

# MAISTER PETER REDIVIVUS.

By Dr. JOHN FERGUS.

If Maister Peter Lowe were here,  
Revisiting this earthly sphere,  
What wondrous changes would he see,  
Within his famous Faculty.  
No well-kept wigs would he behold,  
Nor stout Malaccas topped with gold,  
No fine point lace nor trig knee-breeches,  
Nor buckled shoon to deck our leeches.  
The great "Chirurgion to King James"  
Would hardly recognise the names  
We moderns use for our diseases  
(*He'd* talk of "vomit," not "emesis")  
His shapely hands amazed he'd raise  
At modes of treatment of our days,  
Like unknown tongues would be our terms,  
And he might ask, "Sir, what are germs?  
And what is this appendicitis,  
That of your modern days the blight is?  
Methinks it is the Iliac Passion  
That in my day was much the fashion."  
Imagine Peter, as I say,  
Meeting our President to-day;  
How suave his greeting and how fervent,  
"Good-dav to you, Sir; Sir, your servant."  
How courtly, too, his gracious bow.  
"Your Faculty, how goes it now?"

Time does not rust it, Sir, I hope,  
Nor usage circumscribe its scope?  
And tell me, prithee, if to-day  
The good old custom still holds sway,  
That poor folk are attended gratis,  
Or if that now quite out of date is.”

And then most likely he'd inquire  
How moderns treat diseases dire:  
As thus—“ Now, tell me, Sir, I pray,  
Is bleeding still the rule to-day?  
In my time every one was bled  
Till he was cured or he was dead.  
Not bleed at all! Gadzooks, how strange!  
Ah me, Sir, what a dreadful change.  
Podagra now, how do you treat it?  
You say you very seldom meet it,  
But once or twice in twenty years.  
Odds bodkins can I trust my ears?  
Podagra rare? Why, who'd have thought it?  
When we old leeches daily fought it  
With lohoch, julep, quilt or clyster,  
Or bolus, apozeme or blister.

“ Now the King's Evil—doth your King  
Touch daily for the monstrous thing?  
My lord King James—God rest his soul—  
Touched oft and multitudes made whole.  
You say your liege lord never touches  
Grammercie, Sir, but this too much is.  
In scores the loathsome thing must kill 'ee;  
Sir, do I hear you say ' bacilli ' ?  
What *are* bacilli? Are they humours,  
Or vapours, essences or tumours?

Or have they aught of magic function?  
Must certain stars be in conjunction,  
Or doth the moon affect their power,  
Or are they garnered from a flower?  
The term, Sir, is quite new to me:  
'Tis not in my 'Chirurgerie.'

“ The Falling Sickness! *There*, I'm sure  
We're both agreed upon the cure:  
Plaster of orris-root lay on,  
Two drachms of Diaphænicon,  
Open the Hæmorrhoidal Vein;  
Give Guaiacum decoction plain;  
Cups to the occiput apply,  
Which first you well should scarify;  
Insert a seton near the ear:  
Your patient will have naught to fear.  
You 'treat with Bromides'? What are these?  
Some notion new from overseas?  
From Araby or far Cathay?  
A passing fancy of the day.

“ How oft, Sir, do you burn your witches?  
A horrid crew, ill-omened bitches,  
Of Satan's seed a monstrous birth,  
Who are far better off the earth.  
You say you never burn the creatures,  
But search for stigmata their features,  
And 'mid their howlings and their squealings,  
You psycho-analyse their feelings,  
To find an Œdipus complex;  
Such terms my mazéd mind perplex,  
And when as cure you talk of Freud,  
Gad, Sir, I feel some whit annoyed.

“ And pray, Sir, what’s a Spiro-chete,  
And hath it aught to do with gleet?  
Or peradventure ’tis a genus  
Of th’ ills of those who worship Venus?  
A germ, you say, surnamed the white  
Luetic—so I’ve guessed aright;  
Well, Sir, the treatment then is clear:  
Hydrargyrum for full a year,  
Pushed till the gums begin to stink  
Decoctum sarsae oft to drink,  
Argenti nitras oft instil,  
A cure will justify your bill.  
You give salvarsan? My dear Sir,  
You’ll pardon me if I aver  
That I have not the faintest notion  
Whether it be a pill or potion.  
You give it with some hollow pin,  
You introduce beneath the skin,  
Or else inject it in a vein.  
Sir, the procedure’s far from plain,  
And if you will excuse the word,  
In my opinion, quite absurd.

“ Do virgins now—how scant their dress!  
Still suffer from the Green Sickness?  
And do you still with mugwort treat it,  
Though fever-few at times may beat it?  
‘ The Leucocytes you count,’ you say,  
Most learned Sir, pray, what are they?  
You make my ancient senses reel  
With neutro and with basophile.  
I fear me much my day is past,  
I know not what’s a normo-blast,  
Of lymphocytes I never heard,

And polymorph's an unknown word—  
Alack! it is the common fate  
To flourish, then pass out of date—  
'Mid terms so strange my mind meanders,  
We never heard of them in Flanders,  
Where I have served—Sir, do I hear  
You say that of our Fellows dear,  
Many have served there once again?

“ Thank God, I have not lived in vain,  
Thank God that still our noble Art  
In righteous cause can bear its part,  
And that to keep earth's peoples free,  
The Fellows of our Faculty  
Held it a great and glorious thing  
To serve their country and their King.  
And 'mid the fierce turmoil of steel,  
The sick to soothe, the wounded heal.  
Strengthened by grace from heaven above,  
And filled with pity and with love.

“ But, God be thank'd, sweet Peace is here,  
Where may she rest for many a year;  
And on our sea-girt, well-loved isle,  
May Heaven be pleased for aye to smile;  
And may we of our God get grace,  
To live in mirth and die in peace.  
Sir, it hath given great joy to me  
To see my infant Faculty  
Grown to so good and great estate.  
The Fellows I congratulate,  
And beg my parting compliments  
To you and future Presidents.”

And with those words our Founder's shade  
Into thin air again would fade.