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## Letter from Scotland

*Great oaks from little acorns grow.*

This is the first letter from Scotland to THE LINACRE QUARTERLY and I thank you for the honour of inviting me to be your correspondent.

I must crave your indulgence for having deviated somewhat from medical ethics for the history of medicine, but I hope to show something of the influence of Scotland and in particular of my own medical school, the University of Edinburgh, on the development of American medicine. I hope the story will interest you.

Scotland is a small country with a population just over 5 millions. The scenic beauty of the Highlands and Islands may be familiar to you because it attracts large numbers of tourists from the United States each year. The capital, Edinburgh, is a great centre for commerce, education and the arts and you may know of the International Festival of Music, Drama and the Arts which takes place there annually.

The University, one of the largest and most cosmopolitan in the United Kingdom, dates from 1582, but even before that time there was an organised system of medicine in the city. The Royal College of Surgeons was incorporated in 1505 and had the right to "one condemned man a year to make anatomy." The sentence "to be hanged and publicly dissected" was passed until late in the 19th century.

Though there had been Professors of Medicine in the University before, it was not until 1726 that the Faculty of Medicine was founded by Alexander Munro, Primus. Munro had studied at Leyden where he had come greatly under the influence of Boerhaave, the most outstanding medical teacher of

the time. Much of the credit for the foundation must go to Munro's father, an army surgeon, who had also studied at Leyden and resolved to found in his native Edinburgh a school of medicine modeled on that of Boerhaave.

Thus in Edinburgh medicine grew up very much within the framework of the University and remains today. This seems to me a very important thing. One has heard the criticism leveled at this generation that it is "reasonably well schooled but probably the worst educated of the age." The more medical science advances and specialisation increases the more important it becomes for that specialisation to take place against the widest possible background. The universities must look to this to prevent medical education from becoming just a high-class professional apprenticeship.

William Cullen, that great doyen of medical education, held the Chair of Medicine in Edinburgh from 1746 and was the dominant influence in the School during the 18th century. An eminent physician and brilliant teacher, Cullen attracted great numbers of foreign students to the Edinburgh School. By 1750 students were arriving in Edinburgh from the American Colonies in increasing numbers. This was given great encouragement by the lifelong friendship which existed between Cullen and Benjamin Franklin. It was through Franklin that many students were introduced to Cullen. The esteem in which the School was held may be judged from Dr. Samuel Johnson's advice to a young friend, "By all means go to Edinburgh. That Scottish education is like a house built to last a man's lifetime."

The foundation of the first two medical schools in the United States

can be attributed directly to the influence of the Edinburgh School.

The Pennsylvania Hospital was founded in 1751 with Benjamin Franklin as the first president. Medical education dates from 1762, when William Shippen returned from Edinburgh and began to teach anatomy. Shippen was introduced to Cullen in Edinburgh by Benjamin Franklin and he graduated M.D. in 1761. With John Morgan he was a principal founder of the Medical Faculty in the University of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia. Morgan was a native of Philadelphia who graduated M.D. at Edinburgh in 1763. In a letter to Cullen in 1764, Morgan propounds his ideas for the founding of a medical school modeled on Edinburgh at Philadelphia. Morgan later became director-general of the Army Medical Department on the outbreak of the War of Independence.

The foundation of the Pennsylvania Medical School came in 1765. Morgan and Shippen were joined by several other Edinburgh graduates: Adam Kuhn of Pennsylvania graduated M.D. at Edinburgh in 1767 and became the first Professor of Botany and Materia Medica at Philadelphia. Benjamin Rush graduated M.D. at Edinburgh in 1768. He must be regarded as one of the most colourful medical personalities in American history. He became Professor of Chemistry at Philadelphia. For reasons which I have been unable to trace, Rush, as a medical student of 22, had the undoubted honour of being made a Burgess and Guild Brother of the City of Edinburgh. That Rush was a physician of great stature may be judged by references to him as "the Sydenham of America." However, his campaigns against slavery, war, alcohol and the death penalty lead to a decline in his practice. His name is perpetuated in Rush Medical Col-

lege and of course he is remembered as a signatory of the Declaration of Independence.

It was not an American, however, who was the prime-mover in establishing the Pennsylvania Medical Faculty but an Edinburgh man, John Fothergill. Fothergill was a close friend of Benjamin Franklin and of William Penn and it was his influence with Penn which facilitated the establishment of the Pennsylvania School. Fothergill had strong family ties with America and was a physician of some eminence who wrote on a number of subjects. I had always considered him to be one of the first to pioneer artificial respiration with his paper in 1774, "Observations on recovering a man dead in appearance by distending the lungs with air," but the case reported in the May issue of THE LINACRE QUARTERLY from the *Book of Kings* considerably antedates him! Fothergill was keenly interested in politics and worked hard for a reconciliation between the mother country and her American colonies. In 1765 he published his "Considerations relative to the North American Colonies" and in 1774 he met with his friend, Benjamin Franklin, to draw up a reconciliation plan. He was in many ways ahead of his time. Franklin records the meeting in his autobiography: "Dr. Fothergill, with his usual philanthropy, expiated on the miseries of war; that even a bad peace was preferable to the most successful war." On Fothergill's death, Franklin wrote of him: "Our late excellent friend was always propounding something for the good of mankind. If we may estimate the goodness of a man by his disposition to do good and his constant endeavours and success in doing it, I can hardly conceive that a better man ever lived." Surely there can never have been written a finer epitaph for any man. When I came across these

lines I thought how appropriate an epitaph this might be for your late, lamented and dearly loved President, John F. Kennedy.

The second medical school to be founded in the United States was that in Columbia University. Columbia was founded in 1754 as King's College by a Royal Grant from King George II. A medical faculty was established in 1767 with six Professors, five of whom were graduates of the University of Edinburgh:

Samuel Band graduated M.D. at Edinburgh and distinguished himself by winning the coveted Hope Medal. His "Duties of a Physician" is a medical classic and the earliest American publication on medical ethics. He is also distinguished by operating on George Washington in 1789.

John Jones graduated M.D. at Edinburgh and was the first Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at King's College. He performed the first lithotomy in New York and attended Benjamin Franklin in his last illness.

Peter Middleton was born in Scotland and graduated M.D. at Edinburgh. He was Professor of Pathology, Physiology and Materia Medica in that order at King's College. He was the earliest historian of American medicine.

Samuel Lothian Mitchell was another Scot and Edinburgh graduate. He became Professor of Natural History and Chemistry at Columbia College and he should be remembered as the founder of the first American medical journal, *The Medical Repository*.

David Hossack was in his day the best known physician in New York. A graduate of the Universities of Pennsylvania and Edinburgh, he did the first Hunterian ligation for aneurism in America and was a pioneer of

ovariotomy. He became the first Professor of Botany at Columbia College.

No account of the Scottish contribution to early American medicine would be complete without mention of the Royal Medical Society. Within a few years of the foundation of the Faculty of Medicine at Edinburgh (1726) there arose amongst the students and practitioners in the city a desire to establish a fellowship to promote study and research and social intercourse. They established a medical society in 1737 and from humble beginnings it flourished to become a dominant force in medical education in the 18th century and it received a Royal Charter. To this day the Royal Medical Society flourishes in Edinburgh. It is one of the oldest medical societies in the world and is unique among undergraduate bodies in possessing a Royal Charter. The Society has its own Rooms and a famous Hall and a library of 14,000 volumes. The membership throughout the years has been a very famous one. A few names spring to mind: John Fothergill, William Cullen, William Shippen, Charles Darwin, Oliver Goldsmith, William Withering, Thomas Addison, Richard Bright, James Syme, Joseph Lister, James Young Simpson. The Society has the distinction of having the first Papers of its members in manuscript in the library in the form of their Dissertations read to the Society.

An American, Caspar Wistar, from Philadelphia had the honour to be president in 1785. He later became Professor of Anatomy at Pennsylvania (1791) and gave his name to the Wistar Institute and to the shrub, wistaria.

Every member signs the Obligation Book and the first entry by an American was John Moultrie in 1747. He was a native of South Carolina and graduated M.D. in Edinburgh in 1749.

He appears to be the first American to graduate in Medicine abroad.

A Fellow of the Society, John Hoggarth, was responsible for the introduction of vaccination into America. He sent a phial of cowpox lymph to Benjamin Waterhouse who replied: "I consider this a very important thing to my country, where the dread of smallpox is still very great."

Another Fellow, Lord Buchan, was a cousin of George Washington. While Washington refers to him as "cousin" in a letter to Buchan the word must be interpreted as "kinsman." Certainly Buchan was very proud of the relationship and he entertained many Americans at his famous ancestral home at Dryburgh.

The cosmopolitan nature of the Edinburgh School can be judged by an entry in the Society's minutes for 1784 mentioning members from America, Russia, Spain, Brazil, Sweden and France.

Benjamin Rush was an Honourary Member. One of the most distinguished Honourary Members was Benjamin Franklin. This was remembered in 1956 when the United States Congress struck a medal commemorating Franklin's birth and presented one to the Royal Medical Society.

The Scottish influence is apparent not only in the Universities of Pennsylvania and Columbia but in many other schools which owe their origins to these. The torch lit by Hippocrates in Greece passed to Salerno, Montpellier, Padua, Leyden and in the early 18th century to Edinburgh and it was from Edinburgh that it passed to America. Time and space have permitted only a very brief mention of some of the more outstanding personalities; there were many more. I hope this may serve to illustrate the part which Scotland has played in the foundation of American Medicine.

It is a good thing to stop and look back now and again and pay tribute to those who have contributed so much to the spread of medical knowledge. John Fothergill put it so well:

"Let us preserve the memory of the deserving; perhaps it may prompt others likewise to deserve."

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