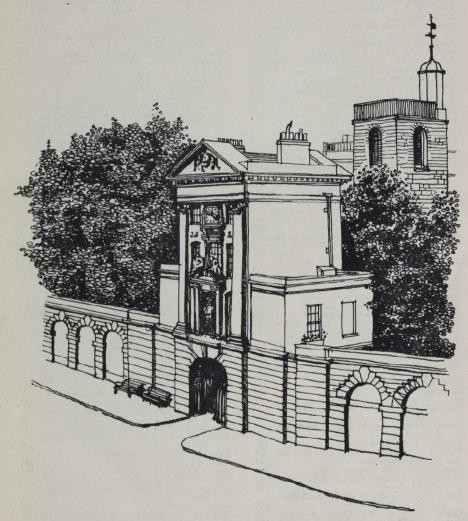


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Jan. 1953—June 1953 ... GRIFFITH EDWARDS
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EDITORIAL

THERE is printed in this number of the Journal an account of the recent discussion on Medical Education that was arranged by the Abernethian Society. It was the most stimulating evening in that society's recent history, and its success was greatly assisted by the presence of several members of the teaching staff, including the Professor of Surgery, the Professor of Medicine, and the Dean. They all showed great tact and courtesy in not daunting the expression of undergraduate opinions. It is astonishing how many sensible things were said during the course of that one evening.

And now what will happen? Who is going to do anything about it all? Does anything ever change in this Medical College? Some things certainly have changed. Women have been allowed in, and there is a hostel. When plotting revolution, we should remember that there has already been a fair-sized rising. We talk about the need for less didactic teaching, for a broader education, for a better college spirit. Things change, but at what rate do they change? The answer is not in metaphysical speculation, but in the library.

For, in the early numbers of this Journal, there are to be found not only formal accounts of formal lectures, learned articles on learned subjects, frivolity, examination lists, bawdy poems and obituaries, but also an undercurrent of editorials, unsigned paragraphs, and anonymous letters. It is these that seem to give a picture of what the staff and students of those times were thinking. Here you find the sort of talk that you would find today at coffee time or sitting beside the fountain, the kind of thing that is said after dinner in the hostel.

The third volume of the Journal covers the year October, 1895, to September, 1896. At the summer prize-giving Sir James Paget

spoke of "the vast improvements which during the past few years had been brought about in the School and Hospital." The Warden, at the same function, told his audience that "the position of the Medical School as the leading Metropolitan School of Medi-cine is still maintained." That is what the staff in those days were saving. The things the students were saying about the staff is suggested by a satire in which the members of the football club go in deputation to a high official of St. Barnabas' Hospital, asking if they may have a real ball instead of a bundle of rags. The high official replies: "I certainly think your request is most reasonable and fair . . . but we old Torics move very slowly, so you must excuse me if I say that this season you must go on as you are." There was a fairly modern feeling that gods have feet of clay, as this poem shows :-

"You practice self-possession
And you mustn't turn a hair
When your cases all go badly
But just publish them as 'rare'."

The satire on the high official was prompted by opposition that had been expressed against women members joining the Dramatic Society. There were, of course, no women students, but someone suggested that the female parts in the plays might be played by friends, if properly chaperoned. In a letter signed Dowager Duchess, students were advised to "keep closely to the old modest and unpretentious lines of the Christmas Entertainment with students in the ladies' parts, and should a dramatic performance be given with ladies, let it be entirely disconnected from the hospital, and entirely outside its precincts."

The rugger club was not all that it should have been. Someone signing himself Rugger, wrote to say: "It is now, I think,