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THE HISTORY  
*of the*  
ULSTER MEDICAL  
SOCIETY

*by*

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ADDRESS

*delivered to*

THE ULSTER MEDICAL SOCIETY  
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*Prepared at the request of the Council*



## *Introduction*

THIS is quite literally two papers. When the Council of the Ulster Medical Society invited the writer to bring R. H. Hunter's account of its history up to date, it was to cover a period entirely within his own membership of the Society, and he had at his disposal primary sources of information in the Minutes of the Society, of the Council and of the Trustees of the Whitla Medical Institute. As it was 30 years since Richard Hunter delivered his address to the Society, and outside the experience of many of the present Fellows and Members, the author was further asked to review the entire span of the Society's existence. For this latter purpose there was no need to go deeper than the secondary sources of information already available, and reference to these is made in the bibliographical note at the end of this communication.

Peace, it is said, is indivisible. So too, it is difficult to separate the history of the Society from that of the community it serves or from the activities and personalities of its individual members. Selection is both difficult and invidious. On this occasion it is nice to be able to say that if any one disagrees with the landmarks the writer has selected, he can lay the blame on the Council for inviting him to take on this task.



## THE BELFAST MEDICAL SOCIETY

AT the beginning of the 19th Century Ireland was just recovering from a period of bitter political upheaval which had culminated in the rebellion of 1798.

Belfast was a parish of some 20,000 inhabitants. For a quarter of a century the Charitable Society's Poorhouse had given shelter to the aged and infirm, and to orphaned and abandoned children. It had created a small hospital for the sick and injured of the town, and had a scheme of medical and social outdoor relief. By 1792 the Belfast Dispensary had provided increased facilities for the medical care of the townsfolk, and had opened a small fever hospital in Factory Row, now Berry Street, in 1797, but it was not until 1815 that this was replaced by the General Hospital in Frederick Street. The ladies of Belfast had founded a small lying-in hospital in Donegall Street in 1793. Further, there were dispensaries in several parts of the town where the poor could be treated free, and it was an accepted policy that it was from those who had served this apprenticeship at the periphery that the staffs of the hospitals were elected.

The earliest professional association of medical men in the area of which there is any record is the Belfast Medical Society.

The Physicians and Surgeons of Belfast in 1806, says Malcolm, though only nineteen in number, were actuated by the same spirit for mutual improvement in their common profession, which has ever distinguished the most celebrated seats of medical science. We are proud to think that, at so remote a period, the practitioners of Belfast aimed at something more than independent efforts for professional distinction. When men unite, as they did, for the purpose of affording to EACH an equal opportunity of obtaining professional information, so far as can be obtained from a reunion, by the contributions of ALL, the true spirit of professional advancement is theirs . . .

The most respectable physicians, surgeons and apothecaries, not merely of the town, but of the vicinity likewise, soon became enrolled under the designation of the Belfast Medical Society . . . (and) among the members were included . . . several gentlemen not belonging to the profession, who were nevertheless desirous of expressing their approval of its objects.

A short account of two of the first presidents and the first secretary shows not only the type of man who founded organised medical society in Belfast, but gives some idea of the times in which they lived.

For many years no one was able to identify a portrait that hung first in the Boardroom and latterly in the Rest Room of the Royal Victoria Hospital. It shows a bald-headed ruddy faced gentleman of middle age with long mutton-chop whiskers and an ample chin resting in the opening of an extraordinarily high collar. It was only recently that John Logan noticed that the letter in his hands is addressed to Doctor S. S. Thompson. Samuel Smith Thompson (Fig. 1) was born in Coleraine in 1778, the son of a doctor, and was a medical graduate of Edinburgh. Doctor Robert Stewart, his biographer, recounts of him that

**RULE 1st,** "*The Belfast Medical Society,*" shall meet in the Hospital on the first Monday of every Month, at 11 o'clock, A. M. Five Members to constitute a quorum, and the fifth who enters the room shall act as Chairman, and shall have, in addition to his ordinary vote, a casting one, in case of an equality.

2d, The Society shall be open to the admission of all members of the Profession.

3d, Candidates for admission must be proposed and seconded at one regular monthly meeting, and balloted for at the next—*one black bean* in five to exclude.

4th, No person who has been rejected, shall be proposed again within six months.

5th, The Society may admit honorary members, on being proposed and seconded in the ordinary manner, one black excluding.

6th, Honorary Members shall enjoy all the privileges of the Society, except a share of the property, should a division of it take place, or a right of voting on the question of dissolution.

7th, The Society shall be specially summoned to meet, on the first Monday in May, in each year, to elect a Treasurer and Secretary for the ensuing year.

8th, The Subscription shall be one guinea annually, payable in advance.

9th, Members who withhold the subscription one month after the meeting in May, shall pay in addition, a penalty of one shilling a month while it remains due.

*Some of the rules of the Belfast Medical Society*



1. *Samuel Smith Thomson*



2. *The Thomson Snuffbox*



3. *Names engraved on the base of the Thomson Snuffbox*

in 1817, when typhus fever broke out so malignantly and spread so fearfully and fatally, he was night and day in attendance on the suffering poor, not thinking at all of self or personal risks, but heroically combating with the dire pestilence which was decimating the land ; and this so successfully, with such unremitting, such superhuman efforts in fact, that when the epidemic had ceased, his fellow citizens presented him with a most complimentary address, accompanied by a splendid service of plate.

Later, in 1834, he was given what was described as a "massive and splendid" gold snuff box (Figs. 2 and 3) on which were engraved the names of the 36 doctors in the neighbourhood.

(His) position among his professional brethren, says Malcolm, was ever so exalted and endearing, that we agreed, during the latter part of his active life, when his years also gave him a claim to the appellation, in designating him the father of the profession.

Such was the status of the first president of the Belfast Medical Society professionally. But he left his mark on the community in another way.

He was, we are told, an enthusiastic lover of music, vocal and instrumental. He was an excellent performer on the violin having an admirable ear, and regularly enacted his part at the concerts of the Belfast Anacreontic Society, of which he was the founder and president.

This was the association which eventually became the Belfast Philharmonic Society.

Another early president of the Belfast Medical Society was Doctor William Drennan (Fig. 5). His father was the minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Rosemary Street. William received his medical education at Edinburgh University, and it was from that city that he wrote home to his sister that

a student of medicine is a term of contempt, but an IRISH student of medicine is the very highest complication of disgrace.

He practised for a time in both Newry and Dublin, but is better remembered for his political and literary activities. He was a founder and a prominent member of the Society of United Irishmen, but he did not approve of their later activities, and drifted away from the movement he had done so much to establish when he discovered that his colleagues were determined to embark on schemes of violence. His address to the Volunteers led to his being brought to trial for "a wicked and seditious libel" in 1794, but he was acquitted. "He was", wrote his granddaughter, "a reformer, but never a conspiracy". Prior to the introduction of Jennerian vaccination, he had proposed a scheme of immunisation against smallpox for the children in the Belfast Charitable Society's Poorhouse, but otherwise his medical activities in Belfast were mainly journalistic. He was one of the founders of the Academical Institution in 1810, and when it was opened in 1815, it was he who delivered the inaugural address. His epitaph, written by his medical son, is worth quoting.



5. *William Drennan*



6. *James McDonnell*



7. *Andrew Marshall*



8. *James Lawson Drummond*

Pure, just, benign ; thus filial love would trace  
The virtues hallowing this narrow place.  
The Emerald Isle may grant a wider claim,  
And link the Patriot with his Country's name.

for it was William Drennan, the Poet, who first called Ireland "the Emerald Isle".

The first secretary and treasurer, and afterwards a president of the Society, was Doctor Andrew Marshall (Fig. 7). His portrait hangs in the Royal Victoria Hospital, for he was Surgeon to the Belfast General Hospital as well as to the Charitable Society. He was in practise in High Street with his brother-in-law Doctor James Drummond, but had begun his career as a Naval Surgeon, and had served in the Baltic under Admiral Gambier in the operations that made Heligoland a British possession.

The graves of all three of these founders are in the old Clifton Street Burying Ground.

But in spite of an auspicious beginning, the early efforts of the Belfast Medical Society failed. The exact reasons are not clear. "The demon of discord invaded its ranks," says Malcolm, and the records of the Society ceased in 1814.

There was a revival in 1822. Two men in particular were responsible for this. The first was James McDonnell (Fig. 6) from the Antrim Glens. He, too, was a graduate of Edinburgh, and was destined to become one of the founders of the Belfast Medical School. His bust, the gift of Robert Marshall, stands in the corridor of the Royal Victoria Hospital, and Malcolm was to say to him that

no contemporary of any note in Britain was ignorant of his profound  
learning and distinguished name.

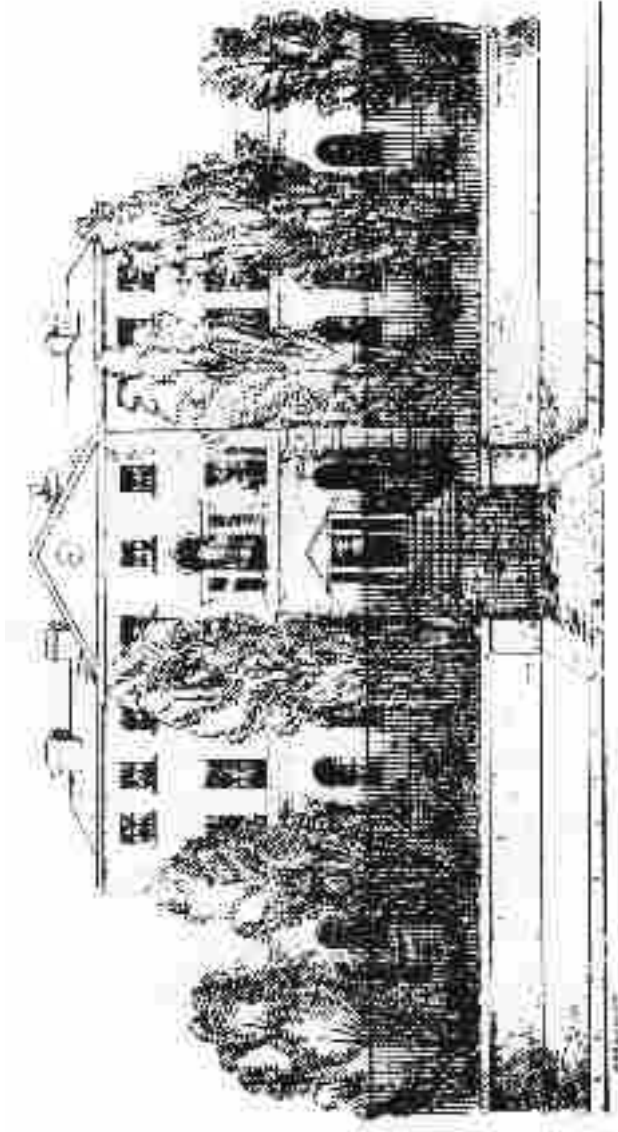
The other was Henry Forcade, who was not only the new treasurer, but the founder of the Annual Feast in commemoration of the revival of the association. He was a retired Army Surgeon who had served all through the Peninsular campaign with the Duke of Wellington, and, as Malcolm says

so distinguished himself ... as to receive the old General's particular  
commendation.

The Minute Book of the Society, states Hunter, shows the wide range of medico-political matters discussed. In 1832, the subject of a Medical School for Belfast was raised, and it was through the activities of the Society that the formation of the school was realized in 1835, in connection with the General Hospital and the Royal Academical Institution, Belfast.

It is true that in 1836 professors of medicine, surgery, midwifery, chemistry and materia medica were appointed at the Academical Institution. But James Drummond (Fig. 8) had been teaching anatomy in Inst since 1818, as well as other basic sciences, so that his seniority determined that he was first Dean of the Faculty, while James McDonnell had given the first clinical lecture in the General Hospital in 1827.

McDonnell, Drummond, Andrews and McCormac (Fig. 13) are the giant names of the period. But while they played their parts in the activities of the Belfast Medical Society, their fame lies with their great professional acumen, and the early days of the Belfast Medical School.

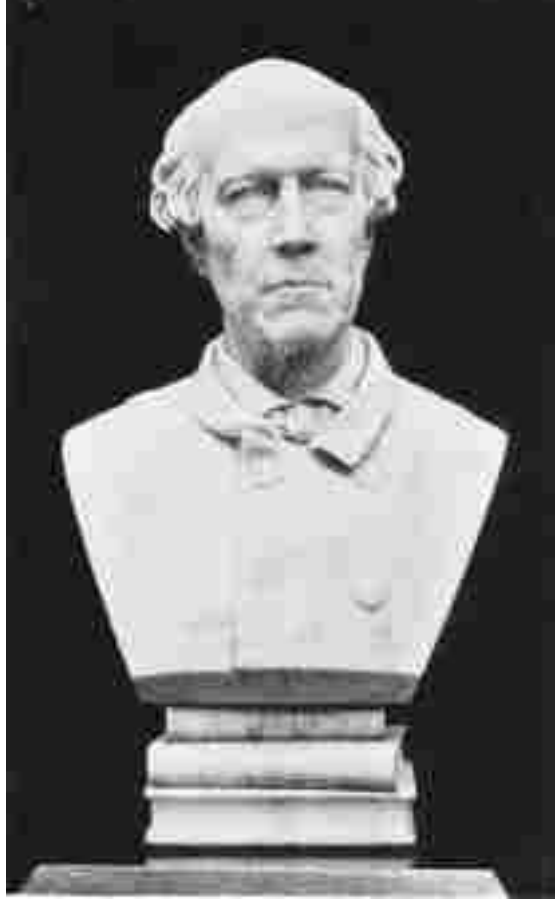


9 *The General Hospital*

13. *Henry MacCormac*

The Medical Society had its own library, and it was meeting in a room provided in the General Hospital (Fig. 9). Malcolm, the medical historian of that Hospital, and whose work has been so often quoted already, was then an active and enthusiastic supporter.

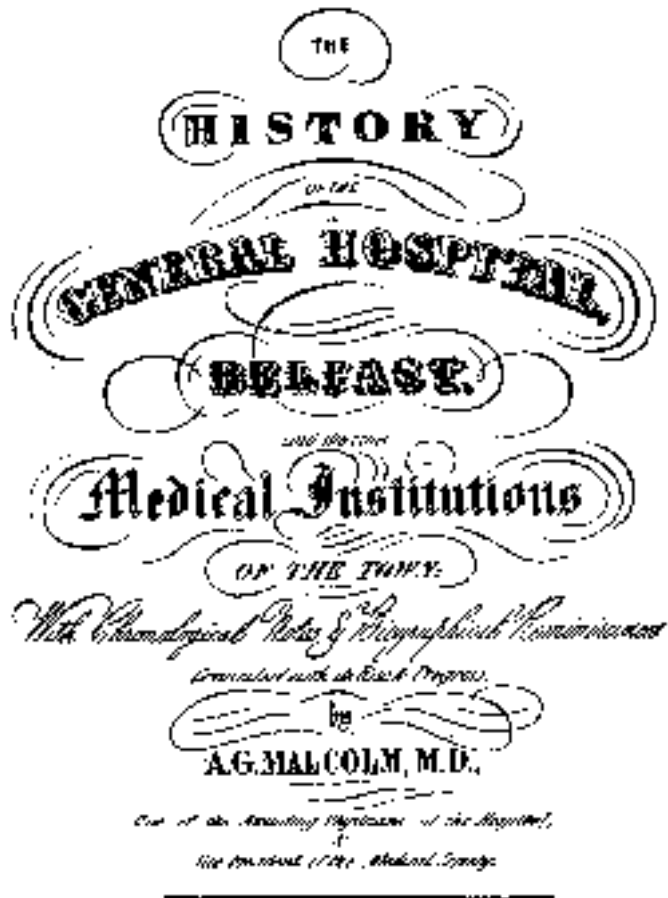
We have members and zeal enough, he wrote, but we are working under great disadvantages. Our library is but limited and our place of meeting can scarcely be called our own. This is not a state of things creditable to a large and learned body.



THE BELFAST CLINICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

In spite of what Malcolm wrote with obvious pride in 1851, he had sounded a note of discontent. It is not, perhaps, surprising that in 1853 the Belfast Clinical and Pathological Society was founded, and that he was the first secretary. There were 96 members by the end of the first year, and these now included doctors from the surrounding country. While the first president was one of the great Belfast medical dynasty of Purdons, as far as the medical societies and their histories is concerned Malcolm is the outstanding figure of the period.

Andrew George Malcolm (Fig. 10) was a native of Newry, received his early education at the Royal Belfast Academical Institution, and was later at Dublin and Glasgow, finally taking his M.D. at Edinburgh. He was physician to the General Hospital, was an authority on public health affairs, and was one of the first to advocate the medical examination of factory workers. Mention has already been



BELFAST:  
W. & G. AGNEW, LITHOGRAPHERS AND PRINTERS,  
ARNDIC-QUARE AND CASTLE-LANE  
1841.



10. Andrew George Malcolm

11. Title page of Malcolm's History of the General Hospital

**REPORT**  
OF THE  
**CONVERSAZIONE**  
OF  
**The Belfast Clinical and Pathological Society,**  
HELD  
ON THE TERMINATION OF THE THIRD SESSION,  
AT THE  
**CORN EXCHANGE HALL, APRIL 30, 1856,**  
WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED  
**THE ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT.**

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**Belfast:**

PRINTED AT "THE BELFAST DAILY MERCURY" OFFICE.

1856.

frequently made of his invaluable "History of the General Hospital" (Fig. 11) published in 1851.

It was, says Robert Esler, written for a fete which took place on the Queen's Island, and with the object of giving a more general interest in the institutions of the town, especially the hospital.

He died in 1856 at the early age of 37, and is commemorated by the Malcolm Exhibition at the Royal Victoria Hospital. Dr. J. S. Drennan wrote of him :

In mid-course of a sublime career  
An active votary of virtue falls.  
Such Malcolm was—he scorned the level way,  
And followed duty up her heavenward hill;  
Steadily working while it yet was day,  
The sudden night fell on him working still.

Meetings of the Society were held weekly on Saturdays at 3 p.m., and were well attended. What the attractions of such a programme would be today is a matter for conjecture. R. H. Hunter records that

a *conversazione* (Fig. 12) was held in a public hall each year to which non-medical guests were invited. One of these was held in the Belfast Corn Exchange in 1856, the year in which Dr. Malcolm occupied the presidential chair,

and in fact the year he died. The Exchange is now the Head Office of the Belfast Banking Company in Waring Street. The Belfast News Letter reported that

great interest was evinced during the evening in some of the microscopic demonstrations by members of the Society, such as the polarisation of light, the circulation of blood in the foot of the frog and in some experiments illustrating the physiological effects of strychnine by Dr. Hall's frog test. None of these could be viewed with indifference even by those accustomed to such spectacles, while to the uninitiated they were productive of surprise and amazement.

#### THE ULSTER MEDICAL SOCIETY — FORMER DAYS

The local medical community was too small to support the interests of the competing societies. The first formal discussions about union took place in 1861, in March, 1862, the Medical Society approved the motion

that a committee be appointed to make the necessary inquiries for a Central Room for the use of the new Society,

and a month later it was suggested

that two rooms with water closet attached be taken in the house, No. 33 High Street, at the rental of £12 10s. per annum, taxes included.

Four days later, on 30th April, 1862, both Societies met and it was resolved that this Meeting approves of the proceedings already undertaken for the amalgamation of the Medical and Pathological Societies, and hereby declares the union of the respective bodies, under the title of the Ulster Medical Society.

The first meeting was held in the rented rooms in High Street on Saturday, 3rd May at 3 p.m., under the presidency of Professor Ferguson who held the chair of Medicine in the Queen's College.

The Society continued to occupy these premises for some years, but during the 1866–67 session it was reported to them that

Doctors MacCormac, Pirrie, and Murney, joint trustees with Mr. Girdwood for the erection of the new wing to the hospital—the donation of Mr. Charters—were present, and concurred in stating that both rooms in the basement wing had been specially prepared, and were INTENDED FOR THE SOCIETY'S USE ; all the expenses of preparation having been defrayed out of the supplementary grant of £500 from Mr. Charters.

So in that session the Society gave up its rooms in High Street, and settled in what was described as "the more congenial atmosphere of the General Hospital". The Ulster Medical Society was back to the home that Malcolm had so much disliked in the days of the Belfast Medical Society, but this time the actual rooms were different, and the Society was now there by right, and not, as it were, in lodgings.

John Charters was a successful Belfast flax spinner

whose sagacity in business, said the News Letter, helped to create and establish the commercial fame of Belfast.

In his lifetime he presented a new wing to the General Hospital, the name of which has been carried over to Ward 11 in the Royal Victoria Hospital. He also built a new wing for the Belfast Charitable Institution. His name is further recalled by the Charters Prizes in the Royal Belfast Academical Institution. It is unfortunate that his kindness to the Ulster Medical Society has been forgotten.

In 1873 the Transactions of the Society were published for the first time, and were included in the Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science, but by the 1884–85 Session these were being published separately in Belfast.

The years that followed this more settled life for the Society are characterised by a succession of brilliant presidents, whose contributions to medicine were clinical and scientific, and who in that sense rather than any other added to the stature of the Society. It is possible to mention only a few of them but they included James Seaton Reid, Professor of Materia Medica in the Queen's College ; James Cuming, Professor of Medicine ; William MacCormac (Fig. 14), afterwards a Baronet and President of the Royal College of Surgeons of England ; Robert F. Dill, Professor of Midwifery ; Sir John Walton Brown and William McKeown, both pioneers of Ophthalmic Surgery in Belfast, and Sir John Fagan, a distinguished surgeon and one of the founders of the Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.

It was during Fagan's presidency in the 1884–85 session that the Society changed its meeting place from the General Hospital in Frederick Street to the Museum of



14. *Sir William MacCormac, Bart.*



15. *The Old Museum*



16. *Sir William Whitla*



18. *Stone Head of Thomas Andrews*

17. *The Whitla Medical Institute*





19. *The Smyth Memorial Window*

the Belfast Natural History and Philosophical Society in College Square North (Fig. 15), and that meetings were held on Thursdays instead of Saturdays.

Presidential names, destined to be well-remembered, continued to appear, including William Whitla ; Robert Esler, an important Belfast medical historian, whose papers on the subject appeared in the early Transactions of the Society, and one of the founders of the Ulster Hospital for Children and Women ; Alexander Dempsey, Gynaecologist to the Mater Infirmorum Hospital, afterwards knighted for his services; Henry O'Neill, nick-named "Health" for his interest in public hygiene, and the founder and first President in his student days of the Belfast Medical Students' Association ; Sir John Byers, Professor of Midwifery and Gynaecology, and an authority on local dialects and folk-lore ; Thomas Sinclair, Professor of Surgery, Member of Parliament for the University at Westminster, and donor of the Society's handsome Loving Cup ; Johnson Symington, Professor of Anatomy and a Fellow of the Royal Society; James Alexander Lindsay, Professor of Medicine ; Sir William Thompson, Professor of Physiology. The list is still far from complete.

From the Society's point of view, the greatest of these was Whitla (Fig 16). A native of Monaghan, he started life as a pharmaceutical chemist, attended the Queen's College, qualified in medicine, and became a distinguished consultant physician in Belfast, living in Wellington Place and later in Lennoxvale House. He was Physician in the old Royal Hospital and then the Royal Victoria Hospital. He was Professor of Materia Medica and Therapeutics in Queen's College, afterwards Queen's University, for many years, and was President of the Ulster Medical Society in 1886–87 and again in 1901–02. His great contribution to medicine was his gift for popularising what was then known of the action of drugs and the medical treatment of disease, and two books, his Dictionary of Treatment and his Pharmacy, Materia Medica and Therapeutics, made not only the author, but the Belfast school, known the World over. They were indeed best sellers, and brought the writer his just rewards. He became famous, he became rich, and it was his generous acts in his lifetime that moved the Ulster Medical Society from rented rooms in the Old Museum to its own new home on the other side of College Square North. He procured a site from the Governors of the Royal Belfast Academical Institution, and on it built the Medical Institute, afterwards known as the Whitla Medical Institute (Fig. 17). The building was planned in great detail. Into the front were placed portraits in stone of the four men considered by him to be "the immortals of the society" –Andrews (Fig. 18), Gordon, Henry MacCormac and Redfern. On 20th November, 1902, the Institute was declared open by His Excellency the Earl of Dudley, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. It must have been a supreme moment both for Whitla and for the Society.

The fireplace in the library on the ground floor had been so designed that the space above the mantelpiece contained a large stained glass window (Fig. 19). The previous winter there had been a serious outbreak of typhus fever on the island of Arranmore off the west coast of Donegal. So great was the terror among the local fishermen that none of them would help the doctor from Burtonport to attend the victims. So Doctor William Smyth rowed himself to the island in a leaking boat with food and medical supplies as often as was necessary, until he was joined by Doctor Brendan McCarthy. Eventually, together, they conveyed the patients to the

mainland, but Doctor Smyth had contracted a fatal attack of the disease. The stained glass window is a memorial of this event, and of Doctor Smyth's death. When it was unveiled by the Countess of Dudley on the day the Institute was declared open, Doctor McCarthy was among those present. As Professor Frederick Boas wrote :

A lonely islet in the western wave  
Lashed by Atlantic surge and winter storm,  
Through it came stalking fever's spectral form,  
Gathering her tribute for the yawning grave.

And while the billows break on Arranmore,  
Men still shall wond'ring tell, and wond'ring hear,  
How in a wave-worn barque of yester-year  
They piloted the sick from shore to shore.

Sir William had the window so placed that it formed a focus of attention ; as he said, "Something that a weary brother seeing may take heart again".

The distinguished Presidential names continue in the records of the Society : Sir John Campbell, the gynaecologist; Lorrian-Smith, the pathologist, who afterwards held the Chair in Edinburgh ; Robert Campbell, a pioneer in paediatric surgery and whose name is commemorated in the Society's Campbell Oration ; Andrew Fullerton, Professor of Surgery, a President of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, and a urologist with an international reputation ; St. Clair Symmers, Professor of Pathology, and for many years Dean ; T. H. Milroy, Professor of Physiology and a world authority on the biochemistry of muscular contraction.

No attempt has been made to make the list complete. Year after year saw a long line of changing Presidents as University Professors, Hospital Consultants and beloved family doctors followed each other. It was difficult to believe that the Ulster Medical Society had not reached a state of happy equilibrium. Safe in its new and beautiful home, with its library and its assembly hall, not even the frightful toll of the 1914-18 War seemed to affect its stability.

But it was not to be.

#### LATTER DAYS

"Stasis" is a word with unpleasant medical significance. Nowadays even the physicists and the mathematicians have doubts whether anything stands still. Certainly in the last thirty years or so Western civilisation has been on the move. Though there are still areas of the world where people exist at starvation level, in most places the standard of living has risen enormously, largely due to scientific advances of all kinds. These advances have made possible the concept and the arrival of the welfare state. But society is still unsettled, and perhaps the very outburst of scientific knowledge has resulted in the inability of peoples to adapt themselves to it fast enough for harmony. Medicine has shared in these discoveries. The history of a professional association such as the Ulster Medical Society reflects these changes. Scientific medicine has demanded a new and extra type of doctor, the specialist in an ever narrowing field, and the researcher in the narrowest field

of all. The ordinary doctor, bag in hand, stands between the patient with his stomach ache on the one hand, and, on the other, not just the physician or surgeon, but the nuclear physicist, the organic chemist, the medical statistician. The exhibition of an elegant pharmaceutical preparation has given way to the exact prescribing of antibiotics and chemotherapeutic agents. In pathological terms, small round celled infiltration has yielded to the vistas provided by the electron microscope.

Within the membership of an association such as the Ulster Medical Society this has meant a disturbed population distribution. The super-specialist has come to stay, and his animadversions are not always to the apparent help, still less to the comprehension of his colleagues, whether general practitioners or other performers in the higher realms. There is the rising danger of the splinter group. The very specialised society has its own part to play, but the audience with a wider view can demand in presentation and discussion a sense of proportion, and, given the chance, leaven the undigestible lump. Scientific medicine has therefore provided medical societies with a new challenge : to introduce a sense of scale into professional audiences and to keep medical outlook on a broad basis. Medical societies have another obvious function : to break down situations in which doctors find themselves isolated, and to provide an opportunity for them to foregather socially as is possible at the beginning and end of every meeting. And surely there is room in the annual programmes of these associations for more evenings devoted purely to non-medical subjects, and the positive objective of simple relaxation?

The Ulster Medical Society has never stood higher than at present in the quality of its scientific communications. Local research papers are of an excellent standard, and the Society can command the most distinguished medical lecturers as guests.

If the Society is in good health scientifically, it has received trauma in other ways. It survived serious deterioration in its old home, the Whitla Medical Institute, but rising costs and taxation have dealt it a blow from which it will recover only as it makes the effort. In dealing with the Society's history over the last thirty years, it is to these aspects that the most attention must be directed, even at the cost of enumerating the success of its individual Fellows and Members.

Its history is certainly not just the record of the people, distinguished and otherwise, who have occupied the Presidential chair. In this particular case, some of the greatest Fellows never achieved or never accepted the office, and the most brilliant presidents individually have not always been those who contributed most to the stature or usefulness of the Society. As each new president is invested by his predecessor with the truly mighty chain of office that weighs him down on such occasions, or even when he wears the smaller one appointed for use at less auspicious moments, he must be aware of this. It may subdue pride in the great, and remind them that the presidential task is one which will test hitherto untried qualities and may well find them wanting, while it will remind less important souls that it is sometimes such as they who have done the greatest things for the Society.

The presidential chain and badge were the gift of Sir William Whitla. It is indeed an example of bread cast on the waters, for it had been the gift to him from his local professional brethren when he was President of the British Medical Association at its meeting in Belfast in 1909. The President of the Ulster Medical Society is thus clearly labelled British Medical Association for all to see, but a small

pendant has been added to clarify this point. There can be no doubt that Sir William Whitla was one of the most successful Fellows ever to fill the office. He was the fashionable local consultant and worthily so. His medical books brought him not only financial rewards, but an international reputation, and one which enhanced the name of the Belfast School. It was not inappropriate that on the bronze plate that records his name in his old wards in the Royal Victoria Hospital Robert Marshall should have chosen to describe him in the words of his favourite prophet Daniel as "skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science". Honorary degrees and a knighthood came his way, he represented his university at Westminster and became one of its Pro-Chancellors. Yet in making this very generous gift of the Medical Institute to the Ulster Medical Society it could not be said that he sacrificed his personal comfort for his fellow doctors. His magnificent home at Lennoxvale, which he left on his death to be a Lodge for the Vice-Chancellor of the University, testifies to the style in which he lived, though it is perhaps an interesting sidelight on his life that, as Cecil Kidd reminds us, the highly evangelical Lady Whitla was apt to support him on some of his official occasions wearing the full uniform of the Salvation Army.

None the less, thanks to his generosity the Society acquired its own home, known in his lifetime as the Medical Institute and after his death in 1933 as the Whitla Medical Institute, a place where it could house its possessions, its pictures and its library, and where Fellows and Members could meet socially as well as for their scientific business. And the site was well chosen for those days, for College Square North was then the fashionable medical area of the city. It was, too, his intention that the Institute should provide a venue for the annual dinner of the Society, as was afterwards often happily proved, though in those days it was always a stag party.

So it came about that the Ulster Medical Society became for several generations of medical men identified with the building. It is now important that this identity must be seen as spurious and that, though circumstances have forced the Society to abandon the premises formerly regarded as its professional home, the Society itself lives on. It is important that it should still play its part in bringing all members of the profession together medically and socially, and in providing that cohesion that is so necessary if family doctors, consultants, and specialists in fields that are getting narrower and narrower are to retain any sense of proportion, or singleness of purpose and ideals. This seems to be, indeed, what is happening already.

On 5th March, 1936, Dr. R. H. Hunter read his paper on the history of the Society in an abbreviated form to a large audience of the Fellows and Members. The minutes record that "the whole paper is a very valuable piece of research work which will be of great value to the Society". It subsequently appeared in two parts in the *Ulster Medical Journals* of April and July, 1936, and finally as a single reprint. Almost the last words in it state that for the previous five years the Society had published its own journal instead of the former somewhat irregular *Transactions*. What it did not state was that he himself had been its Editor over that period, and its virtual founder.

Richard Henry Hunter has for years buried himself in the depths of the country, and his old haunts see him seldom, but if only for his work in founding and remaining editor of the journal over its most formative years, he must be regarded

as one of the great names in the list of Fellows. To the younger generation he is perhaps only remembered as the energetic, bustling little man in the top hat and evening coat of hunting pink who for years organised and acted as ringmaster in the Belfast Christmas Circus. This sort of thing he loves, and, in the summer to join a travelling circus and go round the country with it was his ideal holiday. He had a way with wild animals, as those who saw him in the tiger's cage at the reception given to the British Medical Association at Bellevue in 1937 will remember. From being an interpreter with the French Army in the 1914–18 War, and then a foundation member of that famous Queen's University Concert Party, the Jesters, he became Lecturer in Embryology, and, if it was a loss to Anatomy that he never attained the Professorial Chair for which his friends considered that his inspiring and enthusiastic teaching entitled him, it was the University's gain when he left his old department to become Secretary. It must also go on record that he was one of the moving spirits in founding both the Queen's University Association and the University Staff Club, "SI MONUMENTUM REQUIRIS CIRCUMSPICE".

The closing years of the period covered by Richard Hunter's history of the Society were marked at home by a fair measure of peace and economic stability. Hitler was making himself heard in Germany, but was hardly taken seriously by the world at large. The Ulster Medical Society's affairs could fairly be described as staidly prosperous. It was possible to buy a good six-cylinder car with a sunshine roof for under £300, and it was possible to park it in front of the Institute, or if not in front, certainly within a hundred yards, though such an inconvenience was regarded as bordering on the intolerable. But the pattern of life was in many ways changing. People no longer foregathered in the Institute for a four of bridge or a game of billiards. The library was still used for reference purposes, but as a social centre the annual dinner was becoming the sole attraction. Yet the sense of companionship remained. Those who arrived early for the usual fortnightly meeting could be sure of a chat with friends before a cheerful open fire in the front hall. The leather of deep arm chairs gleamed and gave an air of luxury. The floors and the walls shone, and smelt of polish. Most people knew each other, and "Who on earth is that chap?" was still a question for the far future. Wilson, the Steward, presided on these occasions in his little telephone office, and, after the meeting was over, his wife's fairy cakes were of a lightness such as encouraged gluttony.

The Northern Ireland Branch of the British Medical Association invited the Association to hold its 105th Annual Meeting in Belfast in 1937, and it was inevitable that the Ulster Medical Society would be involved. For the two years preceding the meeting the Society's library was used as an office, and the whole meeting was organised from it. Under the Presidency of Professor P. T. Crymble, the Ulster Medical Society held a reception and dance for the Representative Body of the B.M.A. at Belfast Castle on Saturday, 17th July, and the following evening there was a concert in the Whitla Medical Institute. The President of the British Medical Association was Robert James Johnstone, Professor of Gynaecology in Queen's University, and one of its representatives in the House of Commons at Stormont. He was subsequently knighted for his services to medicine, but did not live long to enjoy the honour, for he died in 1938. He was a former President of the Ulster Medical Society, and his name is commemorated in Johnstone House in the Royal Maternity Hospital.

Professor W. W. D. Thomson, afterwards Sir William, who held the Chair of Medicine in the University, was President during the 1937–38 Session. His inaugural address was entitled "Some Aspects of the Life and Times of Sir Hans Sloane". Sloane was born in Killyleagh in Co. Down in 1660. He studied medicine at Montpellier, but, as a Protestant, took his M.D. at the neighbouring University of Orange. He became a fashionable London physician and was the friend of Ray, Boyle and Sydenham. He travelled to Jamaica as physician to the Duke of Albermarle, and here he had the opportunity of making a considerable sum of money from the purchase of Peruvian bark as well as becoming a fine botanist. Later, his charity to poor patients who came to see him at his own house in London did not prevent him from making a large professional fortune, and Hans Crescent and Sloan Street commemorate his wise speculation in land in Chelsea. Above all, his wealth enabled him to amass an enormous number of curiosities; botanical, geological and archaeological. This collection forms his greatest claim to fame, for, though he was the only person ever to become President of the Royal Society and of the Royal College of Physicians of London, yet, as Professor Thomson said in the concluding works of a remarkable address, "the vision of a young Ulsterman and the dreams of his old age gave England the British Museum".

At the annual dinner that session Professor Thomson presented to the Society two of its finest canvasses : a magnificent copy of the picture of Sloane, the original of which is in the National Portrait Gallery in London, and the painting of Sir William Whitla, so often called the second founder of the Society. This was also the occasion of the conferment of the honorary Fellowship of the Society on Sir Humphrey Rolleston and Mr. A. B. Mitchell, F.R.C.S.I., and at a meeting soon afterwards on Sir Robert Johnstone.

1937 marked the beginning of a period of great world uneasiness. Adolf Hitler had ranted his way from the Munich beer cellars to the Chancellory in Berlin. "Liebensbraum" was the password. Mussolini was baring his teeth to the rest of the world from the balcony of the Palazzo Venezia. The horrors of the civil war in Spain and the Italian invasion of Ethiopia seem in retrospect but trials of strength. Chamberlain and his piece of paper marked a temporary pause only, a period when the nations were taking a deep breath before the plunge into six years of conflict such as the world had never seen before. One by one the smaller nations were taken over by Germany. Finally Hitler announced that his patience was exhausted. For a year there waged what came to be known as the phoney war. Then came the blitzkrieg in North West Europe, the retreat of the allies at Dunkirk, and the dreadful time when Britain and her Empire stood alone. Against such a background the affairs of the Ulster Medical Society fall into insignificance, yet it is not without pride that the facts can be stated.

On the outbreak of hostilities, and with the unknown risks of air raids, it was decided to curtail the activities of the Society, and to offer the premises to the Government for war purposes if they were required. It was also agreed to reduce the publication of the Ulster Medical Journal to two copies in the year. Temporary membership was offered to Service Medical Officers stationed in Northern Ireland, and the wartime programmes of the Society included many joint meetings with the British Medical Association, as well as clinical meetings at Campbell College under the auspices of the 24th General Hospital, R.A.M.C, and at the Musgrave Park

premises which had been taken over and opened as the 31st General Hospital. In December, 1942, Captain Swank of the United States Medical Corps became the first American officer to address the Society, and on another occasion one of those taking part in a discussion was Major General Sir Henry Tidy, Consultant Physician to the Army, for long a close personal friend of Professor Thomson, and Extern Examiner in Medicine at Queen's University.

Into these martial affairs there obtruded a political impasse. In 1942 the Society refused Dr. Samuel Simms the use of the premises for a meeting of the Medical Practitioners' Union, and again after the council had been specially convened there was a further rejection of the request. The argument brooked of no denial. The minutes record the simple rhetorical question : "Was not this a branch of the T.U.C.?"

By the late summer of 1945 the Allies had brought both Germany and Japan to the armistice tables. Atomic energy had been liberated. A terrible source of destructive power and disease had been discovered, the full force of which was not at first generally realised. The physical destruction of air raids on Britain had been immense. Belfast had not escaped and had been the victim of one of the heaviest raids. If Musgrave Park Hospital had been created The Ulster Hospital for Children and Women in Templemore Avenue as it had been known was destroyed. The fabric of the Ulster Medical Society's premises was intact, but not so its roll of Fellows and Members.

In 1948 a Roll of Honour was prepared. It was agreed that it should include not only the names of those who belonged to the Ulster Medical Society when they joined the forces, but also those who had served and who had joined the Society by 1st May, 1948. It was obvious that any other course would have excluded many who had never been afforded the chance of joining the Society in the ordinary way at the usual time. Finally a wooden panel was constructed similar to that presented by Dr. H. L. McKisack commemorating those who had served in the 1914-18 War, and was given to the Society by Robert Marshall, a past President of the Society and a former Editor of the Journal. It records the names of 126 Fellows and Members who served with the armed forces, including the following who lost their lives :

R. McF. Kirkpatrick, D.S.C., Surgeon Lieutenant, R.N.V.R.

Robert W. S. Marshall, Squadron-Leader, R.A.F.

Humphrey B. Thomson, Captain, R.A.M.C.

The war period was characterised by one immediate objective—to win. The purpose of the post-war period was less clear. For many the main point was to get back to things as they were. It was never to be. All sorts of commodities were scarce. "In short supply" became, and remains, the jargon. Food, petrol, cars were still rationed or on a system of priorities. Six years of war had created a social upheaval on which there was no going back. The Beveridge Report pointed the way to the Welfare State. The return of a Labour Government in Britain demanded it. Medicine was deeply involved. The pattern of general practice seemed in the melting pot. In Northern Ireland the province could not absorb many more family doctors without imperilling the economic status of them all. The voluntary hospital system as it had existed for generations could not provide a livelihood for the extra

consultants that the expansion of scientific medicine demanded. Very experienced ex-service doctors were demobilised without jobs and without higher qualifications. Ex-service housemen and ex-service registrars became the order of the day, and medicine made its contribution to the growing ranks of angry young men. These aspects of the immediate post war period, fortunately, did little to upset the peace and concord of the Ulster Medical Society, but economic considerations did not encourage immediate recruitment to its ranks. The medico-political battles were largely fought out in the Ex-Service and Registrar Groups of the British Medical Association, but there can be few Fellows or Members of the Society who at that time escaped the complications of the period. Whether under the auspices of the British Medical Association or not, it was usually in the Whitla Medical Institute that these group meetings took place, though on occasion they were held on the premises of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland. There was always something about the Medical Institute that made it feel like a home even if there was a bitter argument in progress. It was comfortable. It belonged to you and you belonged to it. No other allegiance was involved. It engendered an undivided loyalty and an independent attitude to professional alignments of other kinds.

Gradually the post-war years slipped into the early days of the Health Act of 1948, with the appearance of the General Health Services Board, the Northern Ireland Hospitals Authority and the Tuberculosis Authority. But, while the restrictions of war gradually disappeared, social patterns on the whole were still changing. The days were long since past for the bridge room or the billiard table. Except for the invaluable social periods just before and after scientific meetings the place was no longer a club, yet was being maintained almost on that footing throughout the year. With the abolition of petrol rationing and the greater availability of cars, congestion in the city streets was becoming heavier week by week, and it was increasingly difficult to get near the Institute in the evenings.

It was only after several years of firmer and firmer prompting from the Council, and especially from those who held the premises on Trust for the Society, that two special considerations finally dominated the thoughts of the Fellows and Members generally. The first was the deterioration in the fabric of the building itself, and which dated from the time when the British Sailors' Society purchased and enlarged the old Police Barrack on the east side of the Institute to make a Merchant Seaman's Club. The other was the introduction of legislation involving the Society in the payment of heavy rates from which they had been hitherto exempt on the simple assumption that the society was scientific and educational.

Early in 1946 cracks had appeared in the wall beside the musicians' gallery in the lecture room and in the old billiard room above it. Then it was found that some of the doors in the Institute had become very tight, and could be opened and shut only with difficulty. It was the opinion of the Society's architect that these faults were due to subsidence in the new walls erected by the British Sailors' Society next door during the conversions for the purpose of the Merchant Seamen's Club. Strips of gummed paper were put over the cracks to see if there would be any further widening. The architects representing the British Sailors' Society were consulted and they admitted that Society's liability for the damage. Unfortunately they did not commit this opinion to paper. In the meantime doors became tighter still, and dry rot was discovered in the downstairs bathroom. Further, the ceiling in

the main assembly hall was reported to be dangerous, and the architect advised the Society that the room was no longer safe for use.

The brunt of the responsibility for advising the Fellows and Members and for making decisions of policy fell even more heavily on the trustees than on the council. The chairman of the trustees at that time was Sir Thomas Houston, and it was during the early period of these troubles, in 1949, that he died at an advanced age. He was one of the Society's most distinguished Fellows and a past President, a pioneer of clinical pathology and haematology in the province, and a man who commanded widespread affection. He was simple and humble to the point of eccentricity, and all who remember him do so with nothing but happy recollections. Other important names among the trustees at that time were Mr. S. T. Irwin, Dr. George Lyttle and Dr. Hilton Stewart.

It is extraordinary how protracted the proceedings were. Consultation was, of course, extremely complex. The general membership of the Ulster Medical Society, its council, its architect, the trustees for the building, the solicitor and eventually senior counsel on the one hand, and on the other the British Sailors' Society, their architects both in Belfast and London and their local and central solicitors had all to be consulted in turn. In 1952 one of the architects for the British Sailors' Society contended that the subsidence in the Whitla Medical Institute would not have taken place had its piling been sound, and advised an inspection. The arguments started all over again about who should be responsible for paying for this. By the end of 1953 the Ulster Medical Society was becoming impatient about all the delays, and blame was cast in many directions. It was now becoming evident that sums, perhaps in the region of £12,000, would be necessary if the building was to be saved. The question of its sale became more than just an awful thought that few cared to mention even in confidential conversation.

By March, 1954, the Council, finding that it was impossible to insure anyone but the steward against the risks of damage from falling plaster, decided to close the premises temporarily. It was only late in 1956 that the trustees reported to the society that they had at last been advised that they could and should repair the foundations and renew the ceilings and plaster work so that the premises could be used again. Even the exploration of the foundations had not been accomplished without trouble, for the builders had broken a drain in filling in the excavation, and had to uncover this and repair it, fortunately at their own expense. At the same time, the opportunity was taken to overhaul the heating, ventilation, plumbing and decoration, and to reconstruct the steward's premises.

How was the bill to be met? All sorts of expedients were considered by the council. To raise the subscription to the Society might seriously affect recruiting and even encourage resignations. It was hoped that it might be possible to pay subscriptions by Covenant, but this too fell through because the objects of the Society had never been clearly defined, a stumbling block which was also to prejudice seriously the Society's position in connection with exemption from rating. It was the legally-minded Reginald Hall who pointed this out, with the result that later a formal declaration of purposes was prepared. The case against the British Sailors' Society had been fully investigated by the Society's solicitor and Senior Counsel, and, finally, though the matter did not go to the courts, the Ulster Medical Society received an agreed sum of £5,000. This still left almost £2,000 to

be found, and it was not until 1959 that this debt was cleared off, largely through direct appeals to the Fellows and Members.

The premises were not the only source of financial worry. The Ulster Medical Journal was costing more and more to produce. It had never returned to its prewar output of quarterly copies, and remained at two issues annually, but it was the only local medical publication and was filling an increasingly valuable role not only in providing an outlet for papers of medical interest written locally, but in publishing such material as the Annual Opening Address at the Royal Victoria Hospital. It had become one of the Society's most important contributions to local medical affairs, if not its most important. It formed, too, the basis of a wide exchange service with other centres, as it had been from its inception. Fortunately its value was appreciated outside the Society, and support was forthcoming from the University, the Hospitals Authority and the Belfast Hospitals Management Committee.

More recently, fresh arrangements have been made for the publication of the Journal, so that the cost of production may be to some extent met by the income from advertising.

"The Journal," said the Council as far back as 1957, "is the Journal of the Medical School and dependent on it, and it must remain a general journal in an age of specialisation. Good articles in it are noticed in the literature, and all are indexed and abstracted . . . Perhaps the supplements have done most to interest those outside the School."

While the reconstruction and repairs to the Whitla Medical Institute were being carried out, the Ulster Medical Society held its meetings for the most part in the then new Institute of Clinical Science at the Royal Victoria Hospital site. The Society must for ever remain grateful to the University for the facilities thus granted, but Fellows and Members had a feeling that they were not meeting under their own roof tree, and particularly that no part of the surroundings belonged to them. The familiar portraits, the War Memorial Boards, the stained glass windows ; none of these things were there to give any sense of specific identity or of the continuity of the life of the Society. There was no environmental proof that the meetings were indeed of the Ulster Medical Society.

So it was with the genuine feeling of a house warming and a homecoming that the 1957–58 Session began with the re-opening of the Whitla Medical Institute. A ladies' committee had helped with the choice of the interior decorations, and the place glowed in tones of warm orange light and soft greys and greens. There was the old sensation of physical and emotional warmth, and the evening was an especially happy one. Olive Anderson was the incoming President. She was the first woman to fill the office, and her colleagues welcomed her with special affection for she was just recovering from a serious operation. It was perhaps not unnatural that she chose as her subject "Elizabeth Garrett Anderson and her Contemporaries".

In spite of the joy of the occasion, there were some who realised that for the Whitla Medical Institute it marked the beginning of an Indian summer. Costs of all sorts were still rising. Even the heating of the building to a degree necessary for its proper maintenance was becoming a serious item of expenditure. Little use was made of the Institute except for the nights of the Society's own fortnightly meet-

ings. The British Medical Association, after the failure of several attempts to plan a secretarial addition for themselves at the back of the Institute, at last purchased their own premises on the Ormeau Road. This meant another and serious loss of regular income. Finally, the Council had to report that the Society was no longer regarded in Law as a charity, and would in future be faced with annual rates of some £300.

Among the trustees, who had borne so many responsibilities during the previous years, there were sad things to record. The Chairman, Sir Samuel Irwin, who had received a knighthood for public services, died in 1961, and the Secretary, Doctor Hilton Stewart had to resign that same year on grounds of ill health, being destined to survive only for another year. Continuity was retained in the person of George Lyttle, who became Chairman, while Reginald Hall was appointed Honorary Secretary.

An attempt to raise income by letting some of the rooms during the day to the Royal Belfast Academical Institution and to the Belfast School of Art meant an increase in the cost of heating, and part of the expected revenue disappeared, but it was clear to the Trustees, and to many of the Council, that the payment of rates was the final blow that was to bring the Society to bankruptcy unless something was done about it. Should the Society run into serious debt on this account, there was no sign of any new source of income to meet it. The Society as a whole turned both a blind eye and a deaf ear on the warnings of those in closest touch with the rapidly deteriorating situation.

1962 was the Centenary year of the Society's foundation. Cecil W. Kidd was the President, and he chose for his address "Sir William Whitla, Profile of a Benefactor." Instead of the usual Annual Dinner there was a reception in the main hall of the Houses of Parliament at Stormont. The occasion was made one for full academic dress and decorations, and the party was attended by many distinguished guests.

But the hair by which the sword of Damocles was suspended was becoming ever more tenuous. It was in 1964, when Kathleen Cathcart became the Society's second woman President, that the nettle was really grasped. Ever decreasing use was being made of the premises, the cost of its upkeep was becoming greater month by month, the parking of cars was becoming next to impossible, and the final burden was the imposition of the municipal rates. The Society was loathe to sell the premises. With the prospect of being no longer able to meet in the familiar surroundings, sentimental attachment to the Whitla Medical Institute had grown, and there were indeed heart searchings.

There was a good business reason for disquiet too. The trust deed was so framed that if the Society defaulted the proceeds must go to the Royal Victoria Hospital to endow a ward, though the trustees could reserve such portion as they saw fit to establish a fund for the endowment or further endowment of a Chair of Original Research in Pharmacology at the University. Already in his own lifetime Sir William Whitla had seen the hardship that this might one day place on the Society, but, as the trust had been established, he had no power to alter it. The Society would not benefit one halfpenny from the sale of the Institute, and would be homeless. The decision to sell was a terrible one to have to take, but it had to be taken, and better sooner than later. It was at an unusually solemn meeting of the

Society that a formal motion was proposed by Robert Marshall, and to few people can such a duty have been more painful. On 2nd June, 1965, the Council informed the Trustees officially that they defaulted and were vacating the building forthwith. The Whitla Medical Institute was sold to the Governors of the Royal Belfast Academical Institution, the ground landlords, for £13,500. With a sum of £417 15s. 6d. to be reserved for certain expenses approved by the Trustees, this left a disposable sum of £13,082 4s. 6d.

£13,000 is not a large sum in terms of bargaining power with Universities or Hospitals in modern times and the Society had to find a new home. Fortunately it possessed a far more powerful ally than mere money—an immense volume of good will. The Royal Victoria Hospital was not really free to give any hard and fast undertaking about how it would spend such a sum, so the Trustees decided that it would give the Hospital £500 to name a Whitla bed. The University, on the other hand, offered permanent accommodation on the Lisburn Road site, part of which would be for the exclusive use of the Ulster Medical Society, and which would be free of charge so long as the Society carried out its newly declared purposes. In the meantime the Society could have the use of premises in the Keir Building. The balance of the money paid to the University would go to further the study of Pharmacology as envisaged in the original trust deed.

The Society had no longer any place to keep its LARES and PENATES. There were the stained glass windows, the silver cups, the portraits, the Presidential Boards, the War Memorials, and the handsome grandfather clock that for so many years had kept watch and ward in the library. All were found temporary homes or were put in store. The key was turned in the door of the Whitla Medical Institute, and an epoch was over.

Already, even in temporary quarters for which it must once again thank the University, the Society is showing every evidence of spontaneous resuscitation. There have been excellent attendances at all the recent meetings, and Fellows and Members themselves have been commenting on this. There could be no better physical sign on which to base a favourable prognosis. Future historians will without doubt be able to record that the Society continued to grow in stature and importance, not merely for the purpose of spreading medical knowledge through its meetings and its Journal, but for the promotion of friendship and a true professional fellowship.

Perhaps too, in days to come, at some focal spot dedicated to the purposes of the Ulster Medical Society, the stone faces of Gordon, Andrews, Redfern and MacCormac, with the portrait of Sir William himself, may look down on new generations of their professional colleagues, and not be left to stare in vain into the traffic turmoil of College Square North, where the Hippocratic tradition no longer prevails.

APPENDIX

Societies such as the Ulster Medical Society do not run simply by their own corporate momentum, but by the exertions of individuals. Especially are they indebted to honorary secretaries, who, in a mist of anonymity, record in the minutes the work they do. It has not been possible in this brief communication to mention a fraction of the persons who have contributed to the welfare of this Society, and so there are enumerated here those who have held the chief offices over the years.

PRESIDENTS

PROFESSOR FERGUSON, M.D.	1862-63
JAMES PATTERSON, M.D.	1863-64
ROBERT STEWART, M.D.	1864-65
JAMES MOORE, M.D.	1865-66
JOHN S. DRENNAN, M.D.	1866-67
PROFESSOR J. SEATON REID, M.D.	1867-68
JAMES CUMING, M.A., M.D.	1868-69
JAMES W. T. SMITH, M.D.	1869-70
SIR WILLIAM MacCORMAC	1870-71
HENRY MURNEY, M.D.	1871-72
HENRY M. JOHNSTON, L.R.C.S.I.	1872-73
JOHN MOORE, M.D.	1873-74
CHARLES D. PURDON, M.D.	1874-75
THOMAS KENNEDY WHEELER, M.D.	1875-76
RICHARD ROSS, M.D.	1876-77
GEORGE F. WALES, M.D.	1877-78
ALEXANDER HARKIN, M.D.	1878-79
PROFESSOR ROBERT F. DILL, M.D.	1879-80
J. WALTON BROWNE, B.A., M.D.	1880-81
PROFESSOR CUMING, M.A., M.D.	1881-82
WILLIAM A. McKEOWN, M.D.	1882-83
PROFESSOR ROBERT F. DILL, M.D.	1883-84
JOHN FAGAN, F.R.C.S.I.	1884-85
JOHN FAGAN, F.R.C.S.I.	1885-86
WILLIAM WHITLA, M.D.	1886-87
ROBERT ESLER, M.D.	1887-88
HENRY BURDEN, M.A., M.D.	1888-89
ANDREW MCCONNELL, L.R.C.P. & S.Edin.	1889-90
ALEXANDER DEMPSEY, M.D.	1890-91
HENRY O'NEILL, M.D.	1891-92
HENRY WHITAKER, M.D., M.R.C.S. Eng.	1892-93
PROF. J. W. BYERS, M.A., M.D., M.R.C.S.Eng.	1893-94
F. E. MCFARLAND, L.R.C.P.&S.I.	1894-95
PROFESSOR T. SINCLAIR, M.D., F.R.C.S.Eng.	1895-96
PROF. JOHNSON SYMINGTON, M.D., F.R.C.S.Edin.	1896-97
JAMES A. LINDSAY, M.A., M.D., M.R.C.P.Lond.	1897-98
JOSEPH NELSON, M.D., L.R.C.S.I.	1898-99
ALDERMAN JAMES GRAHAM, M.D.	1899-1900
PROFESSOR W. H. THOMPSON, M.D., F.R.C.S.Eng.	1900-1901
PROFESSOR WILLIAM WHITLA, M.A., M.D.	1901-02
JOHN CAMPBELL, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.S.Eng.	1902-03

PRESIDENTS *continued*

JOHN CAMPBELL, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.S.Eng.	1903-04
WILLIAM CALWELL, M.A., M.D.	1904-05
WILLIAM CALWELL, M.A., M.D.	1905-06
D. P. GAUSSEN, M.D., M.R.C.S.	1906-07
JOHN McCAW, M.D.	1907-08
THOMAS S. KIRK, B.A., M.B.	1908-09
J. J. AUSTIN, M.D.	1909-10
J. J. AUSTIN, M.D.	1910-11
HENRY L. MCKISACK, M.D., M.R.C.P.Lond.	1911-12
R. W. LESLIE, M.D., LL.D.	1912-13
ARTHUR. B. MITCHELL, M.B., F.R.C.S.I.	1913-14
JOHN S. MORROW, B.A., M.D.	1914-15
A. GARDNER ROBB, M.B., D.PH.	1915-16
ROBERT CAMPBELL, B.A., M.B., F.R.C.S.Eng.	1916-17
WILLIAM D. DONNAN, B.A., M.D.	1917-18
JAMES COLVILLE, B.A., M.D.	1918-19
ANDREW FULLERTON, C.B., C.M.G., M.D., M.Ch., F.R.C.S.I.	1919-20
THOMAS HOUSTON, O.B.E., B.A., M.D.	1920-21
ROBERT HALL, L.R.C.P. & S.Edin.	1921-22
R. J. JOHNSTONE, B.A., M.B., F.R.C.S.Eng.	1922-23
PROF. W. ST. CLAIR SYMMERS, M.B., CM.	1923-24
J. SINGLETON DARLING, B.A., M.D., M.Ch., L.M.	1924-25
JAMES A. CRAIG, M.B., F.R.C.S.Eng.	1925-26
M. J. NOLAN, L.R.C.S., L.M.K.Q.C.P.	1926-27
J. C. RANKIN, M.D.	1927-28
PROF. T. H. MILROY, M.D., LL.D., F.R.S.Edin.	1928-29
HOWARD STEVENSON, M.B., F.R.C.S.I.	1929-30
HENRY HANNA, M.A., B.Sc., M.B.	1930-31
S T. IRWIN, B.A., M.B., M.Ch., F.R.C.S.Edin.	1931-32
C. G. LOWRY, M.D., F.R.C.S.Edin.	1932-33
PROF. W. J. WILSON, B.A., M.D., D.Sc., D.PH.	1933-34
S R. HUNTER, B.A., M.D.	1934-35
FOSTER COATES, B.A., M.D., D.PH.	1935-36
PROF. P. T. CRYMBLE, M.B., F.R.C.S.Eng.	1936-37
PROF. W. W. D. THOMSON, B.A., M.D., B.Sc., F.R.C.P.Lond., D.PH.	1937-38
JOHN M. McCLOY, M.D., D.PH.	1938-39
T. S. S. HOLMES, M.B., M.Ch., F.R.C.S.Eng.	1939-40
T. S. S. HOLMES, M.B., M.Ch., F.R.C.S.Eng.	1940-41
GEORGE G. LYTTLE, M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S.Eng.	1941-42
ROBERT MARSHALL, M.D., F.R.C.P.I., M.R.C.P.Lond.	1942-43
WILLIAM DICKEY, M.B.	1943-44
WILLIAM A. ANDERSON, M.A., M.D., D.L.	1944-45
H. P. HALL, M.D., M.Ch.	1945-46
JAMES GILLESPIE, M.B.	1946-47
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## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The following sources of information have been found specially useful in the preparation of this paper :

Articles :

1. Transactions of the Ulster Medical Society—  
ROBERT ESLER : Early History of Medicine in Belfast, 1884-85 ; Sketch of the Ulster Medical Society and its Presidents, 1885-86.
2. Ulster Medical Journal—  
R. H. HUNTER : History of the Ulster Medical Society, April and July, 1936 ; The Belfast Medical School, July 1937.  
ROBERT MARSHALL : Opening Address, Royal Victoria Hospital, January 1936.  
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CECIL W. KIDD : Sir William Whitla : Profile of a Benefactor, December 1962.  
W. W. D. THOMSON : Some Aspects of the Life and Times of Sir Hans Sloane, January 1938.

Books :

1. A. G. MALCOLM, 1851. *The History of the General Hospital, Belfast, and other Medical Institutions of the Town*. This book is now rare, but it is a delightful account of medical affairs in Belfast from early days, and particularly of the foundation that was to become the Royal Victoria Hospital.
2. GEORGE BENN, 1877. *The History of Belfast*. This is a standard text. It is now fairly difficult to procure, but is a mine of information about the growth of Belfast in general.
3. D. A. CHART, 1931. *The Drennan Letters*. A witty correspondence between William Drennan, an Irish Physician who was also a politician, a poet and an acute observer of events, and his sister, Mrs. Samuel McTier. This book comes to the better secondhand bookshops fairly often.
4. ROBERT MARSHALL, 1937. *The Book of Belfast*. Fairly difficult to get. A handbook written for the 105th Annual Meeting of the British Medical Association.
5. ROBERT MARSHALL. 1953. *The Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, 1903-1953*. This was published by the Hospital on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary on the Grosvenor Road site. It contains many sidelights on world and local affairs.
6. R. W. M. STRAIN, 1961. *Belfast and its Charitable Society*. While this account is mainly of the Charitable Society, it includes much of the history of the social development of the town from the middle of the 18th to the middle of the 19th Centuries.

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