The College and Europe

The Langdon-Brown Lecture

M. COOKE, DM, FRCP, Hon Consulting Physician, Radcliffe Infirmary, and Emeritus Fellow, Merton College, Oxford

This lecture commemorates the life and work of Sir Walter Langdon-Brown (1870–1946), Physician to St Bartholomew’s Hospital and Regius Professor of Physic at Cambridge. He was a many-sided physician who wrote successful books on such varied subjects as applied physiology, therapeutics, neurology, endocrinology, and psychology. In the Royal College of Physicians he was Croonian Lecturer, Senior Censor, and Harveian Orator. At the Society of Medicine he was at various times President of four Sections, of which was the History of Medicine. I count it a privilege to be allowed to make this offering in a subject of which I hope he would have approved.

When one considers the effects of wars, rumours of wars, politics, economics, and social changes, the fact that our College has survived at all, and especially for as long as 450 years, is to me at any rate a source of wonderment as well as satisfaction. That there should be celebrations of the occasion is nowadays taken as a matter of course, but the celebration of centenaries is surprisingly modern. It developed mostly in the last century, and in this college not even then. The Annals make no reference to the subject until 1916, when a Committee was appointed to consider the celebrations appropriate to the quatercentenary due in 1918. The Committee first suggested that owing to the war there should be a postponement of six months, but that no celebrations should be held at all. Nevertheless, there were celebrations, those held by Fellows of the College who were serving with the British Expeditionary Force in France. Sixteen of them met in Boulogne on 23 September 1918, celebrated with a dinner and sent the College a Latin address, delivered by Michael Foster (son of the famous physiologist) on St Luke’s Day. The sixteen Fellows included many well-known to the more senior of the present Fellows—Wilmot Heringham, Rose Bradford, Gordon Holmes, T. R. Elliott, William Hume, Henry MacCormac and Archibald Gray. The College replied to the Fellows in France with another Latin address, and the President, Dr Norman Moore, gave Michael Foster...
two mementoes of the occasion—a denarius of Caligula, who had associations with Boulogne, and a silver coin of Larissa, because it is believed that Hippocrates practised there.

When I was asked to give this lecture my historical mentor, Sir George Clark, suggested that it would be appropriate to choose a topic which had relation to the whole 450 years, namely, *The College and Europe*. I have received generous help from many hands, but I owe special debts to Sir George Clark and to Mr Payne, the Librarian of the Royal College of Physicians. The activities that I shall describe are mostly not the formal or corporate acts of the College, for these are relatively few, but the activities of the Fellows, Members, and Licentiates who together constitute the College. The Licentiates, and Extra-Licentiates, although forming the lowest orders in the College, are not to be regarded lightly. Before 1859 they were similar to Fellows in all respects, except that they had not graduated at Oxford or Cambridge. Their ranks include Clopton Havers, Thomas Dover, John Addenbrooke, William Hunter, Thomas Dimsdale, John Lettsom, Caleb Parry, John Fothergill, Thomas Bowdler, and, greatest of them all, Thomas Sydenham.

For convenience, I have divided my account into three periods, each of approximately 150 years.

The title of the College, The Royal College of Physicians of London, and the fact that its jurisdiction extended only to seven miles round the City of London, have perhaps led some persons to take the view that its activities were local, if not parochial. I hope to show that this was not entirely the case.

In 1518 the study of medicine in England was the study of Hippocrates and Galen, and virtually nothing more. The instruction provided by the two English universities was formal and stereotyped. The revival of learning, both classical and medical, in Italy gave the educated Englishman of the period a thirst for continental travel, so that he might partake of these riches. The theologians were attracted to Rome, the lawyers to Bologna, and the physicians to Padua. Bologna, the oldest university in Europe, was founded in the 11th century for the study of Canon Law and Civil Law. These important subjects were carried by successive migrations of teachers and students to other north Italian towns and as far as France—to Mantua, Vicenza, Arezzo, Padua, Siena, and Montpelier. Some universities, in addition to pursuing legal studies, developed medical faculties. By the time of our College's foundation, Padua University (founded in 1222), had become the most famous medical school in the world. The reputation of its teachers, for example Vesalius, Montanus, Fabricius, Fallopius, and Frascatorius, attracted students from all over Europe. As early as 1331, the English and Scottish students had become sufficiently numerous to form a 'Nation'. In
1534 they were separated into the *Natio Anglica* and *Natio Scotica*, but in 1603, no doubt because of the Union of England and Scotland under James I, were recombined, together with the Irish, as the *Natio Anglica*. These 'Nations' were highly organised, each with its Counsellors, Beadle, and Secretary, its own library and various privileges. Padua in the 16th century had two Universities, or as we should say, two faculties, the University of Law and the University of Arts. The students of medicine were included with the arts men.

Let us now look briefly at the travels of Thomas Linacre. Although Henry VIII is officially and *de jure* our founder, there can be no doubt that Linacre is our spiritual and *de facto* founder. In 1485, then aged about twenty-five, he accompanied William de Selling, Prior of Canterbury, who may have been one of his teachers, to Bologna. Linacre stopped there while Selling, who was Ambassador from Henry VII to Pope Innocent VIII, went on to Rome. In Bologna Linacre met Politian, who was Professor of Poetry at Florence. He then spent a year in Florence with Politian and another notable scholar Chalcondyles, who was Professor of Greek there; among their other duties these two were tutors to Giovanni and Piero, sons of Lorenzo de Medici. After visiting Rome, Linacre moved to Venice where he became friendly with the printer Aldus Manutius, who in 1499 published Linacre's edition of Proclus *On the Sphere*. Not many miles from Venice is Padua, where Linacre took his MD degree, with such distinction that he was offered, but declined, a professorial chair. Before leaving Italy he also visited Vicenza, Verona, Brescia, Bergamo, and Milan, eventually returning to England by Geneva, Paris, and Calais. There is some dispute about the dates and the length of his stay in Europe, but the latter was certainly a matter of years. We know that his friends and admirers on the continent included Erasmus, Melanchthon, Vives and Budé, all among the most eminent scholars of the time. He dedicated his edition of Galen's *De Temperamentis* to Pope Leo X, who was the Giovanni de Medici that he had known in Florence. Thirty editions of his books were published in Venice, Basle, Lyons, Paris, Leipzig, Cologne, and Wittenberg. Here then was a Founder who set the College on a continental course. Linacre was an exceptionally gifted scholar, who would have been warmly received in any intellectual society, but many other fellows have carried on his torch since. He was followed to Padua by John Caius, William Harvey, and a host of others. Of the 127 names in Munk's *Roll* up to the end of the sixteenth century, thirty-four (27 per cent) had studied or obtained degrees in Europe. These physicians ranged widely. Twelve went to Padua and the rest to Bologna, Pavia, Ferrara, Paris, Montpelier, Basle, Heidelberg, and Leyden.
Sir Geoffrey Keynes in his admirable book on William Harvey gives a lively account of Harvey’s studies at Padua, of his election as Consilarius of the English Nation (with the unusual distinction of representing the jurists as well as the artists), and of his taking his MD degree. The last sounds a simple procedure, but the conferment of a degree at Padua was a solemn and religious ceremony, before the Bishop, Grand Chancellor, and the Sacred College of Philosophers and Doctors. In 1564, the medical supremacy of Padua for Englishmen was threatened by Pope Pius IV who, no doubt disturbed by the success of the Reformation, issued a Bull (In sacrosancta) requiring all those taking university degrees in Europe to give the Professio Fidei, i.e. to profess the Roman Catholic faith. Padua, like other universities, was supposed to conform, but the Venetian Republic, in whose territory it lay, took a more lax view. At first, those who could not or would not make the Professio Fidei were allowed to receive their degrees from the Count Palatine (as did Harvey in 1602), but there were naturally many difficulties caused by this irregular procedure. In 1616, the Venetian government founded the Collegio Veneto Artista for all non-Catholics. Successful students received a ‘laureate’ or ‘licence’ instead of a degree, but many styled themselves MD Padua or MD Venice. The fees for the Collegio were high (and double for Jews) but this liberal-minded action of the Venetians explains why Protestant Englishmen continued to take degrees at Padua until the mid-eighteenth century, when all Catholic universities were closed to them (Morpurgo, 1926–7). Some Catholic universities renowned for medical studies, such as Montpelier, Rheims, and Caen, continued to attract numbers of English, Scottish, and Irish Catholics. Of 143 known medical ‘laureates’ of the Venetian College, well over half were from the Royal College of Physicians. The Collegio Veneto, with some changes of name, continued until the Napoleonic reforms of 1806. The University of Padua still thrives, and it is of interest that within living memory two of our Presidents, Sir Humphry Rolleston and Lord Dawson, have received honorary degrees from it. Among the portraits at the Royal Society of Medicine are some of former Presidents of the Society wearing a dark red gown. This is a replica of the costume of the Rector of Padua University, which was presented to the Society by Lord and Lady Dawson.

The decline of Padua as a centre of study for the English was due not only to the atmosphere of religious intolerance but to the rise of another university famed for medicine—Leyden. In 1574, the City of Leyden had withstood a long and famous siege by the Spaniards with such tenacity and heroism that the Dutch Government, through William the Silent, rewarded the inhabitants by offering them either freedom from taxes for ten years or a
university. To their lasting credit the burghers chose the latter and the university opened its doors the following year. By this time, the Netherlands had become largely Protestant. The first medical student, an Englishman, John James, entered the university in 1578, took his MD in 1581, and subsequently became a Fellow and Censor of our College, and Physician to Queen Elizabeth I. The relative nearness of Leyden as compared with Padua, its complete religious tolerance, the distinction of its teachers and perhaps the fact that its students' privileges included tax-free wine and beer combined to make it the Englishman's university (Innes-Smith, 1932).

Munk's Roll and the Dictionary of National Biography record those who studied abroad and those who took degrees abroad, often but by no means always the same persons. Despite the overlap, I have recorded study and degrees separately, for reasons which will become apparent. For my first period, 1518 to 1659, the figures for study are shown in Table 1. The total of eighty-four is 26 per cent of the 321 in Munk's Roll for the period.

Table 1. Study, 1518 to 1659

| Country     | Number | Location(s)        |
|-------------|--------|---------------------|
| Netherlands | 38     | (Leyden 36)         |
| Italy       | 19     | (Padua 12)          |
| France      | 14     | (Paris 5, Montpelier 4) |
| Germany     | 3      |                     |
| Switzerland | 2      |                     |
| Unspecified | 8      |                     |
| Total       | 84     | (at 20 universities) |

To celebrate the tercentenary of Leyden University in 1875, the Album Studiosorum Academiae Lugduno Bataviae, 1575–1875, was published which contained about 4,400 names, of which about 2,800 were English-speaking students of medicine. Of these 269 occur in Munk's Roll. Of the remainder, many were Scots and Irishmen. The figures for those taking degrees in Europe during this period were rather different from those for study (see Table 2). Of the 321 in Munk's Roll, 112 (35 per cent) held continental

Table 2. Degrees, 1518 to 1659

| Country     | Number | Location(s)        |
|-------------|--------|---------------------|
| Italy       | 49     | (Padua 44)          |
| Netherlands | 36     | (Leyden 28)         |
| France      | 16     | (Montpelier 6, Caen 3) |
| Switzerland | 9      | (Basle 9)           |
| Germany     | 2      |                     |
| Total       | 112    | (from 17 universities) |
degrees. It will be noticed that although more studied at Leyden, a greater number took degrees at Padua or the Venetian College. The figures in the Tables are in most cases likely to be underestimates.

It is difficult to know how much study was required to obtain a degree on the continent. Many periods of years are recorded, but some students spent only months, and a few only days. The award of degrees with little or no residence, study or examination was widespread in Europe. Universities as far apart as St Andrew's and Ferrara had unenviable reputations in this respect. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that the travel, study, and graduation of the majority of these men must have enriched not only themselves, but the College as well.

Most of the early physicians who visited Europe did so to study, but others went to teach, to practise, in the retinues of monarchs and ambassadors, to escape religious persecution and occasionally to escape their creditors. Linacre was offered a professorship, Caius lectured on the Greek text of Aristotle, Sir John Finch was Pro-Rector of Padua University, later Professor of Anatomy at Pisa, and finally Charles II's ambassador at Constantinople.

Early in its history the College had connexions with Russia. In the latter part of the fifteen century that country was re-discovered by western Europe, and a considerable traffic arose in diplomats, merchants, scientists, and physicians (Bishop, 1929). The first western physicians to enter the service of the Tsar, then Ivan the Terrible, were a German and a Venetian in 1483 and 1490 respectively. Both were put to death for failing to cure their patients. Despite these risks, an English physician, Ralph Standish, a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and the first Licentiate of our College, accompanied the Tsar's ambassador to Edward VI back to Russia in 1557. He dined with Ivan the Terrible on seven occasions and received from him presents of sables, 70 roubles and a horse. Standish lived and practised in Russia till his death in Moscow two years later. Richard Reynolds and Eliseus Bomel or Bornel, empirics whose only connexion with the College was that they were fined and imprisoned for irregular practice, both entered the Tsar's service in the late 1560s. Bomel was unwise enough to indulge in politics and, after torture, died in a Russian prison. More orthodox was Robert Jacob who was sent by Queen Elizabeth in 1581 to attend the Tsarina, which he did with success. He also suggested Lady Mary Hastings as a suitable person to be the Tsar's seventh wife, but in the words of Munk: 'Happily for the lady the Tsar died before the conclusion of these strange matrimonial negotiations'. Jacob returned to England two years later and became a Fellow of the College. Mark Ridley went in 1594 to be physician
to the English merchants in Russia, and on the recommendation of Queen Elizabeth became chief physician to Tsar Feodor I. On the death of the Tsar in 1598, Ridley returned to England and became in time a Censor, Treasurer, and Elect. Baldwin Hamey, the elder, was also physician to this Tsar.

Eminent physicians travelled to the continent with diplomatic missions. Linacre accompanied Princess Mary of England (daughter of Henry VII) to Paris when she married Louis XII. Thomas Muffett accompanied Lord Willoughby to Denmark to invest King Frederick with the Order of the Garter. Matthew Gwynne attended the English ambassador to France in 1595. Harvey was in the entourage of the Duke of Lennox in 1630 and probably shared in some of his travels. We have more detailed information about his extensive continental journey with the Earl of Arundel in 1635, when the Earl was Ambassador from Charles I to the Holy Roman Emperor at Ratisbon. The journey was not devoid of incident. The party met both war and plague.

It is difficult for us to realise the discomforts and dangers of travel in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Sea travel was uncertain, uncomfortable, and unsafe. Ships were entirely at the mercy of wind, tide, and weather. Most passengers could not sleep because of the creaking and cracking noises made by the wooden ships. When the hatches were closed in rough weather the lack of ventilation was appalling. A Fellow of the College in the seventeenth century once took sixteen days to sail from Hamburg to England. Land travel was less unpleasant and arduous, but not to be undertaken lightly. The main roads of Europe had been built by the Romans and altered very little since, but their design and construction were so good that they remained remarkably serviceable, and were virtually unchanged until the nineteenth century. Poor travellers had no choice but to go on foot. Those with money went on horseback. Monarchs, noblemen, and ambassadors travelled in coaches or by boat. Travel by rivers was common, as was travel by the roads beside rivers. In both cases the tortuosity was more than compensated for by the absence of hills. River travel downstream involved little more than steering the craft with an oar, but travel upstream often required the assistance of horses. The Earl of Arundel’s party travelled in an impressive house-boat pulled by eight horses.

Important as were the travels of individual physicians, more important was the transmission of ideas. In the sixteenth century the learned world was much smaller, both absolutely and relatively, than today. The population of Britain and of Europe was about one tenth of its present level. It was correspondingly easier for scholars to know each other. Also, there was less
segregation into specialties. On the other hand, travel was difficult and periodical literature non-existent. New knowledge had to be transmitted by personal contacts, personal correspondence, correspondence with learned societies, or the publication of books. It is possible to forget that our College was founded less than seventy years after the invention of printing by moveable type in 1450, a discovery that was already having profound effects. This invention spread from Mainz over Europe with surprising speed. By 1500 there were presses in more than fifty German towns and they existed in other countries from Sweden to Portugal and even in Montenegro. It has been estimated that by then some 38,000 editions had been published in Europe, the majority in Germany. It is not surprising, therefore, that books of Linacre and Caius were published on the continent, and later those of Harvey, Glisson, and many others. From the foundation of the College to 1659 there are records of eighty-four books published on the continent by Fellows, and no doubt there were others (see Table 3). These books by Fellows were as likely to be editions or translations of the Greek and Roman classics as they were to be on medical subjects. Every major classical author is represented, Aristotle and Plutarch being the favourites. Some physicians, Linacre among them, were best known for their classical writings. There was also a large flow of European books to England. The present College library contains over 8,000 books published on the continent, and no doubt the old library was similarly furnished.

From 1660 to 1824 there were about 1,360 names in Munk’s Roll. From the College 327 (24 per cent) physicians went to Europe to study (see Table 4). The traffic was two-way. Underwood (1968) has traced twenty-five German physicians who came to Britain for study in this period. As the popularity of Italy declined, that of the Netherlands increased. Despite the rise of France and the emergence of Germany, the numbers going to the Netherlands exceeded all the others put together. The reputation of Leyden reached its height in the eighteenth century, largely owing to the fame of Herman Boerhaave, who held the chairs of Medicine, Botany, and Chemistry. Such was his reputation that a letter sent from China addressed to ‘The Illustrious Boerhaave, Physician in Europe’ reached him safely. His pupils founded the schools of medicine at Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dublin, and Vienna.

The degrees taken in Europe were fewer, 287, that is 21 per cent of those in Munk’s Roll (see Table 5).

It will be noticed that from the first period the proportion studying on the continent was about the same, 26 and 24 per cent, but those taking degrees fell from 35 to 21 per cent, partly because degrees from United Kingdom universities were more esteemed, and perhaps more easily obtained. College
Table 3. Books, 1518 to 1659

| Country       | Number | Cities                                      |
|---------------|--------|---------------------------------------------|
| Netherlands   | 32     | (Leyden 10, Amsterdam 9, Rotterdam 8)       |
| France        | 20     | (Paris 14, Lyons 6)                        |
| Germany       | 13     | (Leipzig 4, Frankfurt 3)                   |
| Switzerland   | 10     | (Basel 9)                                  |
| Italy         | 8      |                                            |
| Austria       | 1      |                                            |
| **Total**     | 84     | (in 26 towns)                              |

Table 4. Study, 1660 to 1824

| Country       | Number | Cities                                      |
|---------------|--------|---------------------------------------------|
| Netherlands   | 206    | (Leyden 199)                               |
| France        | 52     | (Paris 34, Montpelier 13)                  |
| Germany       | 21     | (Gottingen 8, Berlin 4)                    |
| Italy         | 10     | (Padua 5, Pavia 2)                         |
| Austria       | 7      | (Vienna 6)                                 |
| Switzerland   | 2      |                                            |
| Portugal      | 1      |                                            |
| Unspecified   | 28     |                                            |
| **Total**     | 327    | (at 29 universities)                       |

Table 5. Degrees, 1660 to 1824

| Country       | Number | Cities                                      |
|---------------|--------|---------------------------------------------|
| Netherlands   | 151    | (Leyden 126, Utrecht 21)                   |
| France        | 74     | (Rheims 32, Montpelier 12, Caen 9)         |
| Italy         | 46     | (Padua 42)                                 |
| Germany       | 10     | (Gottingen 3)                              |
| Others        | 6      |                                            |
| **Total**     | 287    | (from 29 universities)                     |

Physicians continued to publish their books on the continent, partly because the book trade was highly developed there and also no doubt from a desire to obtain a European reputation. The figures for books in this period are shown in Table 6. Underwood (1968) has recently published some interesting figures for the period 1650 to 1800, which show the great demand in Germany for translations of books by English authors. The percentage of English books translated into German was ten times greater than the percentage of those translated from German into English.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Latin declined as the language of science, and study of the classics was in part replaced by study of the vernacular European languages. The last important English medical book


### Table 6. Books, 1660 to 1824

|                |        |                          |
|----------------|--------|--------------------------|
| **Netherlands** | 53     | (Amsterdam 24, Leyden 19) |
| **Germany**    | 36     | (Leipzig 10, Frankfurt 7) |
| **France**     | 30     | (Paris 21, Lyons 6)      |
| **Italy**      | 12     | (Venice 9)               |
| **Switzerland** | 9      | (Geneva 6)               |
| **Russia**     | 2      |                          |
| **Total**      | 142    | (in 33 towns)            |

to be published in Latin was Heberden’s *Commentaries* in 1802, and that was accompanied by an English version. The Fellows of our College have included many linguists, in classical and modern tongues. They have translated most of the European medical and scientific classics, such as works by Haller, van Helmont, Swammerdam, Boerhaave, Ramazzini, Lavoisier, Linnaeus, Laennec, and Auenbrugger.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century began the era of travel for travel’s sake. There are at least two dozen European travel books by Fellows, Members, and Licentiates; as might be expected they are of uneven merit. Some seem to have been written with the aid of an encyclopaedia and the local guide book. Others are interesting, lively, first-hand accounts of travels in what were then remote parts of Europe. Some travellers became involved in the making of history. John Leake, an obstetrician, was in the great earthquake at Lisbon in 1755, when 15,000 or more people were killed in ten minutes, and the shocks were followed by terrible tidal waves and later by fires. With scientific detachment he recorded that these shattering events made no difference to the normal course of childbirth, which we now know to be hormonal and not neurogenic. Richard Fowler was in Paris during the French Revolution and knew both Tallyrand and Mirabeau. In 1805 William Reeve saw Napoleon enter Vienna after the battle of Austerlitz, and was present at the first performance of *Fidelio* conducted by Beethoven himself. Richard Bright arrived in Brussels just after the battle of Waterloo.

One of the first and best travel writers was Edward Browne, eldest son of Sir Thomas Browne of Norwich, and our President from 1704–8. He was an indefatigable and esurient traveller. The title of his book gives some idea of his enthusiasm—*A Brief Account of some travels in divers parts of Europe, viz. Hungaria, Servia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Thessaly, Austria, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola and Friuli, through a great part of Germany and the Low Countries. Through Marca Trevisana and Lombardy on both sides of the Po with some observations on the gold, silver, copper and quicksilver mines, and the baths and medicinal waters in those*
parts, as also the description of many antiquities, habits, fortifications and remarkable places. Nothing escaped his attention—history, antiquities, architecture, inscriptions, fortifications, commerce, language, manners, customs, clothing, crops, diet, mines, and of course medicine and medicinal baths. Browne journeyed by carriage, by boat, on horseback, and on foot. On one occasion he went from Venice to Vienna, about 350 miles, alone and on the same horse. He wrote of his travels in Serbia that with good horses it was possible to make 20 miles in a day, although robbers were troublesome by day and wolves by night. In both cases the occasional discharge of firearms was an effective deterrent. The second edition of his book, published in 1685, has thirty-five illustrations of the wonders that he saw. Martin Lister lived for six months in Paris in 1698 and wrote a book of guide book type that ran into several editions. Bernard Connor, or O'Connor, published in the same year The History of Poland on the strength of a twelve months’ stay there. For readability, Sir Henry Holland’s Travels in the Ionian Isles, Albania, Thessaly, Macedonia, etc. in the years 1812 and 1813, with illustrations drawn by himself, ranks high. He had already travelled in and written about Iceland. Like Browne, he was interested in everything, not excluding a little medical practice among the local élite. He was an ardent botanist and his book lists the 177 species of plants that he had identified on the Island of Cephalonia. He went abroad for two months every year for over fifty years, and also travelled many thousand miles in the United States of America. Richard Bright, of nephritis fame, was another redoubtable traveller. He had been to Iceland with Sir Henry Holland. He published in 1818 Travels in Lower Hungary, which he also illustrated. Bright has a pleasing prose style and an eye for the interesting. William Macmichael, of the gold-headed cane, had visited Moscow in 1814 and wrote an account of his Journey from Moscow to Constantinople in the Years 1817, 1818, again illustrated by himself. The majority of our travellers preferred comfort, but some preferred walking. Thomas Young, who deciphered the Rosetta stone, once walked from Göttingen to Dresden, about 200 miles.

The College continued to supply physicians to various royal families in Europe, including the King of Poland, the King of the Belgians, and the Queen of Spain. William Baylies, a Licentiate who had absconded to Germany to escape his creditors, became physician to Frederick the Great, who once said to him that to have acquired such skill he must have killed a great many people. Baylies made the courageous but correct reply ‘Not more than your Majesty’.

There continued to be communications with Russia. The best known is the visit of Thomas Dimsdale to St Petersburg in 1768 to inoculate Catherine
the Great and her son Paul for small-pox. He received a barony, a fee of £10,000, £2,000 for expenses and an annuity of £500. Failure would not, as might be expected, have cost him his life, because Catherine arranged relays of post-horses across the country to the frontier, so that if things went wrong he could make his escape. He went again to St Petersburg in 1781 to inoculate the Grand Dukes Alexander and Constantine. Schuster (1968) has recently written an interesting account of English physicians in Russia in the early nineteenth century. Sir Alexander Crichton was head of the Civil Medical Department and physician to Tsar Alexander I. Sir George Lefevre was physician to the British Embassy for fifteen years, and Robert Lee a physician in Odessa.

Europeans have been described by an eminent historian as a collection of energetic mongrels, and he might have added with truth the epithet quarrelsome. During the 450 years of the College’s existence there have been very few periods of as long as ten years when there was not a war in progress somewhere in Europe. These hostilities naturally restricted travel, but sometimes Fellows were affected in a more direct way. Samuel Cleverley was a prisoner in France for ten years. Sir George Tuthill and his wife were prisoners, and were released only because Lady Tuthill managed to present a petition direct to Napoleon. John Davis while a prisoner contrived to study at Paris and Montpelier, where he took his MD degree, and to write a book entitled Observations on Precipitate Burial and the Diagnosis of Death. This he sent to Corvisart with a petition for his release, which was successful. The civilities were sometimes observed. When Lord Arundel’s party, which included William Harvey, was travelling up the Rhine and arrived at Coblenz, they found a battle in progress, but both sides ceased fighting to let the English party pass in safety. Napoleon was enlightened in matters of science. In 1813 he allowed Sir Humphry Davy to visit the Auvergne in order to study extinct volcanoes. He also released some English prisoners as the result of a personal letter from Edward Jenner. Jenner, who alas had no official connexion with our College, although we do possess the manuscript of his Note Book, was so highly esteemed in Europe that he was able to issue letters of safe conduct which came to be known as ‘Jenner’s Passports’. In his own splendid phrase ‘Science never goes to war’ (de Beer, 1960). Some physicians did go to war, such as Thomas Willis and Thomas Sydenham, who fought on opposite sides in the Civil War, Willis with the King and Sydenham with the Parliamentarians, but the great majority went not to fight, but to look after the sick and wounded. Some of the early physicians who accompanied armies did so only in the capacity of personal physician to the Commander-in-Chief. Others were more concerned with the medical
care of the common soldier. Sir John Pringle, a Fellow of our College and President of the Royal Society from 1772 to 1778 (incidentally a pupil of Boerhaave) served with the Army in Flanders in 1742, wrote a book *Observations on the Diseases of the Army*, and has been called the father of military medicine. He was highly esteemed on the continent and the great Albrecht Haller dedicated two of his books to him. Pringle was one of the first of a long line of College physicians who have cared for the troops from the campaigns of Marlborough to the last European war. This humane work has not been confined to the British Army; Sir John English was Chief Surgeon to the Swedish Army and Sir David Barry to the Portuguese Army.

My third period of the College history begins in 1825 with two important events, the opening of the new College building in Pall Mall East and the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, the first public passenger-carrying railway in the world. Within ten years there were railways in France and Germany and by the 1840s in Italy, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Russia. As late as 1834 Sir Robert Peel was urgently summoned back to England from Rome to be Chancellor of the Exchequer. As there were no railways in Italy until the 1840s and very few in France, he posted home by coach by the most rapid route available. The journey took about a fortnight, almost exactly the same time that it took the Emperor Claudius when he too hurried from Rome to England in AD 43.

Although railways greatly increased the ease and comfort of travel, since 1825 only forty Fellows are recorded as having taken continental degrees and some of these were European physicians who had become Fellows. They constitute 3 per cent of the 1296 names in volumes 4 and 5 of Munk’s *Roll* (see Table 7). Times had changed. There was only one graduate from Leyden and none from Padua. On the other hand, 544 Fellows studied in Europe, that is 42 per cent of those in Munk’s *Roll* (see Table 8). The most popular centres were Paris, Vienna, and Berlin, in that order.

**Table 7. Degrees, 1825 to 1965**

| Country       | Count |
|---------------|-------|
| Germany       | 14    |
| France        | 12    |
| Switzerland   | 4     |
| Italy         | 3     |
| Netherlands   | 3     |
| Malta         | 1     |
| Norway        | 1     |
| Sweden        | 1     |
| Russia        | 1     |
| **Total**     | 40    |
Table 8. Study, 1825 to 1965

| Country      | Number | Notes                                      |
|--------------|--------|--------------------------------------------|
| Germany      | 201    | (Berlin 87, Heidelberg 20, Leipzig 20)     |
| France       | 169    | (Paris 156)                                |
| Austria      | 104    | (Vienna 99)                                |
| Italy        | 18     | (Rome 3, Pavia 4)                          |
| Netherlands  | 6      | (Leyden 3)                                 |
| Switzerland  | 6      | (Geneva 2)                                 |
| Denmark      | 3      |                                            |
| Hungary      | 1      |                                            |
| Sweden       | 1      |                                            |
| Unspecified  | 35     |                                            |
| **Total**    | **544**| (at 49 universities)                      |

In the mid-nineteenth century there was a more conscious and general desire to know of medical developments on the continent. John Connolly, best known for his work towards abolishing physical restraints and beatings in lunatic asylums, also deserves to be remembered for editing *The London Medical Repository* and *The British and Foreign Medical Review*, both journals which specialised in bringing foreign books and articles to the notice of the English profession. Another Fellow, John Ogle, edited *The Foreign Medico-Chirurgical Review*, with similar aims.

As regards books by Fellows, 55 were translated into European languages, mostly French and German, and about thirty European books were translated into English by Fellows. The smaller number of books was no doubt due to the development of periodicals. In the seventeenth century the world’s medical journals were numbered in ones, in the eighteenth century in tens, in the nineteenth in hundreds and in the present century in thousands. The torrent of medical writing which now overwhelms us flows all over the world. Although it should greatly facilitate the transmission of new ideas, by its very bulk it makes them increasingly difficult and sometimes impossible to find.

One example of the transmission of ideas from Europe in recent times is given by the work of Sir Walter Langdon-Brown. In his book *Thus We Are Men*, perhaps his most attractive work, he wrote convincingly on psychological medicine. He was the first English physician, as opposed to a psychologist or psychiatrist, to accept, expound, and apply the teachings of continental psychologists, notably Pavlov, Adler, and Freud. His work introduced many English doctors for the first time to the importance of the mind in illness.

The nineteenth century was the era of the medical society and the medical congress. Fellows held honorary membership of at least ninety-four European medical societies. In 1866 the College was invited to send a represent-
ative to a conference on cholera to be held in Constantinople. From then till 1938 the College has had over seventy such invitations, to every part of Europe from Moscow to Lisbon and from Bergen to Bucharest, and on every aspect of medicine. A few invitations were declined, mostly those on indelicate subjects such as venereal disease or birth control, and there was little enthusiasm for Thalasso-therapeutics, but to most the College sent carefully selected delegates. These were senior physicians, well informed about the subjects of the conferences and often fluent in the relevant languages. No doubt for these reasons our delegates were usually received with great honour. The College also sent representatives to centenary celebrations of universities and medical institutions in Geneva, Padua, St Petersburg, Paris, and Brussels. Continental learned societies were punctilious in celebrating the centenaries of eminent Englishmen, such as Harvey, Sydenham, Jenner, Darwin, and Bright, in which the College was invited to participate. There were still visits to Russia. Humphry Sandwith’s adventures in the Crimean War took London by storm and he was invited to recount them to Queen Victoria. J. F. Payne, a former Harveian Librarian, went to Russia in 1879 to investigate an epidemic of plague. There is an interesting manuscript account of his journey in the College library.

Travel for pleasure still brought books in its train. Augustus Bozzi Granville in 1829 wrote an account of his visit to St Petersburg, with almost obsessive detail of distances (in miles, leagues, and versts), the number of horses and drivers required at each posting stage, the cost, notes on the inns, etc. George Weatherhead wrote of his walking tour in France and Italy—2,675 miles, without counting the detours. Sir George Lefevre wrote The Life of a Travelling Physician, in three volumes.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the College began to award some of its medals and prizes to continental doctors. For example, the Baly Medal was awarded to Claude Bernard, Carl Ludwig, Heidenhain, Pavlov, Emil Fischer, Magnus, Schiff, Krogh, and Hevesy, the Moxon Medal to Déjerine, the Parkes-Weber Prize to Calmette, and the Oliver-Sharpey Prize to Emile Roux. Pavlov and Wenkebach were made Honorary Fellows.

Travel between the College and Europe has never been all one way. Apart from foreigners who came here to study, Munk records some eighty physicians from Europe who settled in England. Some played an important part in English medicine and in the College, such as the elder Hamey, Sir Theodore Turquet de Mayerne, Sir George Ent, Thudichum, Schorstein, and Mark Roget. The last named, a Swiss, was a distinguished physician and Secretary of the Royal Society, but is best remembered for his Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases, classified and arranged so as to facilitate the expression of
ideas and assist in literary composition, first published in 1852. There were twenty-eight editions in Roget’s lifetime. Now, 100 years after his death the Thesaurus is still widely used. One Oxford bookshop alone still sells 750 copies a year, so the total sales must be prodigious. Roget’s place as the College’s best-seller is, I think, unassailable.

Even in modern times, Fellows have not lost their interest in languages, both modern and classical. R. G. Latham, a noted Scandinavian scholar, was Professor of Philology at University College, London. Arthur Leared wrote a book in the Icelandic tongue. Sir Donald MacAlister was fluent in most European languages, including Romany. Both Henry Sigerist and Charles Singer had an unusual command of ancient, oriental, and modern tongues. Our most noted linguist, Edward Granville Brown, was expert in non-European languages—he was Professor of Persian at Cambridge. As regards the classics, a recent Censor, Dr William Mann, published a new and excellent translation of Hippocrates in 1950.

The glib phrase ‘a European reputation’ must be used cautiously, partly because of its imponderable quality and partly because there is a gentle gradation from the greatest eminence to the deepest obscurity. Using the strictest criteria, and this includes evidence from the written word, there can be no doubt about the position of Linacre, Caius, Harvey, Sydenham, Thomas Browne, Fothergill, Sloane, Mead, Douglas, Pringle, Lawrence and Bright in medicine, and in science Gilbert, Nathaniel Grew, Thomas Young, Wollaston, and Prout. Charles Martin had this distinction, not for medicine or science, but as Principal Librarian of the British Museum. In modern times one is on delicate ground, but there is good evidence that Sir Lauder Brunton, Sir William Gowers, Sir James Mackenzie, and Kinnier Wilson were highly esteemed in Europe. Last, but by no means least, so were our four recent Presidents of the Royal Society, Sir Charles Sherrington, Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins, Sir Henry Dale, and Lord Florey.

Although the centre of gravity of postgraduate medical study has now moved to the other side of the Atlantic, there can be few present-day Fellows who have not visited Europe for study, congresses or recreation.

Fortunately, medicine ignores national boundaries, so for four and a half centuries the College has been linked to the continent of Europe by extensive movements in men, books, ideas, and knowledge. It has received much and given much.

The College has survived many difficulties and dangers over the past 450 years, partly, it must be admitted, by good fortune, but also by the devotion of its Officers, Fellows, Members, and Licentiates, and partly by its ability to adapt itself to changing circumstances. The process of adaptation has some-
times been slow and even grudging, but at other times the College has led in important reforms.

The possibility of our country’s entering the European Common Market and the medical corollaries that would ensue, may open a new chapter in the long history of the College and Europe. If this does come to pass, I can make one confident prediction—that the College will play its part with integrity and distinction.

This article is adapted from the Langdon-Brown Lecture given at the Royal College of Physicians in October 1968. The MS of the complete lecture, with fuller tables, is in the College Library.

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It Pays to Advertise
Modern medical authors are a modest lot, publishing their findings without a single flourish. Not for them the crying of scientific wares in the market place. Three hundred years ago no such inhibitions affected Dr Bennet who prefaced the account of his research with: ‘Let none spurn at me because what I offer is of a new Production; for, I have by certitude of Observations, faithfully and succinctly laid open the fallacy of some Opinions anciently received, and not taken Precepts upon truf, only from Authors, for understanding the Constitution of Nature. Moreover, I have not learn’d to go according to Vulgar Institution, but have made bold to step out of the Common Road, being inclined to contemplate and reverence Nature, rather than her Apes ... I would to God that Physitians would think of refining, correcting, and altering the Method of Phyfick, that it might be more accurately and effecacionfly fitted to the scopes of Curation; in order whereunto, a liberty of thinking and speaking freely being firft obtained, notwithstanding the obstinacy of crabbed and morofe old Fellows, I shall undertake, relying upon Experience, and being instructed by her, to publifh and positively affert divers things, somwhat copiously and boldly, according to the nature of my Defign.’