

that annoyed and worried him. His nights were long and sleepless, and in vain he longed for the breaking of daylight; but the night was not far off that was to close in upon him.

When William Hunter died John was left unrivalled in the field of anatomy, and at the death of Percival Pott he was easily the first surgeon in all England. "He had now arrived at the highest rank in his profession," pleasantly writes Adams, "and was consulted by all those surgeons who were attached to Mr. Pott during that gentleman's lifetime; he was almost adored by the rising generation of medical men, who seemed to quote him as the schools at one time did Aristotle. . . . His town house was beginning to return all the sums it had cost him; it was spacious and exactly suited for his residence. The ground floor was occupied for professional purposes, and such was the afflux of morning patients that to find room for them the drawing room sometimes was so suddenly deserted that the French grammar and other implements of instruction were left behind."

Four years before Percival Pott's death Hunter read his remarkable paper on "Inflammation of the Veins." It made him many new friends. The next year was the "annus mirabilis" of his life. Though a year of suffering and distress, yet its December witnessed one of the master's most wonderful achievements; though his heart was weakened by disease, his hand was still steady enough to perform for the first time in history the operation for aneurysm, which to this day bears Hunter's name in our modern text-books on surgery—an operation which has since saved thousands of limbs and lives.

The constitution of Hunter was gradually weakening under the strain of all this work. What Thackeray said of Swift applies equally as well to Hunter: "He simply tore through life." In 1786 he could no longer walk, and, consequently, was driven wherever he went. But this was a busy year of writing for him. He prepared and published his book, "Observations on Certain Parts of the Animal Economy," during these months. Then came the appointment of Deputy Surgeon-General of the Army, and Hunter, who thought life still held out long days to him, accepted the position. The following letter to Jenner, about this time, shows us that he had not yet abandoned his other activities:

"Dear Jenner,—I have all your letters before me, but whether I have answered any of them or not I cannot recollect. First, I thank you for your account of the cuckoo, and what further observations you can make I shall be glad to have them, or even a repetition of the former will be very acceptable. I received the bird: it is well known, but I look upon myself as equally obliged to you.