

James Moore (1819–93)

President of the Belfast Clinical and Pathological Society

1857–58

President of the Ulster Medical Society

1865–66

Presidential Opening Address

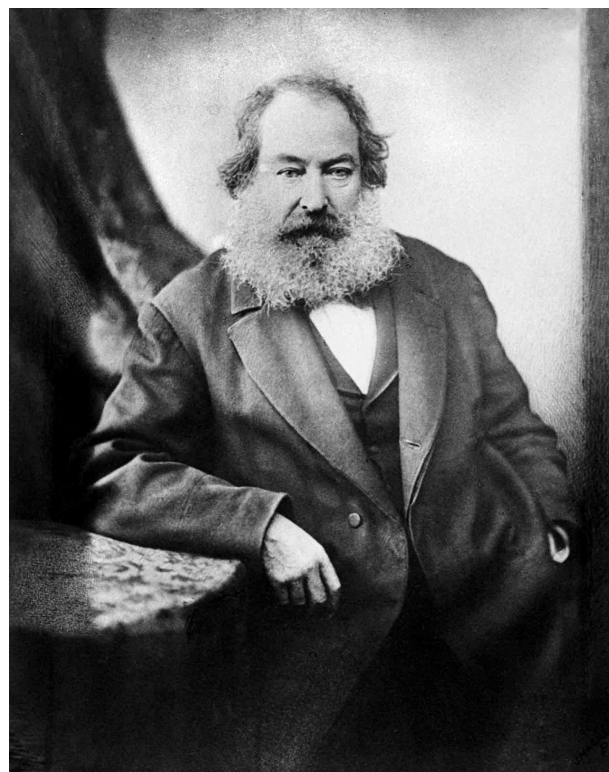
Belfast Clinical and Pathological Society

31st October 1857

GENTLEMEN, – On this day, opening the fifth session of our society, I have the pleasing duty of returning the members my thanks for the honour they have conferred upon me in electing me as their president for the ensuing session.

Since we last met, death has been busy among our ranks. Three of our members have been removed from us – Doctor Horatia Stewart, Doctor Robert Gordon, of Castledawson, and Doctor Magowan, of Carrickfergus. Doctor Horatio Stewart, the worthy son of a worthy father, was known to you all, as Professor of Materia Medica in the Queen's College, and as a Surgeon connected with our Hospital; and may be best recommended to you by your recollection of the cases dilated on by him before your society. In personal character he was mild, open-hearted, generous, and honest – what occasion to say more; yet of his professional skill and abilities, had his life been prolonged, much more must needs have been said. Also of us was Doctor Robert H. Gordon. His nature was to inspire affection, his disposition to retain it; human kindness, a simplicity of heart, were the salient points of his character; you were attracted to him by the heart; the intellect, in all its varied and delightful power, was in him subordinated, uniformly, to the law of kindness. We have also to regret Doctor John Magowan, who was held in high esteem by all the members of our profession who knew him. He, also, was kind, affectionate, open-hearted, generous; and benevolent humanity marked every action of his well-spent life.

To proceed with the more immediate business of the day, I need hardly recapitulate the advantages of a society like the present, especially in the all important matter of verifying the results of diagnosis in the often obscure and apparently contradictory indications of disease. Nor is it less important, by manifestations of diseased structure, to satisfy the mind of the practitioner in cases wherein the diagnosis and prognosis agree with the conjectural result. The mutual benefit to be derived from the free and candid interchange of professional opinion, and the new and unexpected lights thereby thrown upon the several cases brought under your notice, deserve



also to be mentioned as illustrations of the value and importance of societies such as that which I now have the honour to address. Nor must it be altogether forgotten that, in addition to the special objects of our assembling, there is afforded by our regular meetings an opportunity of social communion and personal intercourse, naturally gratifying to the members of a learned and liberal profession.

That the benefits which might have been expected from such a society have been appreciated may be understood by referring to our list in the fifth year of its existence, embracing, as it does, the greater portion of the leading members of our profession throughout Ulster. Nor is it easy to estimate the effect on the progress of the healing art that may reasonably be expected to accrue, for the benefit of the world, during a long series of years devoted in the future to the objects of this society, with the earnestness and intelligence that have hitherto distinguished its members.

The great value of our society consists in its exhibitions, in connexion with specific cases, of the whole, or portions of the parts affected, so that any one present is in a position to see, as well as to judge

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for himself. Our meetings, therefore, are greatly in the nature of demonstrations; our preconceived speculations are compared or contrasted with morbid tissues; we are invited, by the constitution of our society, to enforce what we are able to say, by what we are able to show. Our theories of disease are put in comparison with the workings of disease itself; and from the frequent contemplation of cause and result, we are led, by analogy, to the confident expectation of future remedies in more favourable cases.

In many cases, however, we are unable to preserve for exhibition the morbid tissues; putrefaction, decolorization, render them no longer fit to lay before you; in such instances we have recourse to the assistance of Art.

Art, considered with regard to anatomical and pathological illustration, is either plastic or graphic. Of the former, casts in plaster of Paris, and models in wax, are the principal. The former is sufficient for the purpose of exhibiting mere outlines of form or dimension, as in tumours; many forms of extraordinary excrescences, as I may call them, are thus perpetrated for our information by casts in plaster. But the model in wax, from the pliability of the material, and its capacity for readily taking colour, is of infinitely more value in the demonstration of morbid structure, as it is also in strictly anatomical delineation. The parts exhibited in relief thus appear as in nature, of the dimensions, and with the colouring of nature, or, of diseased alteration, conveying an idea more vivid than can be reasonably expected from any merely graphic portraiture of the parts affected.

To illustrate this, I need only refer you, for example, to a model in wax of the parts involved in the operation for lithotomy, as compared with an engraving on copper, or lithographs of the same. It is, indeed, evident, that no skill on the part of the artist, in the management of light and shade, could produce so clear and satisfactory a delineation, in the drawing as in the model. Other examples, where great inequalities of surface occur in the human subject, both in health and disease, will readily suggest themselves to you, so that it is unnecessary to dwell more particularly upon them.

The graphic art of engraving, applied to anatomical purposes, dates from a very early period, and its progress has kept pace with the progressive advance of the science, whose illustrator and interpreter it is. In its earlier stage, rude and clumsily-executed wood-cuts can scarcely be said to have illustrated the letterpress descriptions of our older anatomical writers. As an example of

illustrations of this rude and imperfect class, I may refer you to the works of the celebrated Surgeon Ambrose Paré, printed a little more than two centuries since. The wood-cuts illustrating this writer are small, rude, and ineffective. A curiously illustrated work, the "Armamentarium Chirurgicum," of Scultetus, 1633, is enriched with wood-cuts of all the instruments and appliances then known to surgery. These, although they will bear no comparison with the best style of illustrative wood-cutting of our day, are curious and useful, especially as exhibiting to our view instruments supposed to have been the invention of celebrated surgeons of a very late date. I only mention this as one of many cases in which in all departments of science and of mechanical skill, wherein we find that many of our inventions and discoveries merely reproduce the ideas of our ancestors.

We shall here observe that while the art of wood-cutting as applied in illustration of surgical and pathological science has kept pace with the advance of their subjects, we find the higher branch of art, that of line engraving, or engraving upon copper with the tool, has not advanced by any means in a like proportion. In proof of this somewhat bold assertion I shall merely take the liberty of referring you to the plates illustrative of the collected edition of the works of Haller, published exactly one century since. These splendid line engravings require nothing but greater size to render them among the first of their class; clearness of outline, with careful discrimination of structure, a fulness and conscientiousness of delineation of nerve, muscle, bone, artery, and ligament painfully indicated, line by line, yet without harshness, coldness, or mere etching; in short, all the merits that an anatomical illustration should have, with just so much artistic character in the plate as can be given, without confusing the subject, from the high, but, by no means, undeserved honour which I think it proper to pay to this honest and careful work of one of our earliest and greatest anatomists.

These remarks, which are not made with a view of deprecating other and later illustrated anatomical works, may be excused for this reason – that, while they give honour where honour is due, they may faintly indicate to the members of the society, the ideas that arise in my own mind, as to the nature of the merits of works so important to the student of anatomy and pathology. Of the requirements of such illustration, fidelity to nature is, of necessity, the very first; and, doubtless, all that the engraver's art can do, may be best accomplished in line by a superior artist; the mechanical operation of

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the engraving tool is a following out, fibre by fibre, as it were, of the structure intended to be portrayed.

Next to the plates of Haller, in order of time, and by no means inferior to them in merit, are those of the celebrated Scarpa (1794) distinguished also by faithful delineation and force in the engravings.

I might enumerate a vast number of anatomical works, in which the contrast to the plates of Haller and Scarpa is painfully evident, arising from carelessness in the drawing, or confusion, feebleness, or haste in the engraving; but this unpleasing task can best be performed by those whose inclinations and opportunities lead them to large libraries. I may observe that, by far the greater number of failures in illustrating anatomical descriptions, with effect, arises from the sketchy and feeble character of the plates, and the same objection applies to surgical illustrations in some cases, wherein, from a certain indistinctness and confusion, added to the very small size of the illustrations, a puzzling effect is produced; and the letterpress description, instead of being illustrated thereby, is apt to be rendered even less intelligible.

On the other hand, we must not forget the great expense incurred in illustrated works, especially those illustrated by line engravings, which must ever tend to limit the employment of this high branch of art, in delineations of anatomical and pathological subjects.

Before we quit the consideration of engraving in line, I think it necessary to direct your attention to the great work of Dr. William Hunter on the gravid uterus. Two of the plates – namely, plates 4 and 6, were engraved for this noble work by Sir Robert Strange, the pride of the English school of line engravers, and the unsurpassed ornament of his art. The connoisseur in art will be struck with admiration in contemplating these magnificent plates, while the anatomist and obstetrician will be delighted and instructed. It is not surprising, indeed, that the author of this work should have declared in the preface that his artist co-labourer had, by these plates, “conferred immortality upon the subject.” How great must be the skill displayed by the engraver, you can imagine, if, upon inspection and careful consideration, you should come to the conclusion, as I did, that no colouring, however artistic, could give more reality, force, and natural character to the subject than the simple lines of the graver. I refer more especially to plate 6, which yields to none of the much coveted and universally admired works of this great master; and with this, the finest anatomical delineation in line engraving known to this, or, perhaps any other

country, I quit the highest branch of the engraver’s art.

Before doing so, however, I may be allowed briefly to refer to the works of an eminent surgeon, whose assistant at Edinburgh I was – Sir Charles Bell. His anatomy of expression, in connexion with the fine arts – illustrated by his own hand, exhibits a high degree of skill, considered in a merely artistic point of view; while his operative surgery and work on the nerves, show the same artistic skill, dexterously applied to the more immediate service of his profession. Many of my hearers must recollect the large and admirable drawings – remarkable for the delicacy of colour and force of effect – with which he was accustomed to illustrate his surgical lectures.

The lithographic art, from its softness, easiness of execution, susceptibility of exact colouring after nature, and last, though not least, its comparative economy of cost, is largely employed, of late years, in the illustration of anatomical and pathological subject. To it pathology especially is much indebted. By it one morbid preparation is multiplied and diffused, as it were, among many, so that the fleeting and changeable colours and external structure of rare disease can be preserved for recognition at distant periods, and the experience of one pathologist diffused among many more.

The plates of Cruvellier may be referred to as good examples of this important department of art; and we may here observe, that, in lithography, the French may claim the merit of combining, in an eminent degree, nicety and clearness of delineation, with natural effects of colour. The defect of lithography, when not carefully guarded against, is a softness, having a tendency to degenerate into obscurity. This is more observable in details and small objects, which may be better expressed, in many cases, by a clear and precisely executed wood-cut.

In justice to our own country, however, while we admit the merit of the French, we must not fail to recognise the excellence of a work designed, drawn, engraved, and edited by Dr. Quain and Dr. Joseph Maclise. The drawings, equally correct and spirited, by the latter (whose name is associated with the highest branch of art), show the great advantage of delineations from the hand of a surgeon and anatomist, who is also an artist. There is a spirit and character imparted to drawings by a hand equally skilled in the use of the scalpel and in pencil which it is impossible for the best artist, who merely mechanically follows out the details of the subject before him, to attain. We may, therefore, point, without vanity, to the anatomy of Drs. Quain and

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Maclise as a work of which any nation may be justly proud; and we, especially, of this part of the empire, who have the pleasure to know that both these gentlemen are our distinguished countrymen.

The observation, that what is subjected to our eyes conveys ideas to the mind quicker and clearer than descriptions, which are addressed to the ear, is as old as Horace, or, probably, as old as literature itself: –

“Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures,
Quamquae sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.”

We need not be surprised, therefore, to find that pathology, anatomy, and surgery, are largely indebted for their better illustration to the wood-cutter's important art. The advantage is, being able to print the illustrations with the letterpress, and thus have the woodcut and description side by side, may be appreciated best by the laborious student, for whose use in various excellent hand-books and elementary works, these illustrations are abundantly, yet not quite enough, provided. These works it would be too tedious to enumerate, and invidious, partially to select from; the merit of the wood-cuts is, of course, extremely various. Indeed, it may be observed of this useful and popular style of engraving, that it is capable, in skilful hands, of exceeding power, clearness, and force, and is equally liable, by carelessness, inaccuracy, or unskillful cutting, to render the text which it ought to illustrate less intelligible than it would have been without it.

Of the photographic art, from which the most important element of fidelity may most reasonably be expected, we have to lament, as yet, that the delineations produced by its aid are defective in permanence and durability – not much less to be desired than fidelity to nature itself.

It must be obvious to this society, that in applying art to pathological purposes, the readiest vehicle is the best. The readiest vehicle is, without any question, water colour. Without the depth, richness, and fulness of oil, which is requisite in the embodiment of conceptions of high art, the water colour has in skilful hands, a transparency and clearness which render it highly useful as an educational agent of pathological instruction. Any gentleman present who has had the advantage of looking over a portfolio of the water-colour drawings of diseases of the skin, for example, by Connolly, of Dublin, will at once recognise the fidelity to nature, and the value to the profession of such drawings.

It is much to be desired that our students – such of them, at least, as possess a taste for colour – could be induced to turn their attention to

pathological water-colour drawing. To copy accurately the outward aspect of the morbid appearance set before them, without exaggerating the colour, on the one hand, or losing the true effect by feeble touchings, false tints, a striving after effects neither required nor permitted by the subject, on the other – this is the only requisite in drawings of this nature. Nor is it always or altogether easy, and is to be attained alone by a conscientious determination to produce no drawing that does not faithfully represent, and can be distinctly recognised, as representing what it professes to imitate from nature. Another accomplishment will, by the practice of this art, be added by the student to the many that are required by the truly learned physician, and his labour in art may be rendered creditable to himself, and interesting to his professional brethren, and, above all, useful to society.

I should, perhaps, apologise for having detained the society so long by this detail of the rise and progress of the graphic arts, in connexion with pathology, anatomy, and surgery; and I must admit that my review is not only imperfect, but, I fear, may be considered tedious. Yet I can conscientiously state to the society that, if I had entered into all the details which the importance of the subject deserves, I should have been compelled to make further demands upon the patience which they have so generously extended to me on this occasion.

I must find an apology for the manner in which I have treated this subject: in the importance of the subject itself; it would be impertinent to dwell further upon the importance of art, in connection with the medical sciences. We may also plainly see that medical art, as I may call it, is greatly extending itself, and becoming popular, which it would not do, if its value and importance had not begun to be generally appreciated by the profession. I may also plead that I was induced to direct your attention to the subject of art in connection with the profession, partly because my own tastes, habits, and opportunities have led me a good deal into the practice and observation of it – and, partly, because I do not remember to have seen this subject treated of before in an inaugural address. I must do myself the justice to say, however, that I should not have taken up the subject because it is new, if I had not been convinced at the same time, that it is eminently useful.

Art speaks a universal language. It reproduces the forms of disease, whose colours, texture, and, if we may say so, characters have faded away; it multiplies transcripts of morbid appearances, each of which is a copy of the other, and of the original; it

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thus extends beyond a narrow circle or a short period of time the results of our separate experiences, and combines them for the benefit of the whole profession. And here, I may be permitted to observe that the benefit of art, as applied to the medical sciences, will be still further extended when we boast of greater numbers of the profession, who, with natural taste for the arts, improved by practice, shall devote their talents to the pictorial illustration of disease. There is a constant and unavoidable loss of effect in every transfer from the drawing to the engraving, which would be avoided if such of our students as may manifest a talent for drawing, would extend their labours, like Sir Charles Bell and Dr. Joseph Maclise, to the acquisition of the engraver's art, in connexion with professional subjects.

While I am fully aware of the necessity of art in connexion with our profession, I must not be understood to exaggerate its importance. Till we make every proper and legitimate use of these our pathological, anatomical, or surgical studies from nature, we must never cease to refer, upon every practical occasion, to the indications exhibited to us by nature herself.

We must continue industriously, perseveringly, to exhibit our morbid appearances, to produce the curative results of our treatment, whenever practicable, in the persons of the living subjects, as it is our custom to do; to confirm principles by experiment; to decide theories by facts; and to escape from the doubtful and contradictory sea of opinion into the safe calm haven of actual demonstration.

James Moore

Presidential Closing Address
Belfast Clinical and Pathological Society
1st May 1858

GENTLEMEN – At the close of each session, according to our usual custom, and as a proper mark of respect to the members, a few observations may be permitted from your President, who trusts, in their imperfect delivery, to your usual consideration and indulgence. Our proceedings during the present session have been such as might have been expected from the high professional character and large experience of the gentlemen composing this body. The attendance of members and of students has been indeed good; the mutual interchange of valuable information has been considerable; the advantages of friendly personal intercourse, produced and perpetuated by our meetings here, it is superfluous to enlarge upon. The specimens of morbid structure exhibited, the number of patients presented with interesting forms of disease or malformation – amongst the latter, the remarkable case of Monsieur Groux, the action of whose heart was visible, owing to a deficiency in the anterior wall of his chest – the numerous instructive cases from our country correspondents read, and the results of chemical examination detailed to you, will suffice, without eulogy of mine, to convince the profession at large of the practical utility and business character of this Society. It is from the collated results of each succeeding session that our growing importance and increasing professional usefulness may be safely inferred. Nothing is of greater importance to us than that every successive session should exhibit an increased amount of pathological and clinical information, collected by individual exertion of your members. In this respect we have good reason to regard the session now about to expire, without fear of it suffering by comparison with any that have preceded it.

On the occasion of opening the present session, I enlarged sufficiently upon the important aid rendered by art to pathological science. I shall here only repeat my request to such of our students who may feel inclined to exert their talents in the application of art to the service of their profession, to lose no time in commencing their labours, since of the fine arts may be emphatically asserted, in particular, what the proverb enunciates of arts in general – namely, that art is long (or, in other words, is difficult), while life is short. It is right to observe, in connexion with this branch of the subject, that our museum is enriched with additional casts of diseased

structure, with many models in plaster and in wax, coloured after nature, and admirably truthful, to which I need not more particularly direct your attention.

In hopefully looking forward to the still more enlarged importance and usefulness of this Society, I may take this opportunity to remark on the service our members may individually render to the profession and the public, by their exertions in the several branches of professional inquiry, until we again re-assemble in this room. The strict rule which properly confines our discussions here to clinical and pathological topics, does not exist for us in our individual capacities elsewhere. Elsewhere, therefore, I think it right and becoming in our profession to bestir itself, individually, in matters of moment that concern the public health, that, by so doing, our profession may not merely set itself forth as a humane, liberal, and learned profession, but take the proper rank to which it is fully entitled, as a governing opinion of the State. The various predisposing causes by which public health is endangered are surely proper subjects of inquiry to a profession continually called upon to grapple with the fearful results of these very predisposing causes. Whether we regard the poisoning of human life by heaping up mounds of scarcely covered dead under the very windows of the living, or the constant streams of pollution emanating from open drains or imperfect sewerage, or the noxious gases of pestilential factories, whose smells and fumes are the warnings appointed by nature to induce man to remove them to a distance from his neighbourhood; all these are very fit and proper subjects for the consideration of professional men, who cannot forget that they are likewise public-spirited citizens. The rescue of human life – especially of the lives of those whose daily labour is our national wealth – from the depressing and destructive agencies of damp, ill-ventilated habitations, of defective sewerage, inadequate supply of pure water, and many other less destructive agencies, is especially our business; and I should insult the Society, were I to do more than express my convictions of their readiness to do all that in them lies to remedy such evils, as far as it is possible, by expression of enlightened, humane, and well-considered professional opinion, to do so. The oppressive voluntary taxation, as I may call it, of habits prejudicial to health, though not immediately or suddenly endangering life, are worthy of our serious consideration. I am led to animadvert upon one of these, from having my attention called to several cases of chronic disease produced by

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excessive indulgence in the practice of smoking tobacco.

I am not about to enter upon the wide field of discussion which the almost universal use of tobacco invites. I am neither prepared, with Pereira and Christison, to assert that no well-ascertained ill effects have been shown to result from the habitual practice of smoking, nor, on the other hand, to condemn unreservedly the moderate use of tobacco, in all cases, times, and places. A luxury indulged in more or less immoderately by so large a portion of the human race, and which, next to salt, is supposed to be the article most extensively consumed by man, must be able to adduce numerous arguments, more or less tenable, for its extended use. For its abuse, however, no arguments can be tenable; and it is with its abuse that we are called upon professionally to deal. We find smoking begins with boyish bravado, or weak compliance with absurd solicitation; proceeds by degrees to an offensive custom, and resulting in a confirmed habit, which it is hardly too censorious to stigmatise as a vice. To trace the progress of this deteriorating habit, from the first whiff, productive of incontrollable nausea or ill-concealed disgust, to the period, not very remote, of the constant craving, demanding the ever-recurring pipe; following it still downward till the habit merges into the vice, the vice into disease, we have especial reason to lament the increase of the habit of smoking among the rising youths of the lower and middle classes in our town. The prevalent practice of smoking is the more especially dangerous in this, that its agency in lowering the tone – mental, moral, and physical – of the animal economy, is extremely insidious. By degrees the disease – for such it must be considered – ripens into various forms, which compel the interference of the physician; and not unfrequently medical assistance is unavailing to rescue the sufferer from the consequence of habitual indulgence in this, to him, daily luxury of life. In my own circle of friends, a professor of eminence, an original thinker and fine reasoner, and one who had adorned the literature of our profession, fell a victim to the immoderate indulgence in smoking, a resulting cancerous affection of the tongue being, by the victim himself, attributed to this infatuation. I need hardly remind you of the frequency of epithelial cancer among the poor of these islands, the result, as I believe, of the acrid, irritating, empyrhumatic oil absorbed into the system from the short black tobacco pipes in use among the humbler classes. The delicate nervous organization of the eye is injuriously affected by tobacco in two ways – first, by the direct application

of irritating vapours to so delicate an organ; secondly, by the participation of the optic nerve in the depression of the nervous energy throughout the frame. In rude and primitive conditions of life – as that of the hunter, whose high-wrought nervous actions may require to be toned down – or in cold, damp, or hot climates, in marshy districts, or with insufficient food or shelter, and under other exceptional circumstances of daily life, the use of tobacco may be comparatively innocent, and in some cases may supersede the habitual resort to wine, opium, or spirituous liquors, and thus may claim the privilege accorded by common consent to the lesser evil. As a means of assuaging the pain of excessive fatigue of labours, of mitigating the pangs of hunger, or of subduing mental distress – among those, especially, not over-burthened with the good things of this life – there appears much to be forgiven in the use of tobacco. At all events, an indiscriminate censure of it, even if it were just, would be ridiculous. In most countries where tobacco is now extensively used, its use was prohibited by the ruling powers, at one period or another, under stringent penalties; and wherever its use has become almost universal, we find, on consulting historical records, that the prohibitions were the strongest and the penalties most severe. But in town life, and among our rising youth especially, none of the conditions which render the habit of smoking excusable, under certain extenuating circumstances, can be said to exist. There is not even the excuse of want of variety, or that sinking of the spirit, as in remote and solitary places, which makes smoking partly a sedative, and partly a mechanical habit of passing away the tedious time. It is not necessary for our rising youths to dissipate mind and body in this manner. Self-respect will suggest some more active and ennobling employment for mind and hand, or at least will induce the well-disposed to refrain from countenancing, by presence or participation, the bad example of others. When we consider that in the act of smoking of one quarter-ounce of tobacco, there may be imbibed into the system two grains, or more, of one of the most subtle of all known poisons – scarcely inferior in virulence to prussic acid, a single drop being sufficient to kill a dog – one might as certainly expect immediate symptoms of disease from tobacco smoking, as from any other poison, did not nature come to the rescue, by adapting the system to the unnatural conditions imposed upon it. Nicotine, however, is not the only poisonous principle of tobacco; the oil distilled through the tobacco-pipe, as in a retort, is not only disagreeable and acrid, but

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narcotic and actively poisonous. Under its influence reptiles die instantaneously, and some of the wild people of the earth wisely employ it for that purpose.

I shall dismiss this disagreeable subject, and refer to a matter more immediately connected with the dignity and interests of our body. In contemplating the progress of the profession at large in public estimation, we cannot fail to be struck with the increase of individual pursuit of special branches of medical, surgical, and pathological science. This division of professional labour has reached such a pitch in our metropolitan cities – Dublin, London, and Edinburgh – that the profession and the public are equally advantaged thereby. In consultations, as we have constant occasion to know, certain great names are appealed to, as of the highest authority, in the last resort. Individual members of the profession, it is also observed, who are shining lights in their speciality, are frequently the most generally accomplished in other respects. This is only what may be expected, since he who confines himself to one chosen department of his profession, will not only be more likely to excel in that, but have more leisure for excellence in other things. This town, though large, and rapidly increasing, may not yet be large enough to admit of that metropolitan division of labour which we see in great cities; and it must be admitted that we, who depend on general practice, must be content to practise generally. Yet I would wish to observe, that I think a tendency to special pursuit, in such of our body as are of my way of thinking, must be of signal advantage, alike to the individual, his professional brethren, and the public. Medical men can have no motive to refuse acceptance of that leading truth of our age, that progress in the arts and sciences is a direct result of the division of labour. As special eminence in particular branches becomes more general, our profession, in theory at least, might be expected to become, if not less competitive, more co-operative, since it is but reasonable to suppose, that as each became an authority in his peculiar walk, his professional brethren would defer to his authority therein, and a mutual deference and respect arise from special individual eminence. Of course we must expect that this devotion to one speciality will be limited, and in some degree hindered, by the circumstances of our individual positions. I only repeat, that the division of professional labour, where practicable, is desirable, and tends to the advancement of the dignity in which is involved the interests of our profession.

Gentlemen – for the honour you have done me, for the uniform courtesy and kindness which you

have always shown towards me – I heartily thank you. I now leave this chair to an able and worthy successor; and my sincere hope is, that this Society may continue to prosper – prosper it must – because it is useful, and useful because it is practical.

James Moore

Presidential Closing Address

Ulster Medical Society

5th May 1866

Dr. Moore then addressed the meeting before resigning the chair, when he shortly reviewed some of the more salient occurrences during his year of office, observing that at the fortnightly meetings of the Society there were always most interesting pathological specimens and cases brought forward, which underwent the fullest and freest discussion; nor could such be over-estimated in a practical point of view, and this not only to the members themselves, but especially so to the medical students who had the privilege of being present at those discussions, and so afforded the benefit of the matured skill and judgment of their seniors. He then referred to the great value of the circulation of the several medical periodicals of the day amongst the members, which was one of the many advantages of their body, and which it was so desirable should be carried on with the strictest attention and regularity, their due circulation being, in point of fact, the back-bone, he might say, of the Society.

The subject of "increase of wages" was then touched upon. All skilled and unskilled classes in the community were now, he observed, demanding and obtaining increased remuneration for their time and skill, but the hardest worked and most expensive and responsible of all professions and callings, as theirs confessedly was, continued to be the worst remunerated as usual. But what must be considered a most serious injustice to their junior medical brethren, and also to the ratepayers themselves, was the well-known fact of tradesmen and mechanics, earning from two to three pounds a week, obtaining for their wives and families advice and medicine from the dispensaries, who were well able to pay for both. The Dispensary Medical men and Board of Guardians should resolutely set their faces against the continuance of so great an abuse as this palpably was, the time having fully come for their doing so.

The office of coroner for the Belfast district, so legitimately belonging to their profession, he stated, had since their last annual meeting become vacant, upon which a special meeting of their Society had been called by him to consider the propriety of supporting one of their brethren to fill it, and which had been unanimously resolved upon; but subsequently it was discovered that the Town Council had in their own hands the power of appointing a Coroner for the borough of Belfast exclusively, and

who had appointed a most excellent and judicious one in the person of Dr. Dill. Dr. Campbell of Lisburn, another equally deserving and well-qualified practitioner, having been elected by the Parliamentary voters for the other portion of the district, so that thus two of their body were now exercising that important office in this locality, which was a great point gained for their profession.

During the past year two of their Society, he sincerely regretted to say, had been removed by death from amongst them – Professor Ferguson and Dr. Hunter – both gentlemen in the truest sense of the term, and of highly cultivated intellects, and both deeply mourned for as men and as brethren for their always honourable and exemplary conduct and great ability as medical practitioners. He might also name Dr. Catherwood of Donaghadee, who had lately paid the last debt of nature, and who was a truly Christian and worthy man. Two of their Society had during the year taken their leave of Belfast, and removed to practise elsewhere – he alluded to Drs. Strong and Hanna, the former to Dublin, and the latter to one of the distant colonies.

The "Royal Medical Benevolent Fund Society of Ireland" was then brought under notice, with the view of impressing the obligation which devolved upon each member of the profession of subscribing to it, so as to enable its disinterested managers to accomplish the largest amount of good possible, but which could not be done unless each and all gave that most excellent Society their countenance and best support, and of which it was so eminently deserving.

The President, after referring to some other matters of detail, concluded his very appropriate and well-received address by observing that, in relinquishing the chair he then occupied, it was with the greatest gratification he handed it over to Dr. Drennan, who not being present, he might the more freely speak of his exalted worth both as a citizen and a member of their profession, deeply learned, and of the most sterling principles: and also to make the passing remark that the new president's father, the celebrated Dr. Drennan, obtained for Belfast the title of the "Athens of Ireland" by reason of his distinguished literary attainments, Their president, then, for the ensuing year might truly be said to be "the worthy son of a most worthy sire."

One more remark he had to make which was his being enabled to announce that during the ensuing year a large infusion of new blood might be expected into the Society, several of their younger brethren having recently intimated to him their intention of joining it.