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978-1-108-07594-7 - Biographical Memoirs of Medicine in Great Britain: From the Revival of Literature to the Time of Harvey

John Aikin

Frontmatter

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It is sobering to realise that as recently as the year in which *On the Origin of Species* was published, learned opinion was that diseases such as typhus and cholera were spread by a 'miasma', and suggestions that doctors should wash their hands before examining patients were greeted with mockery by the profession. The Cambridge Library Collection reissues milestone publications in the history of Western medicine as well as studies of other medical traditions. Its coverage ranges from Galen on anatomical procedures to Florence Nightingale's common-sense advice to nurses, and includes early research into genetics and mental health, colonial reports on tropical diseases, documents on public health and military medicine, and publications on spa culture and medicinal plants.

Biographical Memoirs of Medicine in Great Britain

In this absorbing work of medical history, the physician and writer John Aikin (1747–1822) brings together biographical information on a selection of Britain's early medics, shedding light on the lives, works and quirks of more than fifty medical writers, surgeons and physicians between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries. Outlining the roles played by major figures in the great medical advances that marked this period, the book was first published in 1780, prior to Aikin's move to Great Yarmouth in 1784 to practise medicine. However, his political beliefs and dissenting views regarding the Church of England contributed to his unpopularity in the area, prompting his move to London and greater literary freedom. Over the years, he produced a broad range of published works, including his historically valuable *Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles Round Manchester* (1795), which is also reissued in the Cambridge Library Collection.

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BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIRS

O F

M E D I C I N E

I N

G R E A T B R I T A I N

FROM THE REVIVAL OF LITERATURE

TO THE TIME OF HARVEY.

By JOHN AIKIN, SURGEON.

---- Genus innocuum, vitæque ad publica nati
Commoda, divinas tantùm didicere per artes
Exercere ævum, atque humanæ præesse faluti.

FRACAST.

L O N D O N :

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CHURCH-YARD.

MDCCLXXX.

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P R E F A C E.

THE Volume here presented to the public is not such as the author wished it, but such as he has been able to make it. Instead of a complete *Medical Biography of Great Britain*, he has been obliged to confine himself to some *Biographical Memoirs of Medicine*; and these, instead of deriving from obscure and antient records, he has drawn only from sources opened *since the revival of literature*. How far his plan is really the worse for this deviation, he submits to the judgment of each reader; but he thinks

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himself obliged to say a few words respecting the *cause* of it.

THE first circumstance which made him sensible of having sketched out a plan beyond his abilities fully to execute, was the perusal of Dr. Milward's *Invitatory Letter*, published in 1740; the design of which was to solicit the aid of the learned in composing just such a work as that projected by himself. The numerous and abstruse objects of enquiry started in this pamphlet, are sufficient to deter any person from the pursuit, who is not possessed of a great deal of knowledge and leisure, together with the opportunity of free access to every help for studying successfully questions of remote antiquity. Accordingly, it appears from the event, that Dr. Milward's scheme was unfinished and forgotten.

THE assistance the present writer had flattered himself with the hope of obtaining,

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obtaining, by means of his *Address to the Public*, fell so much short of his expectations, that even had the subject been much less extensive, he must have abandoned the prosecution of his original design. He soon perceived, that of all the materials for information, *printed books* were alone what he had any chance of procuring. This, at once, reduced his plan to the compass of a comparatively modern period. He was further mortified with the prospect of not accomplishing even *this* part of his design so perfectly as he thought to have done. After the most extensive enquiries, many of the publications he had lists of were no where to be found; and a few, though known to exist, were locked up in libraries, the rules of which did not allow of their being lent for perusal, on any interest or security whatsoever.

AFTER this free confession, it will probably be asked, “ Why publish at all

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all a work acknowledged so incomplete?" The author can only answer, that in the judgment of many respectable friends, the materials he had collected were too valuable to be thrown away; and that he could not suppose his work would be improved by *mere delay* of publication. And after all, he could not think his deficiencies extremely interesting to the medical history of the period he has chosen. Of the more important printed works, several copies must be imagined to exist, all of which could scarcely escape a diligent search continued for some years. He trusts it will appear that they have not; and that a tolerable idea may be formed of the state of medicine and its practitioners, during a considerable portion of time, from the *memoirs* he has been able to compile.

SOME of the author's most esteemed medical correspondents have hinted a desire

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defire, that he would confine his researches to the progress of the *art*, without troubling himself with the *biography* of its *professors*. He is sensible that this is indeed the most useful and essential part of his undertaking; and he has, accordingly, by an account of every thing that seemed new and important in all the publications which came before him, attempted to fulfil this intention. But he could not persuade himself to forego the opportunities which offered of adding somewhat to the stock of *British Biography*; and of throwing due lustre on the characters of men, not less estimable for liberal manners and literary endowments, than for skill in their proper profession.

SHOULD this work be favoured with the public approbation and encouragement, the author may probably be induced to pursue the same plan

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plan through succeeding periods, which present objects still more interesting, and less liable to deficiency in the execution. He has already made some advance in this design.

HE concludes, with returning his grateful acknowledgments to those Gentlemen who have forwarded his work, as well by their judicious advice, as by the books they have transmitted. If the performance he ventures to offer them, shall in any degree answer their expectations of information or amusement, he doubts not but they will consider themselves as sufficiently repaid.

C H R O-

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CHRONOLOGICAL SERIES

O F

PERSONS OF WHOM MEMOIRS

ARE GIVEN IN THIS WORK.

	Born.	Flourished.	Died.
R ICHARDUS ANGLICUS, —		1230.	—
NICOLAS DE FERNEHAM, —		—	1241.
JOHN GILES, or DE } SANCTO ÆGIDIO, }	—	13th. century.	—
HUGH OF EVESHAM, —		—	1287.
GILBERTUS ANGLICUS, —		end of 13th. cent.	—
JOHN OF GADDESSEN, —		begin. of 14th. cent.	—
WILLIAM GRISAUNT, —		an old man in 1350.	—
JOHN ARDERN, —		1370.	—
JOHN MARFELDE, —		begin. of 15th. cent.	—
NICHOLAS HOSTRESHAM, —		1443.	—
JOHN PHREAS, —		—	1465.
THOMAS LINACRE, 1460,		—	1524.
WILLIAM BUTTS, —		—	1545.
JOHN CHAMBRE, —		—	1549.
ANDREW BORDE, —		—	1549.
	b		EDWARD

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	Born.	Flourished.	Died.
EDWARD WOTTON,	1492.	—	1555.
THOMAS VICARY,	—	1540.	—
GEORGE OWEN,	—	—	1558.
ROBERT RECORDE,	—	—	1558.
ALBAYN HYLL,	—	—	1559.
THOMAS PHAYER,	—	—	1560.
THOMAS GIBSON,	—	—	1562.
WILLIAM TURNER,	—	—	1568.
JOHN CLEMENT,	—	—	1572.
THOMAS GALE,	1507.	—	—
JOHN KAYE, OF CAIUS,	1510.	—	1573.
WILLIAM CUNINGHAM,	—	1559.	—
WILLIAM BULLEYN,	—	—	1576.
RICHARD CALDWALL,	—	—	1585.
JOHN SECURIS,	—	1566.	—
GEORGE ETHERIDGE,	1518.	—	—
JOHN JONES,	—	1572.	—
GEORGE BAKER,	—	1574.	—
JOHN BANISTER,	—	1575.	—
WALTER BALEY,	1529.	—	1592.
THOMAS MOUFET,	—	—	about 1600.
JOHN HALLE,	1529.	—	—
JOHN DAVID RHESE,	1534.	—	1609.
WILLIAM BUTLER,	1535.	—	1618.
WILLIAM GILBERT,	1540.	—	1603.
WILLIAM CLOWES,	—	1573.	—
PETER LOWE,	—	—	1612.
FRANCIS ANTHONY,	1550.	—	1623.
RICHARD BANISTER,	—	an old man in	1622.
MATTHEW GWINNE,	—	—	1627.

PHILEMON

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	Born.	Flourished.	Died.
PHILEMON HOLLAND,	1551,	—	1636.
THEODORE GOULSTON,	—	—	1632.
EDWARD JORDEN,	1569,	—	1632.
JOHN WOODALL,	1569.	—	—
THEOD. TURQUET } DE MAYERNE, }	1573,	—	1655.
ROBERT FLUDD,	1574,	—	1637.
THOMAS WINSTON,	1575,	—	1655.
TOBIAS VENNER,	1577,	—	1660.
WILLIAM HARVEY,	1578,	—	1658.
FRANCIS GLISSON,	1597,	—	1677.

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E R R A T A.

Page 9, line ult. In following my authority too implicitly, I have not recollected that N. de Ferneham is said (p. 5.) to have been court physician to king Henry III.

P. 71, l. 7, *for electoi read electio.*

197, 5, *for pharmacoepa read pharmacopœia.*

222, 18 and 21, *for pharmacopœa read pharmacopœia.*