh, practised in Birmingham for a short time and arrived in this colony in the year 1808. He was a man of great parts, highly intellectual, of tremendous energy, a fearless fighter, and a great medical man. He was not taking the treatment endured by the men of his own profession, who went before him, he intended to dictate policies when necessary, not to blindfoldly obey, and his outstanding ability and university training placed him

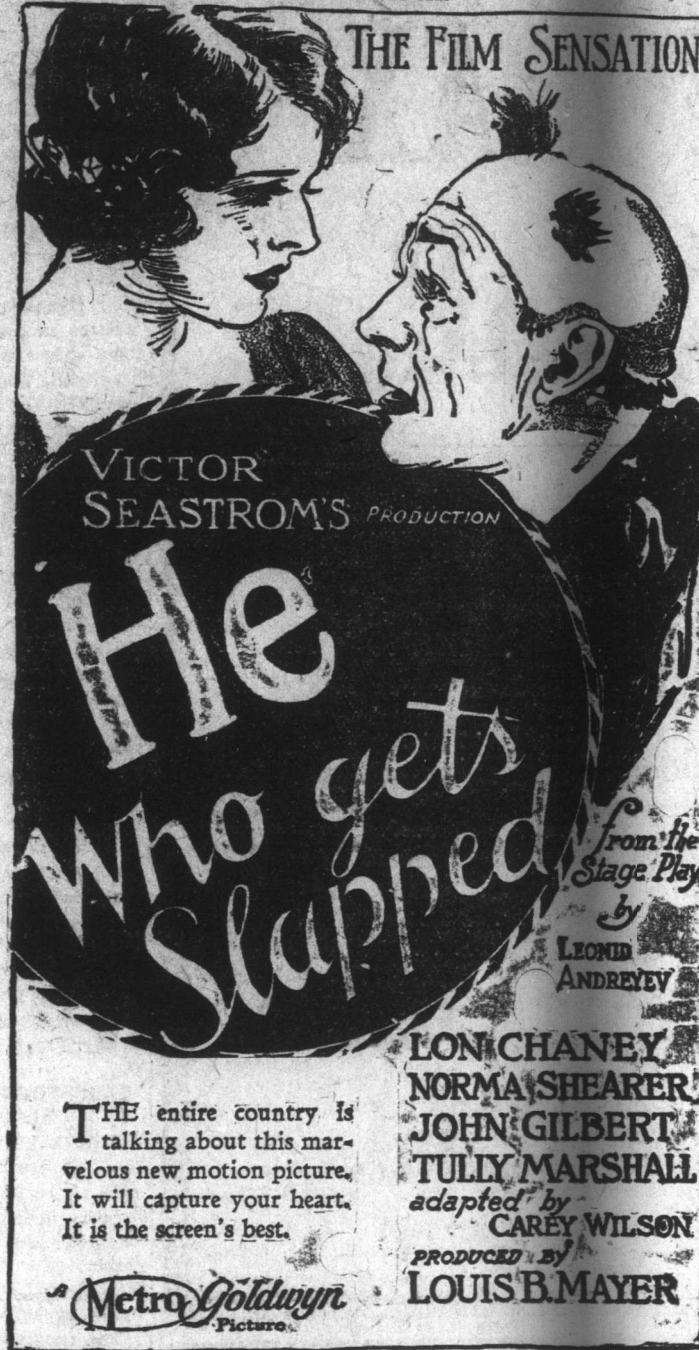
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far above the quarter deck legislators of that day, who ruled "the country with a rod of iron. Carson was a deep student of the British Constitution, knew that it did not mean the despotic system he saw around him, and he had scarcely settled down as a resident of St. John's before the thunder from his pen was echoed over the Island through the columns of the Newfoundland Sentinel, the Colony's first newspaper.

It was through Carson's efforts that the Pleating Courts were abolished, and a proper system of British Justice brought in. It was through Carson's great ability as a statesman that representative form of Government was secured for Newfoundland.

From various bits of correspondence I have read, Carson appears to have been the prime mover in every kind of reform, and whenever he was jumped on by the local rulers of the day, he appealed over their heads directly to the members of Parliament of the United Kingdom. In one of these appeals, on behalf of the inhabitants of Newfoundland, he says, "The ignorance of that English minister of the Crown, who enquired what kind of trees grew on the banks of Newfoundland, is truly characteristic of that defective information, which is still so apparent in the policy observed towards this settlement."

Continuing he says fearlessly, "The inhabitants of Newfoundland know that you do not know them, that they have been distorted and obscured. It is the object of this letter to remove the veil that has concealed them and to expose the evil genius that has hitherto blasted the fortunes of this country." Around 1810, when Carson was writing this way, the population of Newfoundland was 70,000, yet when the merchants and inhabitants decided to address the Prince Regent on their grievances, Carson was the man selected to send forward their petition with a covering letter of his own, which for its boldness and deep knowledge, stands out as one of the greatest documents written in the history of this country. Touching on the ignorance and prejudice of the Vice-Admirals, who then governed the inhabitants, he says:—"A high-minded Admiral endowed with nearly absolute power, cannot be expected to submit to the painful and humiliating task of learning; to appear ignorant of those high ideals which he is called on to perform, would be far too degrading for so dignified a personage, so enveloped in ignorance, he therefore assumes an impossible character, and the dignity of majesty is

degraded in the character of its Representative." Such writing in days when an act of independence might be arraigned as an act of mutiny, illustrates the patriotism and character of this man.

Very shortly after Carson arrived he started an agitation for a hospital in St. John's, and in 1811 a committee was appointed to deal with the matter. The following advertisement appeared in the papers of that year: St. John's, Oct. 14, 1811.

The committee appointed by the Grand Jury for the management of an Hospital for sick persons, intended to be built, take this public manner of requesting the attention of merchants and other masters of servants, and also suppliers of those men, to stop one penny in the pound of each man's wages on a/c of the Hospital, and such monies as may be collected are requested to be paid into the hands of the Treasurer.

(Sgd.) Wm. Carson, M.D., Nathan Parker, Thos. Williams, Nicholas Gill, Alex. Boucher, John Dunscomb, Thos. Meagher, James Melledge, David Tasker, Treasurer.

This petition in 1811, engineered by William Carson, was the first attempt in Newfoundland for the establishment of a civil Hospital, and will be referred to when considering Hospitals later in this address.

When Representative Government replaced the system that Carson fought against, he became representative of St. John's, and was also Speaker of the Assembly. These positions he held until the sub-version of our free constitution by Lord Stanley, after which Carson started the fight for liberty again, but did not live to see the days of Responsible Government. On the evening before he died he sent for the editor of the "Patriot," Robert John Parsons, and asked him to stir up the friends of the people, to recover their rights, and win back by constitutional means, the Great Charter of which they had been so unjustly deprived. From his obituary I take the following:—

Hon. Wm. Carson may be said to be the first public character who ever departed life in Newfoundland, to him in conjunction with a few others, Newfoundlanders owe all they have obtained in political rights. Carson sacrificed many who might have been his friends, and relinquished an easily made fortune, surely such a man should not be consigned to a tomb without some kind of public testimonial to adorn his last resting place, of one whose life was exhausted in the public cause. We do not think that a public monument should be erected

to his memory, at the expense of the Colony. It would be a tribute to worth, which the future historians of Terra Nova, would not fail to accord to our credit, as a people, and to which posterity would be an invaluable monument.

Alas, gentlemen, nothing was done, and the only monument I know of, to perpetuate the memory of this great member of our profession was the christening of one of the wards in the General Hospital after his name. It may not yet be too late, through the influence of the members of this Association, to erect in the Hospital grounds a small monument, by which posterity may remember him.

It must not be thought that St. John's was the only spot in the Island where medical enthusiasm was to be found, in the early part of 1800, for while Carson was fighting for the relief of suffering humanity, there the banner of Asclepius had been unfurled in many of the Outports.

Even before Carson's arrival in the country, Burin was found looking after her sick, under the direction of Stephenson. He was there in 1804 and I find that his commission as Justice of the Peace is dated 1805. Stephenson was an ex-Naval doctor, when he decided to settle in Burin. He brought his family out from England, so he must have been middle-aged at that time. He was an excellent doctor and a very accomplished man, being a great musician. Practising with Stephenson was an Irishman called Row, who was also an ex-Naval Doctor. Row was described as a man of much wit, but as unfair charges are always being hurled at the Irish, you must take this statement cum grano salis. Row's wife had been present when the French burned Bay Bulls, but apparently it did not affect her nerves, for she lived to the ripe age of 96.

These men were succeeded in Burin by the Morans, Frank and James, both Irishmen. Frank spent his whole career at Burin. James practised for some years at Brigus, but returned to Burin as Magistrate in 1864. He died at the age of 73. He was a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin. He is described in an old record as "well beloved and a very charming and cultivated gentleman." Before leaving Brigus he was presented with a very valuable watch, which, after his death, was sent to his brother-in-law, who was an ex-Lord Mayor of London. His brother, Frank, predeceased him by seven years, at the age of 75.

(To be continued.)

MINARD'S LINIMENT FOR SPRAINS