



From a portrait by Geddes

JAMES WARDROP, F.R.C.S.

(1782-1869)

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6.—JAMES WARDROP, F.R.C.S.
(1782-1869)

BY
WILLIAM GEORGE SYM,
EDINBURGH.

THERE is a small district some twenty miles or so from Edinburgh which has a wonderful record as the birthplace of medical worthies, for within this area were born the two Hunters, John and William, Matthew Baillie, Sir James Young Simpson, and the subject of the present sketch, James Wardrop. Wardrop belonged to a family of better descent than did some of the others; he was the youngest child of James Wardrop and Marjory Marjoribanks, daughter of Andrew Marjoribanks of that ilk, and was born at Torbane Hill, a small property, near Bathgate, which had for many generations belonged to his ancestors; the date of his birth was August 14, 1782. The chief part of his schooling he obtained at the High School of Edinburgh; and later, when he proposed to join the medical profession, he was bound apprentice, in accordance with the custom of that time, to his uncle Andrew Wardrop, a surgeon of some eminence in Edinburgh. Like all good surgeons, James Wardrop became first a good anatomist, and for his thorough grounding in this department he was indebted to the well-known anatomist Barclay, whom he assisted for a time during the period of his apprenticeship. After a

little time, however, desiring to obtain a wider acquaintance with the views and practice of other leaders in other places, he went to London (in 1801), where he attended the lectures of Abernethy, Cline, and Cooper, and worked in St. Thomas's, Guy's, and St. George's Hospitals; having spent some couple of years or so in such a manner, he passed on to Paris, then the most famous medical school on the Continent. But Paris in 1803 became, as modern military slang would put it, very "unhealthy" for a Briton; however, young Wardrop, after not a few more or less exciting adventures, managed to elude Napoleon's secret police and to escape from France to Vienna.

This visit was of much importance in reference to the further course of his life, for it was not a little owing to the interest aroused in the young surgeon by his attendance on the lectures on ophthalmology given by the illustrious Beer, whose *cliniques* he closely followed, that Wardrop acquired the taste for the study of disease of the eye, which never afterwards left him, and which dominated his life-work. In 1804 he returned to Edinburgh, where, having obtained the Fellowship of the College of Surgeons, he devoted his attention chiefly to surgery, pathology, and diseases of the eye. At this time he assisted in the formation of the museum of the College, then in its infancy, and found in this work gratification of his zeal, enhancement of his knowledge, and a fine scope for his manual dexterity and neatness: a number of his preparations are still on the shelves. Wardrop did not, however, remain very long in Edinburgh; perhaps he found no real opening; perhaps he was ambitious to fill a larger sphere; so he made his way to London in 1808, where he took up his abode at No. 1, Charles Street, St. James's, in which he lived till his death in 1869. He was admitted to the membership of the English College of Surgeons in 1814, the Master (Sir Everard Home) making the complimentary statement that his published work was quite sufficient to entitle him to the diploma; his Fellowship was not taken till 1843. In 1818 he was appointed surgeon-extraordinary to the Prince Regent, in whose train he came to Edinburgh in 1823, after the Prince's accession to the Crown; and when Sir Astley Cooper was raised to the rank of serjeant-surgeon, Wardrop became surgeon-in-ordinary to King George IV. On that occasion he was offered a baronetcy, but this honour he declined, principally on financial grounds. At a later time, during the last illness of George IV, Wardrop considered himself to have been somewhat unfairly treated by certain of the physicians attached to the Court, and his expressed opinions to have been somewhat cavalierly put aside; he took the matter very seriously to heart, and withdrew himself from the whole Court connection. It would prove a thankless, a difficult, and probably a useless task to attempt to discover at this distance of time who the chief offender

may have been and to rake over again the cold ashes of this long-gone controversy over a trifle, but Wardrop seems to have been at least so far in the right of it that Sir William Knighton, when he himself lay a-dying, expressed his earnest wish to see him for the purpose of apologizing for his own share in the affair, and of indicating his high opinion of Wardrop personally, and his own sincere desire to be reconciled to him before his death.

Wardrop took an unusual step in 1823, for, in that year, along with Sleigh, he founded a hospital of his own, in which he continued to operate, to see poor patients, and to lecture for about ten years; but the expense of keeping it up was too great, and he had to abandon the scheme after a time. One peculiar feature of the teaching at this school, which they called the West London School of Surgery, was that it was free to any practitioner who cared to come to it, and we may be sure that the *cliniques* and discussions on the cases of patients sent in for treatment were sound and valuable in their day. Nor was this Wardrop's only experience of teaching, for he associated himself for a time with Sir W. Lawrence in the Aldersgate Street School of Medicine, and subsequently joined the Hunterian School in Great Windmill Street as lecturer on surgery. There is no doubt that in his day Wardrop enjoyed a high reputation both in general surgery and as an ophthalmic surgeon. In the former branch his work on Aneurism brought him into great prominence, and in the latter capacity his books on "Fungus Haematodes" and on the "Morbid Anatomy of the Eye," marked a great advance on our previous knowledge. As he published also a book on "Diseases of the Heart," which was well thought of, he must have been a little of the type of the general specialist. But in addition to this lecturing, his writing, his hospital and private work, he was a great society man; he had numberless acquaintances and friends among society, even of the highest rank; indeed, he might, without exaggeration, be described as an intimate friend of George IV, both when he was Regent and after he had succeeded to the throne. Another interest in his life was that he was a great lover of horse-flesh and an excellent judge of an animal; indeed he published a little book on the treatment of diseases of the eye in horses.

He married Miss Margaret Dalrymple, daughter of Col. George Dalrymple, North Berwick, by whom he became the father of four sons and one daughter. He has a number of descendants of the third generation living to-day, to one of whom we are indebted for some of the information we have given, and who is the possessor of two fine portraits of him, one of which is reproduced in this issue. There are in all three oil paintings of him, by Joy, by Raeburn, and by Geddes. It is the last of these which has been chosen for reproduction, as representing Wardrop at the time when he was at

the height of his reputation and of his professional activity. Of his sons the only one to enter the medical profession was his eldest (James), who became surgeon in the 7th Hussars, and subsequently in the Grenadier Guards, with which regiment he served through the Crimea.

If there is one feature more than another which strikes the modern reader of some of the older authors of medical books, it is the accuracy of the clinical descriptions. These older writers possessed none of the extraneous means of investigation: no ophthalmoscope, for example, no tonometer; no Wassermann had yet appeared, no perimeter was invented, the microscope was in its infancy. Yet the clinical descriptions of the naked eye aspect of their cases it is oftentimes a joy to study. This statement applies to Wardrop's work as fairly as to some others' of his time; notably it refers to his description of night-blindness and of fungus haematodes. If anyone should imagine that it is in his generation that wisdom arose, let him read in the older writers; if he feels pessimistic, as one is apt to do, regarding our poor advance in the knowledge of disease, let him study them further, and he will find that till he comes to the deductions to be drawn from the observations there is little indeed to add except the particular points of precise mensuration which can only be supplied by modern instruments and tests, and these in truth form an advance which affords us great and solid advantages as compared with our ancestors; but for all that, within their possible area the older observers were not easy to beat.

Wardrop's two most important works, at least from our point of view, are his "Morbidity Anatomy of the Eye" and "Fungus Haematodes." We may do well to quote a few sentences from the preface to the former: "The object of the following essays is to describe the various morbid alterations in the structure of the human eye, and to illustrate by engravings those which are most remarkable. In the accurate view which Dr. Baillie has given of the morbid anatomy of some of the most important parts of the body, the diseases of the eye are not described; and as no attempt has yet been made in this country to treat of the pathology of this organ, little apology seems necessary for the present undertaking. Several excellent practical treatises and detached essays have indeed been at various times published, but during the last thirty years the diseases of the eye do not appear to have excited the same attention in this country as on the continent of Europe." After mentioning several books, "None of these authors have, however, delineated the morbid changes of structure which they have described; a few drawings only are to be found in the works of Beer and Scarpa, and in some periodical publications. The importance of a work, the object of which is to supply these defects, is sufficiently obvious." The book is in two volumes of about 400 pages

altogether, and is furnished with a number of coloured diagrams, which, though of small size, are of admirable beauty and fidelity, and are quite equal in their way to those in any modern text-book. The preface, as will be seen from the quotation given, amply justifies the appearance of the book. Its title, however, as the phrase would be understood now-a-days, is, perhaps, a little misleading, for there is not a great deal of anatomy in it; there is more of clinical observation and of reference to the cases related by other surgeons. Some of the statements, it must be confessed, read very strangely to-day. We may give three examples: "Though no muscular fibres can be demonstrated in the iris of the human eye, yet from the motions it performs, their existence can scarcely be doubted" (p. 25). "Throughout the animal kingdom, those animals who have two or more eyes, employ them to extend their sphere of vision, but man makes use of both eyes chiefly as one organ, little advantage being probably derived from being endowed with a pair, except that of diminishing the risk from injuries and disease" (p. 244). "There is a part of the retina called the macula lutea discovered by Sömmering which has been observed only in the human eye, and the functions of which have not been even conjectured" (p. 145).

It is curious to note, too, that even so late as the date of this book, the darkness surrounding amaurosis and squint was so impenetrable; one is brought forcibly to realize how the ophthalmoscope is essential to any comprehension of the former, and a clear idea of refraction to the explanation of the latter.

In his "Fungus Haematodes," too, we see how the question of the decussation of the optic nerves was still a moot point: "As, from the dark colour of the diseased parts, this was a favourable case for ascertaining whether the optic nerves decussate with each other or merely come in contact, I examined carefully the state of these parts. . . . This dissection clearly proved that the nerves did not in this individual cross each other. I would be, however, inclined to believe, from what I saw, that the optic nerves were joined to each other by interposed nervous substance common to both." For all that, "Fungus Haematodes" is an excellent book which displayed at once the author's earnest purpose and his knowledge of the existing pathology. From the preface to it let us quote a sentence: "In the following observations it has been my great object to point out the anatomical structure of the fungus haematodes, and to fix precise limits to the import of the name, to bring under one general view a considerable number of facts, the greater part of which have fallen under my own notice, along with others which have been communicated to me by my medical friends, or which are to be found insulated (*sic*) and not arranged in the works of different authors,—and also to describe the disease in

particular organs where it has not been hitherto known to exist." Not even a twentieth century writer could set before himself a wiser or more philosophic aim.

One point in which Wardrop and the writers of his day were able to excel most of those of our time, was in the elegance of their diction. Take the dedication of one of his books to Sir James Simpson; for a neatly turned compliment, for frank admiration with avoidance of fulsome flattery, for an honest and self-respecting tribute from a disciple to a master, you will find it hard to beat.

Would that more of *our* medical writing could with as much justice be described as literature!

OBSERVATIONS ON EYE CONDITIONS MET WITH IN MALTA, 1916-1917,

Occurring among British troops in the Balkans and Malta
Garrison.

The Montgomery Lecture, 1916-1917*

BY

EUPHAN M. MAXWELL, M.B., F.R.C.S.I.

I wish in the first place to express my thanks to Major Kiep, R.A.M.C., in charge of the Ophthalmic Department, St. George's Hospital, Malta. During the time of preparing this paper he afforded me every opportunity for the examination of his patients and reference to his case books. To many of his own personal observations and comments I am deeply indebted.

The cases observed have been mainly of diagnostic interest, acute conditions being usually treated in Salonica, while those of a chronic nature were frequently transferred to England in the course of treatment.

I am classifying the cases as follows:—

1. Ocular conditions associated with general disease.
2. Ocular conditions arising from traumata.
3. Visual acuity viewed from the military stand-point.

I.—Ocular conditions associated with general disease

A.—Malaria.

1. *The Conjunctiva.* Excluding the transient hyperaemia frequently present with any pyrexia, no affections of the conjunctiva,

*Read on November 28, 1917, in the School of Physic, Trinity College, Dublin.

to the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, and honorary physician to the King George Hospital. He had a charming personality—lovable, modest, genial, and tolerant.

Charles Edward Glasgott, senior consulting surgeon to the Manchester Royal Eye Hospital, died on August 14, after a brief illness, at Budleigh Salterton, Devon, where he had lived for some years in retirement. He had been Vice-President of the Ophthalmological Society of the United Kingdom (1902-1905).

We regret to announce the death, on July 19, of William James McCulloch Ettles, at the early age of 49 years. For many years he practised in the City, but on devoting himself exclusively to ophthalmology, he migrated to Harley Street. He was Treasurer, and had been President of the Hunterian and Optical Societies.

The following deaths are announced from America: John Chase, 62, of Denver; I. S. L. Bermann, of Washington, D.C.; H. T. Moore, 31, of Wilmington; A. F. Sanders, of Cincinnati; N. J. Hepburn, 71, of New York City; and Frank C. Todd, of the University of Minnesota.

Stephen Bernheimer, Fuchs's successor in the Vienna chair, died at the age of 57 years, on March 19, 1918. Ewald Hering, widely known for his researches on colour vision and other physiological problems, died on January 26, 1918, at the age of 84 years. A full account of his scientific achievements is to be found in the June number of the *Klinische Monatsblätter für Augenheilkunde*. Dr. Nicolai was killed in France, at the age of 50 years, on April 13, 1918. In civil life he enjoyed an extensive eye practice in Berlin.

NOTE

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Appointment	MR. R. R. CRUISE, C.V.O., has been appointed a Surgeon-Oculist to His Majesty the King.
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CORRIGENDUM

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IN Wardrop's biography, published in the August number of this journal, it was stated that the brothers Hunter, like Wardrop, were born near Bathgate. The writer of the biography now informs us that the Hunters came from a district considerably farther west than Bathgate. The author was misled by a reference from a book generally considered as authoritative.