

**THE VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
OF MANCHESTER
MEDICAL SCHOOL**

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The Victoria University of Manchester Medical School by Various

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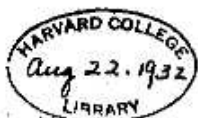
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INTRODUCTION

HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL

THE foundation of the Manchester Infirmary in 1752 was the first incident in the development of the University of Manchester School of Medicine of the present day. In this year Mr. Thomas Bancroft, a prominent citizen, and Mr. Charles White, a young and enthusiastic surgeon, who, as a student in London and Edinburgh, had seen the immense benefit which hospitals were to the sick poor and to the study of medicine, and who had just settled in practice in the town, opened a hospital for twelve patients. So successful was the venture that a larger building had to be provided, and this was erected on the site in Piccadilly where, with its various enlargements, it has been in constant use and known as the Manchester Royal Infirmary until 1908. Whilst apprentices were at once admitted to the practice of the hospital, it was not until 1783 that lectures on the ancillary sciences of anatomy, physiology, and chemistry were delivered under the auspices of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society by Charles White, his son Thomas White, and Thomas Henry respectively. The lectures on anatomy and physiology for some reason or other were not a success, and after a couple of sessions were discontinued. But from this date onwards for the next twenty years, other courses on the same subjects were delivered irregularly, the best known lecturers, in addition to Charles White and Thomas Henry, being John Ferriar, Peter Mark Roget, and William Henry, all men whose names are still honoured.

Charles White, who was probably the originator of the Infirmary scheme, was a man of most exceptional parts. A fellow-student and friend of John Hunter, White possessed much of the force of character, enthusiasm for work, and originality of mind of that distinguished man. He may be called one of the founders of the science of anthropometry, and he had visions of the theory of evolution. One of the earliest conservative surgeons, he removed the head of the humerus for caries in 1766, excised the shoulder-joint, and proposed excision of the hip in 1769. He also introduced the use of the dry sponge to arrest hæmorrhage. Famous as an obstetrician, he suspected that puerperal fever was due to absorption of "matter," and that it was infectious. He knew that it was more prevalent and fatal in large cities and crowded hospitals than in places where the air was more open and pure, and he gave definite advice as to treatment with "antiseptics," isolation of the patient, and after-disinfection. His best known medical work was entitled "*Phlegmasia alba dolens puerperarum.*"

The Henrys are better remembered at this date as chemists than as physicians. Thomas Henry, an apothecary, invented calcined magnesia, hence his sobriquet "*Magnesia Henry.*" His son William Henry discovered the law of absorption of gases under different degrees of pressure and temperature.

John Ferriar was a writer and critic of considerable genius, best known for his classical essays on the dramatic works of Massinger and his "*Comments on Sterne.*" To him must be attributed the first published ideas on Boards of Health, from which, in Manchester, resulted the foundation of the House of Recovery or Fever Hospital.

Peter Mark Roget resided in Manchester for three years only, removing then to London, where he became the secretary of the Royal Society, a post which he held for several years. He is best remembered as a mathe-

matician, and for his "Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases," which is still in print and much used.

In 1814 Joseph Jordan taught practical anatomy for the first time in Manchester in a small school in an out-of-the-way street of the town, and his certificates were recognised in 1817 by the Society of Apothecaries.

All this irregular teaching was, however, but a preliminary to the foundation in Manchester of an organised scheme of medical education. This took place in 1824, when Thomas Turner, F.R.C.S., began lecturing in an unpretentious way on anatomy, with John Dalton helping him with a course on pharmaceutical chemistry. The next year the leading physicians and surgeons in the town joined in the teaching, and courses on *materia medica*, surgery, midwifery, botany, chemistry, anatomy, physiology, and pathology were delivered, medical jurisprudence being taught two years later. Clinical work could be seen in the Infirmary, where clinical lectures were instituted in 1833, at the Lunatic Asylum, founded as part of the Infirmary in 1765, at the House of Recovery or Fever Hospital, at the Lying-in Charity founded in 1790, and at the Eye and Lock Hospitals.

A very important feature in this Manchester School of Medicine was that students were able to dissect on their own account. Mr. Turner, speaking of this, said: "The means of dissection which our school affords gives to it a superiority over the schools of London and Edinburgh. We have never wanted the means; they have. My pupils have dissected until they grew tired of it, the London and Edinburgh pupils have grown tired and disgusted for the want of it." This was the first provincial medical school in England, a fact which was recognised in 1836 by King William, who became its patron, and allowed it to be called the *Manchester Royal School of Medicine*; and so great was its success, that ten other provincial schools, founded within the next few years, were designed on the same plan. In 1825 Mr. Turner asked the College of Surgeons of

London to accept for their diplomas his anatomy certificates instead of those of a London school; but it was not until 1828 that, on the report of a Committee of the House of Commons on the teaching of anatomy, the College conceded this. Before this Committee a great compliment was paid to the Manchester School of Medicine by the Secretary of the Apothecaries' Hall, who stated in his evidence that "no young men came before the Court of the Apothecaries' Hall better qualified in every respect than those who had been entirely educated at Manchester, where excellent lectures in every branch of medicine were given by competent teachers." In spite of this influential testimonial, however, the College of Surgeons, although they recognised the teaching of anatomy at Manchester, would not place the Royal Infirmary on the same footing in the matter of clinical teaching as the London, Dublin, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh hospitals, and accept its certificates for surgical instruction, and yet at this time the Manchester Infirmary had a larger number of patients than either St. Bartholomew's or St. Thomas's Hospitals, which were two of the largest London hospitals. The desired recognition for clinical teaching was eventually granted on the report of another Committee of the House of Commons on medical education in 1834, which reflected adversely on the policy of the Council of the College of Surgeons in the matter of these certificates of clinical instruction in the subjects of their examinations.

The success of the Royal School of Medicine brought about the formation of other rival schools in the town, all of which were, however, but short-lived.

The Owens College.—A most important epoch in the history of the school of medicine was its amalgamation, in 1872, with the Owens College, an institution which was founded under the will of a Manchester merchant, John Owens, who died in 1846, leaving for this object the sum of £96,000. The Owens College, which, like the medical



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