

ROYAL FACULTY OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF GLASGOW.

By Dr. OLIPHANT.

THE headquarters of the Royal Faculty are in the hall at 242 St. Vincent Street. In this building there is a reading room, well stocked with medical journals and magazines, home and foreign, open to medical men introduced by a Fellow of Faculty; there is also a large medical library, of which some particulars are given later.

At the present time the Faculty is entitled to give a registrable qualification in conjunction, chiefly, with the Royal Colleges of Physicians and of Surgeons of Edinburgh; it also gives qualifications in public health and in dentistry. The fellowship is granted by election, after examination, to licentiates and to graduates of Universities on certain conditions. This examination is of high standard, and embraces Medicine or Surgery, and an optional subject from one of the specialties; since the Great War the Faculty has admitted after examination in one subject members of the profession who served in the war. A considerable number of younger practitioners have availed themselves of this privilege or reward, and thus fresh blood has been infused, from which the Faculty has acquired new life. It has also on its list a few Honorary Fellows, men now of

world-wide reputation, such as William Hunter, Brown-Séquard, the physiologist; Syme, the surgeon; Allen Thomson, the anatomist; David Livingstone, the explorer and medical missionary; and among those living Sir William Macewen, Regius Professor of Surgery in the University of Glasgow and President of the British Medical Association in this year 1922.

The history of the Faculty has been admirably related in the "Memorials of the Faculty," by Dr. Alexander Duncan, the late librarian, in which all interested in such matters will find a full account of its vicissitudes, with biographical notes on some of its more distinguished members and Fellows. Of the founder, Dr. Peter Lowe, Dr. James Finlayson, late hon. librarian, published a memoir ("Account of the Life and Works of Maister Peter Lowe," Glasgow, 1889); to these works the writer of these notes is indebted.

In its origin the Faculty occupies a unique position among the bodies in the United Kingdom entitled to grant a registrable qualification to practise the medical profession. It was founded by a charter granted in 1599 by King James VI., that is, a few years before he left Scotland on his succession to the English throne. This charter was secured by the exertions of Mr. Peter Lowe, the term "Mr." at that time denoting a Master of Arts. He was admittedly the most distinguished surgeon of his time in this country, and had recently returned after a residence of some thirty years in France, where he had reached the position of "Ordinary Chyrurgeon to the French King and Navarre," *i.e.*,



Maister Peter Lowe

Henri IV. He had seen much service with the French armies in the field in "France, Flanders, and elsewhere, the space of 22 yeeres; thereafter being Chirurgian maior to the Spanish Regiment at Paris, 2 yeeres; next following the King, my Master, in the warres 6 yeeres"; this service with the Spanish Regiment must have been from 1588-90, when the Spaniards helped to hold Paris for the Catholic League against Henri IV. It is not known, but highly probable, that he was at that time a Catholic; as he subsequently married the daughter of a Presbyterian minister in Glasgow, and was condemned to do penance in the church for some pecadillo unrecorded, he was presumably a Protestant on his return to Scotland. He may have 'verted when he entered the service of the *rusé Béarnais*; but that is mere guesswork. Maister Peter Lowe called himself Arellian, and this word has puzzled his biographers; the most reasonable of the explanations is that he was Aurelianus, that is, a graduate of Orleans, where we can picture him studying not only sports and life, like his predecessors of a few generations back, Pantagrue, who neglected books, lest their perusal might injure his eyesight. He also called himself Doctor in the Faculty of Chirurgie in Paris. This was a title claimed by members of the College of Sworn Master Surgeons of Paris, known as "surgeons of the long robe," to distinguish them from the barber-surgeons or "surgeons of the short robe." This college dated from 1216, and was often named the College of St. Côme, from the name of the patron saint near whose church their hall

was situated. Their claim of the title doctor was opposed by the Faculty of Medicine, but had been admitted by the King and confirmed by the Parliament. Lowe's connection with this fraternity is important, as will be shown later, in relation to the founding of the Glasgow Faculty.

In the last decade of the sixteenth century Maister Lowe returned to Britain, and in 1596 published in London his "Spanish Sicknes," a work on syphilis, where also he issued his "Chirurgerie" in the following year.

In 1598 we find him as salaried or pensioned surgeon in Glasgow, which at that date was a small Cathedral and University town of only some 7000 inhabitants, and not so wealthy as ten other towns in Scotland; for details the inquiring reader is referred to Dr. Duncan's "Memorials." Be it noted here, however, that the number of surgical practitioners was half a dozen, with one physician; none of these practised obstetrics, which was in the hands of two midwives, who, oddly enough, were answerable to the kirk session, as appears from the records of the Presbytery, whose special interest in the midwives lay in these being called on to relieve the ministers of their night work; "for they were dischargit to go to any unmarried woman, within, while first they signify the matter to some of the ministeris in the daylight, and if it be the nicht time that they take the aiths of the said woman before they bear the bairne wha is the fayther of it, as they will be answerable to God and the Kirk."

Such was the unsatisfactory condition of medical

practice in Glasgow when Peter Lowe settled here. There was no authority accredited to inquire into the fitness of any practitioner; quacks and pretenders flourished, and again we find the Kirk moving in the interests of reform, for in 1598 the session represented to the Town Council that the University, ministers, and presbytery "take cognition who are within the town that pretend to have skill in medicine and hath not the same; that those that have skill be retained and others rejected." Next year, accordingly, we find the Council minuting, "The Provest, bailleis, and counsale, at desyre of the sessione, ministrie and elders thair of, being informit of mediciners and chyrurgians quha dayle resortis and remainis within this towne, and ar not able to discharge thair dewtey thairintill, in respect thair have not cunying nor skill to do the same, and for evading of inconvenientis that may follow thair-upon, hes deput and assignit thir persones onder-written of the counsale to concur and assist the ministrie, certane of the sessione, and otheris cunying men of that arte, to examinat and tak tryall of all sic persounes as vsit or sall happen to vse the said arte within this towne in tyme cumyng, and with thair advyis and consent to tak the tryall thair of, viz., the thrie bailleis, James Forret, Alexander Baillie, and Thomas Pettigrew, to convein with thir persones of the ministrie, viz., the thrie ministeris, the principall, Mr. Blais Lowery, and Mr. John Blakburne, upon Weddinsdye nixt efter the preiching in the Blakfreir Kirk, and to reporte."

It is to be noted that this activity of Church and civic fathers followed hard on the settlement in

Glasgow of Dr. Peter Lowe, a "cunyng man of that arte," and about this time he made strong representations to the Scottish Court with the result of obtaining the charter accrediting him to set matters right. In a sort of preamble the charter states, "Understanding the grit abuisis quhilk has bene comitted in time bigane and zit daylie continuis, be ignorant unskillit and unlernit personis, quha, under the collour of Chirurgeonis, abuisis the people to their plesure, passing away but [without] tryel or punishment, and thairby destroyis infinite number of our subjectis." Quackery was evidently rampant then, as now, and it may be added, there was then no General Medical Council to try to keep it within bounds inside the profession.

In 1601 Dr. Peter Lowe went to Paris in the suite of the Duke of Lennox, who had been appointed special ambassador for the Scottish King at the Court of France. A minute of the Town Council shows that "at the special requeist and desyre of my Lorde Duikis grace [it] hes licenciat and gevis licence to Maister Peiter Low, chyrurgian, to pas in company with my Lorde Duike, as ambassadour appointit to France, and dispensis with his absence and not remanyng of the said Maister Peiter, and that he may enjoy his pensione of the towne, and that quhill the xi of November nixtocum, but preiudice of his contract in caice of his returnyng or soner at the said tyme as sal happin his lordship to returne."

He was the leading surgeon in the West of Scotland till his death, which is believed to have occurred about 1612. This is the date inscribed on

his tombstone in the south wall of the High Church-yard. The visitor will find it on his right hand, close to the gate giving access to the Cathedral precincts; the epitaph is quaint—

STAY. PASSENGER. AND. VIOW. THIS. STONE
FOR. UNDER. IT. LYIS. SUCH. A. ONE
WHO. CUIRED. MANY. WHILL. HE. LIEVED
SOE. GRACIOUS. HE. NOE. MAN. GRIEVED
YEA. WHEN. HIS. PHISICKS. FORCE. OFT. FAILED
HIS. PLESANT. PURPOSE. THEN. PREVAILED
FOR. OF. HIS. GOD. HE. GOT. THE. GRACE
TO. LIVE. IN. MIRTH. AND. DIE. IN. PEACE
HEVIN. HES. HIS. SOUL. HIS. CORPS. THIS. STONE
SIGH. PASSENGER. AND. SOE. BE GONE

AH ME I GRAVELL AM AND DUST
AND TO THE GRAVE DESHEND I MOST
O PAINTED PEICE OF LIVEING CLAY
MAN BE NOT PROUD OF THY SHORT DAY

The stone is, unfortunately, much weather-worn, so the Faculty erected inside the Cathedral a memorial designed by Pittendreich Macgillivray, the eminent sculptor. It stands on the north wall of the nave, almost opposite the south, or usual entrance door, and was unveiled in 1895.

Lowe was survived for no less than forty-six years by his widow, Helen Weems or Wemyss, daughter of the Rev. David Weems, who was the first Protestant minister of the town. Their grandson and their great-grandson, both writers (solicitors) in Edinburgh were admitted as Fellows of the Faculty as descendants of the founder, but this must not be

considered as entitling them to practice surgery, but rather as the sort of sickness and unemployment insurance obtaining at that time. Indeed, we find the Faculty seriously embarrassed financially from time to time by the claims made on its funds by these payments to dependents, and in 1850, in the thirteenth year of Queen Victoria, an Act was passed by which new Fellows of Faculty were no longer compelled to contribute to the fund raised for widows and children of Fellows.

Of Robert Hamiltoun little is known, but that he was a physician and an active partner in the administration of the Faculty during his life; even his place of graduation is not certainly known, though it is believed to have been Glasgow University.

William Spang had been apothecary in Glasgow since 1574, and became Visitor of the Faculty in 1606. His portrait, along with those of Lowe and Hamilton, is in the Faculty Hall.

The foundation charter, after the preamble already quoted, showing the chaotic state of things in the medical world in Glasgow, confers on "Maister Peter Low, our Chirurgian and Chief Chirurgian to our dearest son the Prince [Henry, the heir apparent who died in 1612], with the assistance of Mr. Robert Hamiltone, Professoure of Medicine [*i.e.*, physician], and their successouris, indwellers of our Citie of Glasgow . . . full power to call . . . before thame, within the said burgh of Glasgow, or any otheris of our said burrowis, all personis professing or using the said airt of Chirurgie." The bounds of their jurisdiction were

the "baronie of Glasgow, Renfrew, Dumbartane, and our sheriffdomes of Cliddisdale, Renfrew, Lanark, Kylie, Carrick, Air, and Cunninghame"; to examine them and to licence them "according to the airt and knowlege that they sal be fund wordie to exercise," to prohibit practice beyond the licence so granted; to amerce a fine on the contumax of fortie pundis [Scots], recoverable by a summary process known as *letters of horning*, under which goods to the amount could be seized or the person incarcerated.

Lowe and Hamilton were designated The Visitors, and were ordained to "visit every hurt, murtherit, poisonit, or onie other persoun tane awa extraordinarily," and to report to the magistrates. As regards medicine, they were to inhibit from the practice thereof all but those who possessed "ane testimonial of ane famous universitie quhair medicine be taught, or at the leave of oure and our dearest spouse chief medicinaire." They had powers also, along with William Spang, an apothecary, to control the sale of drugs, prohibiting the sale of drugs which had not been "sichtit," and of poisons, except by apothecaries charged to take caution of the purchasers, thus forestalling some of the provisions of our recent sale of poisons Acts. Dr. Duncan explains that this inspection of drugs was not to prevent their adulteration, but to ensure that the stocks were ample in quantity and variety, "becaus ther ar sundrie who sells drogs wtin this brugh, and hes not sufficient drogs." In those days the complaint was rather that the drugs were too strong; some of those used by ignorant quacks cost

the patient his life. Indeed, when crude drugs such as digitalis leaves were in use, and standardisation was unknown, it is natural that serious accidents should occur.

In the original charter no place was found for the barbers—a deviation from the general rule of such foundations. At an early meeting of the Faculty, however, a bye-law was passed making provision for a modified admission of barbers “ as a pendicle of chirurgerie,” from the ordinary practice of which they were rigorously prohibited under penalties. In 1656 the surgeons and the barbers obtained a “ seal of cause ” incorporating them as a city guild. Thus a dual incorporation was established—that of the Physicians and Surgeons under the Royal Charter and of the Surgeons and Barbers under the “ seal of cause.” So complicated a connection could not last, and after much bickering between the two bodies the union was severed by mutual consent in 1719.

The charter of 1599 bears evidence in some of its provisions, as has been already mentioned, of having been modelled, in part at least, on the rules of the Fraternité of St. Côme, and partly on those of the Faculty of Medicine of Paris, from which the name of the new incorporation was taken. This charter was confirmed in the reign of Charles I., and ratified in 1672 by James VII., but the vagueness of the wording of it and changed conditions of medical practice arising out of the development of the medical side of the Universities led ultimately to much squabbling and litigation, and the English judges of the House of Lords, in their ignorance of



William Cullen

Scots law and procedure, were inclined to doubt the validity of the original charter, but finally gave their decision in favour of the Faculty in 1840. Since the medical legislation of 1858 many of the original powers have naturally been in abeyance, and, as already stated, the Faculty grants qualifications to practise in the United Kingdom, and has no jurisdiction in Glasgow over those who have obtained their qualifications elsewhere.

The permission to assume the title of Royal Faculty was granted by His Gracious Majesty King Edward in 1909.

The earliest medical teaching in Glasgow was given directly under the auspices of the Faculty. One of the duties of the Visitor, that is, the President of the surgeons, was to give systematic instruction to the apprentices of the surgeons, with regular examinations to test their professional progress during the course of and at the end of their pupilage.

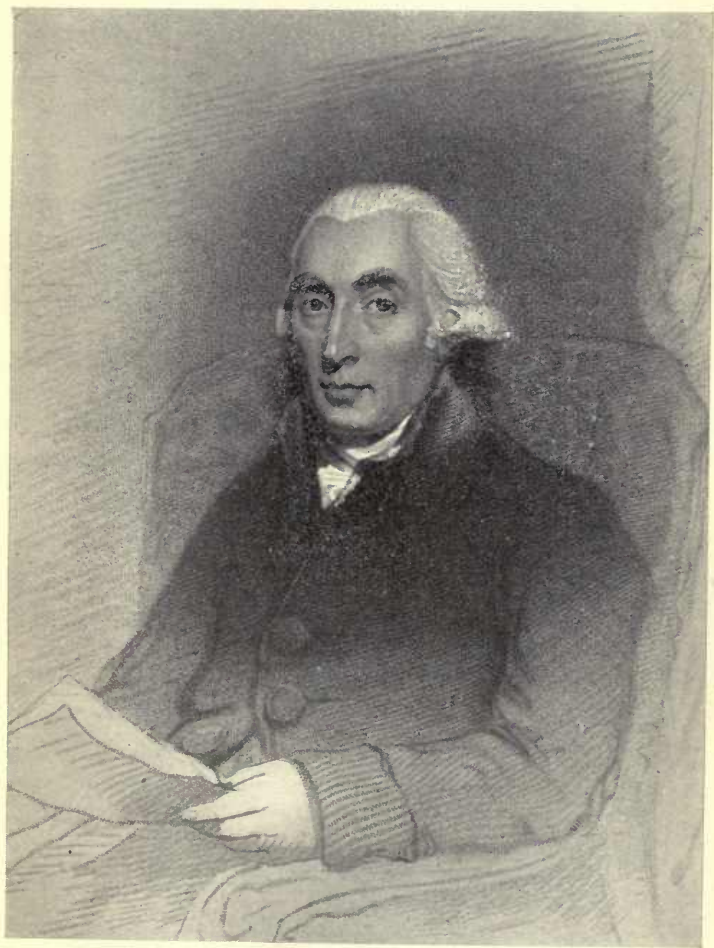
All the men associated with the origin and rise of the Glasgow Medical School were members of the Faculty, and attained to the office of Præses (President of the Physicians) or Visitor. Among the names of distinguished Fellows, mention may be made of William Smellie, a practitioner in Lanark, who went to London and Paris to get the best teaching on midwifery, and, finding none, came back to London and made his name as a teacher; (Smellie was unquestionably the leading obstetrician of his time in Britain on the practical side, as Hunter was on the purely scientific side, these two Fellows of Faculty raised midwifery from

a mere handicraft to the position of a science); William Cullen, who laid the foundation of the Glasgow Medical School, and was an early teacher of William Hunter; Joseph Black, the chemist who expounded the doctrine of latent heat; and many others will be found in the "Memorials" of Dr. Duncan.

Reference has already been made to a few names from among those who have been elected Honorary Fellows. Of these David Livingstone was a Licentiate of the Faculty in 1840, and was elected Fellow in 1857. His career is too well known to require further notice here, but the writer of these notes, who saw him laid to his well-earned rest in Westminster Abbey, may be permitted to pay a humble tribute to the memory of that indomitable man, who tramped through the wilds of Africa with the same pith and dourness with which he had trudged daily from his home in Blantyre to his medical classes in Glasgow. The example of his ideals is worth holding up to the present-day student spoon-fed on Carnegie grants.

The Faculty Hall, after various changes of site necessitated by the growth of the town, is now at 242 St. Vincent Street. Here the Fellows meet monthly to transact their business, and there, too, are the examination rooms for the Licences and Fellowship. The use of the rooms is granted to the chief medical societies, such as the Medico-Chirurgical and its various branches and the Obstetrical Society, while most of the medico-political meetings are held there.

The reading room is open to medical men intro-



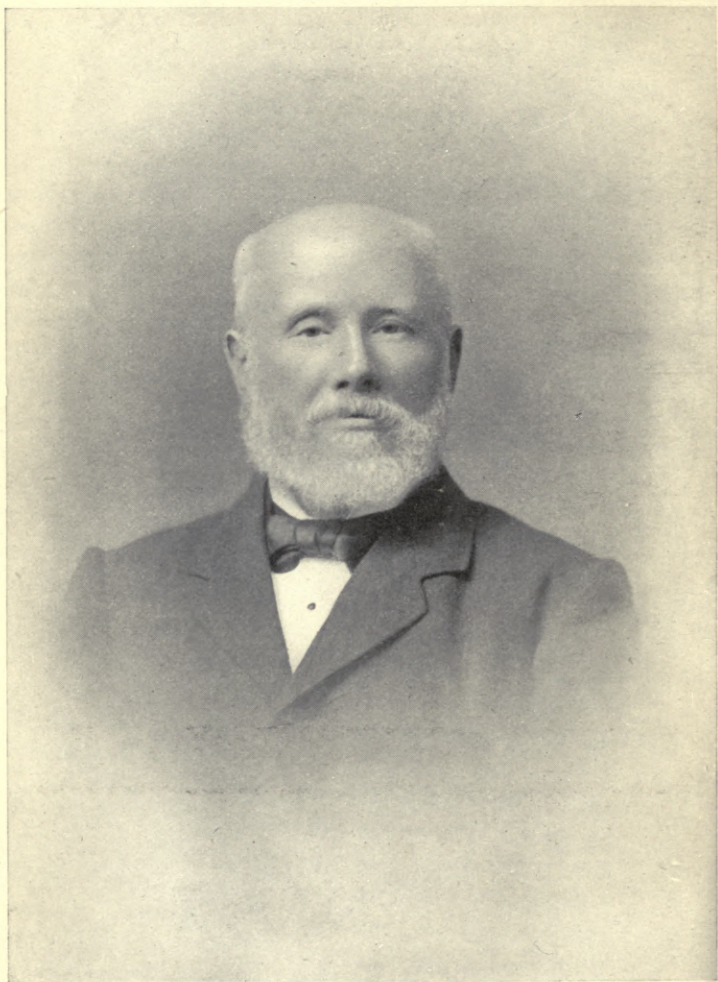
Joseph Black

duced by a Fellow, and the library is open for consultation to all medical men for the encouragement of research. The collection of books was begun at the end of the seventeenth century, as soon as the first Faculty Hall was erected in the Tron-gate, and, from a MS. list of 1698, seems to have contained many works on history and general literature, which at some time unknown have been ruthlessly weeded out, no doubt from want of shelf space. Indeed, at the present time, apart from a few works by or about medical men and a good selection of books relating to the history of Glasgow and neighbouring counties, the library consists almost entirely of works that fall within the province of medicine and its accessory sciences. It now contains some 80,000 volumes, and the Faculty justly prides itself on its excellent catalogues. The books are selected by a committee representative of the various branches of the profession, with the aim of maintaining a good all-round medical library. Successive honorary librarians for a considerable time have fostered the study of the history of medicine; and by gifts of special collections such as the Mackenzie on Ophthalmology and the Reid on Midwifery, certain departments are specially rich.

No attempt has been made to collect *incunabula* or other rarities, but there are a few fifteenth and early sixteenth-century volumes. Of these mention may be made of the "Liber Serapionis aggregatus in Medicina simplicibus" (Venice, 1479); and "Opusculus cui nomen Clavus Sanitationis" of Simon Januensis (Venice, 1488); the "Liber de

Proprietatibus rerum ” of Bartholomæus Anglicus [de Glanvilla], 1491. Another work from the Venetian press, the “ Liber Medicinæ ” of Gordonius, 1496, and the first edition of the “ De humani corporis fabrica ” of Vesalius, Bâle, 1543, are represented. The library contains all the editions, except the first, of Peter Lowe’s “ Chirurgie,” and his “ Spanish Sicknes,” and a number of sixteenth-century works. Among more recent rarities is Wiseman’s “ Treatise of Wounds,” 1672, of which only three other copies are known to exist. Sir Thomas Browne’s “ Pseudodoxia Epidemica,” in the first edition of 1646, is a recent addition by gift. There are also some curious manuscripts, chiefly of local interest, but among those of general interest are notes of clinical lectures by John Hunter and Gregory; an account of John Hunter’s establishment at Earl’s Court and kindred matters by William Clift; a treatise by Burns on the eye, with coloured drawings; and Hopkirk’s “ Flora Glottiana,” with drawings. In the reading room is a bookcase presented by the family of the late Sir William T. Gairdner, for whom it was specially designed—Old G., as he was affectionately known by his students and friends.

There is no museum, properly speaking, for the pathological collection was handed over to the Royal Infirmary in 1832, but the hall contains a few curious and treasured relics, such as the gauntlet gloves of Peter Lowe, the founder, and instruments used on the “ Victory ” at the time of Nelson’s fatal wound, and those used by Lister in Glasgow. In the hall, too, are some portraits, some of artistic and



Alex. Duncan

some of historic value, such as those of the founders
Lowe, Hamilton, and Spang; of Cullen, Living-
stone, and Mackenzie, with those of most of the
recent presidents; and of Alexander Duncan, the
learned historian of the Faculty, who was for many
years its erudite and zealous librarian.