

St. Bartholomew's
Hospital



Journal.

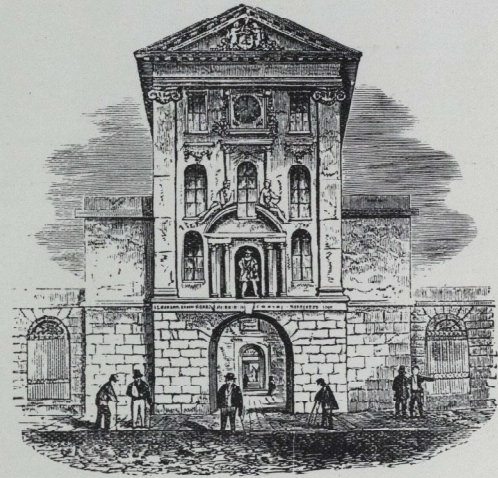
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INDEX TO VOL. IV.

	PAGE		PAGE
A plague-wallah, by Dr. H. J. Walton	135	Correspondence. Sister Magdalen, 15, 32, 48, 64; Beroglyceride fomentations, 15; The Second XV, 15; The Abernethian Society, 16, 31; Volunteer Medical Staff Corps, 16; Nursing news in the JOURNAL, 31; Nomenclature of the Wards, 48; The sexual sense and the X rays, 48; Infantile diarrhoea, 80; Wounds and bruises in the insane, 112; Erratum in Pathological Jottings, 144; Treatment of the puerperal uterus, 176; The late F. W. Ellison, an appeal	102
Abernethian Society, inaugural address to, by H. Marsh	1	Cricket, 1896	10
— meetings of	1, 44, 60, 78, 93, 155	— fixtures for 1897	92, 110
Aconite, case of poisoning by	104	— matches	141, 151
Acute inflammation, by Dr. A. A. Kanthack	100	Currie, J., two patients trephined for head injuries at the Beckett Hospital, Barnsley	40
— poisoning, cases of, by Dr. Rawlings	102	Diabetes mellitus with coma, case of	172
Albuminuric ulceration of the bowel, by Dr. Dickinson	44	Diffuse suppurative meningitis, case of, by G. S. Haynes	148
Amalgamated Clubs, alterations in subscription	92	Directory of old students of St. Bart's Hospital, notice of	123
— annual dinner	156	Distribution of prizes	159
— meeting	10	Doran, A., details of ovariectomy and after-treatment	52, 72
— balance-sheet	42	Dysentery in tropical countries, forms and treatment of	134
— new members	28, 59, 109, 140, 151, 191	Eccles, W. M., on ingrowing toe-nail	118
— notices	10, 28, 42, 59, 77, 92, 109, 123, 140, 151, 175, 191	Editorial: Duty of men towards their Hospital	65
Amyloid changes, by Dr. A. A. Kanthack	68	Ellison, J., obituary notice of	80
Andrew, Dr., obituary notice of	127	Enteric fever, lecture by Dr. N. Moore	145
Andrew, P. O., notes of two septic puerperal cases	174	Entrance Scholarships, award of	14
Andrews, Dr. F. W., vaccination and its results	105	Entry of students, 1896	28
Anniversary dinner	175	Erysipelas, note on, by G. Lowe	45
Annual view dinner	125	Eucaine as a local anaesthetic when used hypodermically, by F. C. Wallis	166
Appointments	13, 31, 46, 63, 79, 95, 110, 126, 144, 160, 176	Evans, E. L., account of the new Martha theatre	148
Athletic Club	123, 140, 156	Examinations, Pass lists	14, 31, 46, 63, 79, 95, 111, 127, 144, 176, 192
Atropine, case of poisoning by	102	Falkenstein im Taunus (health resort for consumption), visit to, by H. Rundle	33
Award of entrance scholarships	14	Fatty degeneration, by Dr. A. A. Kanthack	49
Baker, W. M., obituary notice of	6	Favell, W. F., obituary notice of	40
Baluch-Afghan Boundary Commission, by Surgeon-Captain Maynard	34	Food in infantile diarrhoea, therapeutic value of, by Dr. Cautley	55
Barber, H. R. C., obituary notice of	111	Football Club, Association	11, 29, 43, 60, 77, 92
Bees and medicine, by J. Gutch	71	— first match of	143
Beri-beri, forms and treatment of	168	— Rugby, fixtures, 10; matches	42, 77, 123
Brown, W. L., on plague in England	36	"For diagnosis"	63
Browne, Dr. E. G., chapter in the history of cannabis indica	81	Forman, G. H., obituary notice of	151
Brunskill, W., obituary notice of	63	Gee, Dr. S., case of acute anterior poliomyelitis in an adult	17
Butlin, H. T., operative treatment of fracture of patella	161	— clinical lecture on headache	129
Cambridge Graduates Club of St. Bart's Hospital	13	— on weak hearts	177
Cannabis indica, a chapter from the history of, by Dr. E. Browne	81	— lectures, list of, for summer session	111
Carbolic acid, case of poisoning by	103	— notes from general practice, by H. Wilbe	58
Cautley, Dr., therapeutic value of food in infantile diarrhoea	55	Cocaine, case of poisoning by	102
Champneys, Dr., case of ovarian tumour with amenorrhoea simulating pregnancy	74	Concerning the ship's surgeon and some tropical diseases, by Dr. W. H. Maidlow	113, 131, 168, 185
Chest, accurate diagnosis of diseases of, by Dr. S. H. Habershon	110	Congenital abnormality of ureter with absence of kidney, by C. H. Whiteford	79
Chronic inflammation, by Dr. A. A. Kanthack	20	Contemporary Club, eighth decennial dinner of	157
Clarke, F. A. H., on nomenclature of some of the wards (with illustrations)	24	Cooper, Sir A., copy of letter by	94
Clinical lecture on acute anterior poliomyelitis in an adult, by Dr. Gee	17		
— on headache, by Dr. Gee	129		
— on operative treatment of fracture of the patella, by H. T. Butlin	161		
— on weak hearts, by Dr. Gee	177		
— lectures, list of, for summer session	111		
— notes from general practice, by H. Wilbe	58		
Cocaine, case of poisoning by	102		
Concerning the ship's surgeon and some tropical diseases, by Dr. W. H. Maidlow	113, 131, 168, 185		
Congenital abnormality of ureter with absence of kidney, by C. H. Whiteford	79		
Contemporary Club, eighth decennial dinner of	157		
Cooper, Sir A., copy of letter by	94		
		Headache, clinical lecture, by Dr. S. Gee	129
		Head resort for consumption (Falkenstein im Taunus), by H. Rundle	33
		Hensley, Dr., case of mediastinal sarcoma	147
		Hepatic disorders in the tropics, causes and treatment of	168

	PAGE		PAGE
Herringham, Dr. W. P., case of pernicious anæmia	139	Potassium bichromate, case of poisoning by	104
— of megrim cured by abstinence from meat (Halg's megrim)	99	Power, D'Arcy, contributions towards a history of the surgical teaching at St. Bart.'s Hospital during the nineteenth century	163, 183
Hospital: first Association football match (1879)	143	Prizes, distribution of	58
Hugo, Surgeon-Lieut. J. H., services to a wounded officer at Malakand	191	— practical anatomy, 1897	159
Humphry, Sir G. M., letter from Mr. Crosse concerning, September 15th, 1839	61	Puerperal uterus, treatment of, by Dr. J. Morrison	95
— some personal reminiscences of	7	Rahere Lodge, meetings of	13, 39, 45, 61, 79, 126, 159
Infantile diarrhoea, therapeutic value of food in, by Dr. E. Cautley	55	Rawlings, Dr., cases of acute poisoning	102
Ingrowing toe-nail, by W. M. Eccles	118	Restoration of the apparently drowned, by W. Mawer	14
Jacksonian Prize, award of, to Mr. R. C. Bailey	109	Retroversion of gravid uterus without impaction, notes of case of, by Dr. Griffith	14
Junior Staff, appointments to	13, 110	Reviews: Section Cutting and Staining, by W. S. Colman, 32; Bacteriology and Infectious Diseases, by Crookshank, 46; Manual of Infectious Diseases, by Goodall and Washbourne, 47; Deformities, by A. H. Tubby, 63; Handbook of Surface Anatomy and Landmarks, by Windle and Manners-Smith, 64; Students' Medical Dictionary, by G. M. Gould, 96; Students' Note-book, I, Physiological Chemistry, by A. J. Hall, 111; Natural and Artificial Methods of feeding Infants and Young Children, by E. Cautley, 128; Dental Surgery, by A. W. Barrett, 144.	
Kanhack, Dr. A. A., appointed Deputy Professor of Pathology at Cambridge	41	Round the fountain	62
— on acute inflammation	100	Rundle, H., visit to Falkenstein im Tauus	33
— on amyloid changes	68	St. Bart.'s Hospital Amateur Dramatic Club	45, 60
— on chronic inflammation	20	— Cambridge Graduates Club	13, 45
— on fatty degeneration	49	— Cricket Club	10, 92, 110, 141, 151
Keown, D. B., on temperature and sea-sickness	191	— Hockey Club	12, 77, 92
Lawn Tennis Club, matches for 1897	124	— Photographic Society	62
Leprosy, sketch of	171	— Shooting Club	11, 124
Lister, Sir J., elevation of, to peerage	59	— Smoking Concert Club, 12; ballad	126
London M.B. Examination, successes at	41	— Swimming Club	124, 143, 155, 175
— Teaching University for	66	— View day and dinner	124, 125
Lowe, G., note on erysipelas	45	Sea-sickness, treatment of, by Dr. Maidlow	110
Maidlow, Dr. W. H., the ship's surgeon and some tropical diseases	113, 131, 168, 185	Septic puerperal cases, by P. O. Andrew	174
Malta fever, notice of	171	Shaw, Dr. Claye, wounds and bruises in the insane	87
Marsh, H., inaugural address to Abernethian Society	1	Smith, Mr. Thomas, baronetcy conferred upon	151
Masonic charity	138	— Summer concert	158
Mawer, W., palsy, a word	75	— Sunstroke, forms and treatment of	169
— restoration of the apparently drowned	14	— Superstitions of the West country	9
Maynard, Surgeon-Captain, the Baluch-Afghan Boundary Commission	34	Surgical notes	173
Mediastinal sarcoma, case of, by Dr. Hensley	147	— teaching at St. Bart.'s Hospital during the nineteenth century, contributions towards a history of, by D'Arcy Power	163, 183
Megrim (Halg's) cured by abstinence from meat, by Dr. W. P. Herringham	99	Teaching University for London	66
Moore, Dr. N., lecture on enteric fever	145	Temperature and sea-sickness, notes by D. B. Keown	191
Morrison, Dr. J., treatment of the puerperal uterus	136	Thorne Thorne, Dr., K.C.B. conferred upon	175
My first appointment	86	Tropical diseases, by Dr. Maidlow	131, 168, 185
New Martha theatre (with illustrations), by E. L. Evans	148	Turner, E. P., obituary notice of	16
— productions: Soloids of compressed eucaine hydrochloride, 112; Bovril stannoids, 147; Formaldehyde gas as a steriliser and deodorant, 176.		Ulcerative colitis, by L. B. Burnett	44
Nomenclature of some of the wards (with illustrations), by F. A. H. Clarke	24	United Hospitals Athletic Club	93
Obituary notices: Baker, W. M., 6; Turner, E. P., 16; Pawlett, E. L., 46; Brunskill, W., 63; Ellison, J., 80; Pemberton, O., 96; Barber, H. R. C., 111; Andrew, J., 127; Forman, G. H., 151.		— Cricket Club	143
Old students' dinner	12	— Hare and Hounds	93
Ovarian tumour, with amenorrhœa, simulating pregnancy, by Dr. Champrneys	74	— Swimming Club	150
Ovariectomy, details of, and after-treatment, by A. Doran	52, 72	Vaccination and its results, by Dr. F. W. Andrewes	105
Palsy, a word, by W. Mawer	75	View day and dinner	124, 125
Patella, operative treatment of fracture of, by H. T. Butlin	161	Volunteer Medical Staff Corps Smoking Concert	105
Pathological department of the JOURNAL, arrangements of	15	Wallis, F. C., eucaine as a local anæsthetic when used hypodermically	166
— jottings, by Dr. A. A. Kanhack	20, 49, 68, 100	Walsham, Mr., presentation to, by staff of Metropolitan Hospital	10
Pawlett, E. L., obituary notice of	46	Watson, Dr. H. J., "A plague-wallah"	135
Pemberton, O., obituary notice of	96	Weak hearts, clinical lecture on, by Dr. Gee	177
Pernicious anæmia, case of, by Dr. Herringham	139	West country, some superstitions of the	9
Personal reminiscences of Sir G. M. Humphry	7	West, Dr., some chapters on pneumothorax	97, 179
Plague in England, by W. L. Brown	36	Wilbe, H., clinical notes from general practice	58
— in Western India, by Dr. Maidlow	185	Wounds and bruises in the insane, by Dr. Claye Shaw	87
Pneumothorax, some chapters on, by Dr. West	97, 179		
Poliomyelitis, acute anterior, in an adult, by Dr. S. Gee	17		

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NOTICE.

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St. Bartholomew's Hospital Journal,

OCTOBER 14th, 1896.

"Æquam memento rebus in arduis
Servare mentem."—Horace, Book ii, Ode iii.

Inaugural Address to the Abernethian Society,

October 8th, 1896.

BY HOWARD MARSH, F.R.C.S.

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN,—No task could be more entirely congenial to my feelings than that which, on the invitation of your Committee, I have now to discharge.

When I was asked to give the address at the opening of the present session of the Abernethian Society, my mind at once grew busy with the subject, and the more I reflected the more clear was my conviction that the Abernethian Society has been for upwards of a hundred years, and is now more distinctly than ever, one of the most valuable

accessories of the Hospital and School. But this view was only the confirmation of a conclusion which I had formed some thirty-five years ago, when I was myself a student, and, a little later, house surgeon.

I well remember how regularly I then attended the meetings of the Society. I remember also that the Society occupied a very high position in the estimation of us all. For not only had Lawrence, Paget, Baly, Kirkes, Rolleston, Savory, and others contributed many valuable and interesting papers, but it was here that a highly important event in pathology had taken place. In November, 1835, Paget, who had become a student of the Hospital only a few weeks before, announced his discovery of the *Trichina spiralis*; while Kirkes, in 1850 or 1851, as I have always understood, brought forward his observations on the effects of embolism of the systemic and pulmonary arteries. His original paper on the subject is published in the *Transactions of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society for 1852*. Such achievements as these not only conferred lasting honour on the Society; but they created a standard of work which, although it is not likely to be often reached, must always remain as an abiding stimulus and incentive to all those to whom, each in their turn, is entrusted the responsibility of safeguarding the scientific reputation of the Abernethian Society.

I am sure everyone who has ever tried the experiment must have found how useful a thing it is to take part in the active work of the Society by writing a paper or joining in the discussions. A paper that is worth anything requires a good deal of careful and solid work. It is necessary in the first place to get at the essential facts of the subject in hand, a proceeding which involves much patient labour, and the exercise of the critical faculty. Sir James Paget used to say that you should not make an assertion unless you feel that you can take your oath to it. You must then read and think about what others have written, and you must next arrange your facts in their proper relative order. Then you must endeavour to draw sound conclusions from them, and, lastly, present the result with clearness and in the best literary form of which you are capable.