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PIONEERS OF MEDICINE IN THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.¹

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MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN :

Meeting as we do, here in Quebec, the very cradle of our nationality, the place and the occasion is I think, peculiarly appropriate for recalling to your memory, a few of the old-time worthies of our profession; the men who were first to plant the Æsculapian banner on the soil of Canada. It is difficult to write, or say anything about the ancient city of Quebec, without picturing some of the great events which have occurred in her history, for history surrounds us on every side, from the banks of the St. Charles, where Jacques Cartier held his conference with King Donnacona and erected the sacred emblem of christianity, to the plains of Abraham where fell the gallant Wolfe and chivalrous Montcalm—but I must forbear, and pass on at once to the subject in hand.

It was indeed a motley crew that followed in the train of the French merchants, who were first attracted by visions of the fabulous wealth to be acquired in trading with the aborigines of the New World; warriors fresh from the battle fields of Europe; men of the proudest lineage of France, and who had breathed the atmosphere of courts, missionaries whose souls were fired with zeal at the alluring prospects of evangelization awaiting in the forests of America; and adventurers, daring as ever followed the standard of William of Normandy. Picture to yourselves if possible, the harbour of Port Royal, or what is now Nova Scotia, on the morning of July 27th, 1606. There is unusual bustle and excitement down by the shore

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where the little ship "Jonas," commanded by Captain Poutrincourt, is engaged in discharging her complement of passengers, mostly hailing from La Rochelle. Among the band of newly arrived immigrants there is one sturdy figure which I want you to study well, for it is the figure of Louis Hébert, the pioneer physician of Nouvelle France.

We can imagine this young fellow fresh and enthusiastic, as he strides along, gazing with curious and occasionally amused eyes, on the strange sights surrounding him on every side, and startled when addressed by some wild looking Coureur de Bois or fur-trader whose semi Indian attire, and savage bearing, seemed so inharmoniously to blend with the language of France.

From what we are told by L'Escarbot, the historian of the expedition, very little if any serious work was done at Port Royal during the succeeding fall and winter. Hunting and feasting, in which doubtless our great grandfather bore his part, were the chief occupations of the little colony, and it was only when the wine and kindred supplies became exhausted, that the associates of the "Jonas" dropped into the current setting towards Quebec, and with them drifted in the following spring, Dr. Louis Hébert.

Quebec at this time and even for some years before, had been merely a fur-trading centre, frequented by roving bands of Frenchmen, who came to barter with the Indians.

Hébert besides practising his profession of physician, seems also to have engaged in ordinary business enterprises, for we are told by Abbé Ferland that he "began in 1617, to grub up, and clear the ground, which forms the site of the present Catholic Cathedral and Seminary, and constructed a house and the first mill erected in the colony," thus becoming not only the premier citizen of Quebec, but also of all Canada—and here it may be well to note that the first time a notary's services were put into requisition in Canada, was at the instance of the heirs of Hébert the physician—thus proving that in this country, the profession of medicine ante-dated that of law.

Contemporary with Hébert was the surgeon Bonnerme, who came with Samuel de Champlain, when the latter founded Quebec, in 1606. Evidently all was not peace in the camp of Champlain, for shortly after his arrival, some of his followers hatched a murderous plot against the life of the great navigator, the scheme, however, leaked out, the ring-leader was arrested, found guilty, and executed. In some way or other, Bonnerme became mixed up in the matter, and suffered imprisonment, but subsequently his innocence being proved, he was honorably acquitted, our profession thereby fortunately avoiding the distinction, of contributing to the first judicial hanging held

in Canada. Dr. Bonnerme's existence in the colony was a comparatively short one, for he died of scurvy, the universal scourge, in less than two years later.

It is difficult to give the exact year in which the well-known Dr. Robert Giffard settled at Quebec, but we do know that 1634 saw the historic Seigniory of Beauport founded by Giffard, who in becoming the first settler in rural Canada, also became the first Canadian *habitant*. At Beauport he lived to a frosty old age, and many of the leading families of French-speaking Canada proudly recall their descent from Robert Giffard the physician, and first of Canadian Seigneurs.

1639 witnessed at Quebec, the foundation of the Hotel Dieu, under the management of the Sœurs Hospitalières from the convent of St. Augustin in Dieppe, and which was the gift of the Duchess D'Aiguillon, niece of Cardinal Richelieu, and in 1642, a similar building was erected at Ville Marie, the Montreal of the present day, this latter institution being largely due to the benefaction of Mde. de Bouillon, the rich widow of a superintendent of finance. The primary objects of these excellent charities, was the teaching of the children and nursing of the sick, and the faithful manner in which the original intentions have been carried out, even to the present day, entitle the good sisters, to a place among the medical pioneers of this province. In 1690, when Phipps knocked in vain at the gates of the ancient city, the population under the vigorous administration of Frontenac, had increased to 1500, and education had made considerable advance. The Jesuit's College, Séminaire des Missions Etrangères, and Petit Séminaire, were on a firm footing, and we find practising, at Quebec, Drs. Gervase Beaudoin, physician to the Ursuline nuns, Timothé Roussel, physician to the Hotel Dieu, Nicholas Sarrasin, Jean Leger de la Grange, Armand Dumanin, and Pierre du Roy. Of the number Sarrasin was perhaps the most noted. Born in France in 1659, he emigrated to Canada shortly after completing his medical course, and died at Quebec in 1736. He was physician to the King, a member of the Sovereign Council, and published during his long life time, a number of volumes of natural history, botany and medicine, besides discovering the pitcher-plant, which perpetuates his memory in the name of "*Sarracenia purpurea*."

When Peter Kalm, the Swedish Botanist visited Canada in 1749, seven years after the discovery of the Rocky Mountains by La Verendrye a native Canadian, his constant companion during many a woodland ramble, was Dr. Gauthier, himself an accomplished botanist, and from Dr. Gauthier, Kalm acquired most of the informa-

tion which appeared some years later, in the shape of two large volumes illustrated with plates.

A well-known surgeon who figured during the historic period before and following the conquest of Canada by the British in 1759, was the famous Phillippe Badelard—Badelard was present at the battle of Abraham, and seeing that the French troops to which he was attached were giving way, directed his steps to the rear where he met a wounded Highlander named Fraser, who was bleeding profusely. The doctor immediately attended to the soldier's injuries and then gave himself up to Fraser as a prisoner of war. Both Dr. Badelard and John Fraser lived to a very advanced age, and ever maintained for each other the closest ties of kindly friendship. Dr. Badelard was a person of most gentlemanly presence, and constantly wore a sword as was customary with the Bourgeoisie de Paris.

A contemporary of Badelard, Dr. Arnoux, lived for many years in Quebec, and it was in Arnoux's surgery that Montcalm's wounds were dressed while the great soldier was being borne through St. Louis Gate.

Another well-known surgeon of this period, Dr. Lejuste of the French army, came to Quebec after the fall of Louisbourg in 1758, and later among the noted medical men of the province, we find Dr. Francois Blanchet, the father of the first Education bill in Lower Canada.

The cause of education had also in Dr. Jean Baptiste Meilleur, an able and successful advocate. Meilleur who was born in 1796, and died in 1830, had the honor of being the first Superintendent of Public Instruction for Lower Canada, and during his life time, contributed many articles to *Le Journal de Médecine*. He was also a voluminous writer on geology, botany, agriculture, and other scientific subjects, and took a prominent part in the foundation of L'Assumption College.

Dr. Jacques Labrie, born in 1783, and who graduated at Edinburgh, sat for several years in the Lower Canadian Assembly, and besides doing good work as a medical man, also wrote a "History of Canada" which while awaiting purchase by the Government, was unfortunately destroyed by fire at St. Benoit during the rebellion of 1837.

The mention of 1837 will recall to the minds of every student of Canadian history, the names of at least three members of our profession, who were prominent among the agitators of that stormy period, namely Nelson, O'Callaghan and Chenier. Wolfred Nelson although an English-speaking Protestant, warmly espoused what was then termed the national cause, and led the insurgents at the battle of St. Denis, where the British forces were obliged to retreat. Twice he

was elected to the Presidency of the Provincial College of Physicians and Surgeons, and he also sat in the Lower Canadian Assembly. He constantly contributed to the medical press articles on preservation of public hygiene, "Reports on Penitentiary Prisons," etc., and although he suffered for a while political banishment, yet the fact that on his return to Canada, he was elected to the Mayoralty of Montreal, is a proof of the esteem in which he was held by the people of that city.

Dr. Edmund O'Callaghan, a brilliant Irishman, was a member of Parliament, editor of the *Montreal Vindicator*, and author of several historical works. He also was an active participant in the troubles of 1837, after which he took up his abode in the United States, and the gallant Chenier immortalised himself by dying a soldier's death at the battle of St. Eustache.

A man who followed the more peaceful paths of life, was Dr. Andrew Fernando Holmes, born at Cadiz, in 1797. Dr. Holmes who was one of the foremost medical men of his time, collected while a student in Scotland, an extensive herbarium of plants, which later on he presented to McGill University. He was a recognized authority on botany, geology and mineralogy, and contributed many articles on these subjects, as well as writing the history of cholera in Montreal. In 1827 he established with others, The Medical Institution which finally in 1828, merged into that of McGill, of which Dr. Holmes was the Dean, and where he lectured on the Practice of Medicine till the time of his death.

One of the most illustrious names in Canadian medicine, is that of Sir George Duncan Gibb who was born at Montreal in 1821. Sir George founded the St. Lawrence School of Medicine where he held the chair of Institutes of Medicine and Comparative Anatomy, and to which he attracted by his marvellous powers as a lecturer and demonstrator, students from all parts of the country. He assisted in the founding of the Montreal Dispensary, delivered lectures each winter before the Natural History Society, Mercantile Library Association, and Addisonian Literary Society, was Curator and Librarian of the Natural History Society for four years, and devoted much time and attention to the arrangement of the Society's collection, presenting to that body before he left for England, the greater portion of his private museum numbering nearly 1500 specimens in Natural History, and miscellaneous objects of interest and curiosity. A review of Sir George Gibb's contributions to the medical press alone, would form a volume by itself, suffice it to say that during his ten years editorial connection with the *Lancet*, he supplied at least six columns of hospi-

tal matter each week, which is equivalent to 3120 columns for the 520 weeks, or ten volumes of the Journal of 760 pages each. Sir George Gibb might not incorrectly be termed a specialist in any branch of medicine, for there was no department of the science which he did not seem to have thoroughly mastered.

Dr. Archibald Hall, born at Montreal in 1812, and educated at Edinburgh, besides lecturing at McGill successively on materia medica, chemistry and obstetrics, was much devoted to botany, zoology and meteorology. Zoology, however, was his chief delight, as in 1839, we find him presented with the silver medal of the Natural History Society "as a prize for the best essay on the zoology of the district of Montreal."

As a medical writer, Dr. Hall is best known as the editor of the *British American Journal of Medical and Physical Science*, which he established in 1845, and conducted with great ability until its suspension in 1852, and again from 1860 until it finally expired two years later.

Long before "Old Probabilities" were heard of in the United States. Dr. Robert Smallwood, born in 1812, had established at St. Martin, some ten miles from Montreal, a "Meteorological and Electrical Observatory" which was a constant source of wonder to the good people of the parish. Daily from his temple of mystery, Dr. Smallwood telegraphed to Montreal the weather estimates for the ensuing 24 hours and many an anxious St. Martin farmer was stimulated to fresher exertions by the Doctor's prognostications of a rainstorm soon to come, or *vice versa*.

Dr. Smallwood performed some invaluable work, and contributed to the press many interesting articles on the subjects mentioned.

The first medical serial which appeared in Canada namely, *Le Journal de Médecine de Quebec* was published in 1823, by Dr. Francois Xavier Tessier, who was also founder of the Quebec Medical Society.

Dr. Tessier who acquired a wonderful knowledge of several modern languages, studied under Dr. Von Iffland of Quebec, and graduated at New York. *Le Journal de Médecine* which was published in both English and French, received for a while the support of some of the best writers of the province, but finally owing to lack of support of paying subscribers, succumbed to the inevitable, and died the usual death of such journals, three years later.

Dr. Von Iffland founded in 1820, the first anatomical school established in Quebec. He held during his life-time various important positions in connection with his profession under the crown, was for some time Medical Superintendent of Quarantine at Grosse Isle,

wrote a history of the town of Sorel, and also contributed a large number of articles and essays for the medical and general press both in Europe and America.

A public spirited man and good citizen, was Dr. Joseph Morrin, born in Scotland in the early part of this century, and who founded the college bearing his name, which school has been of incalculable benefit, especially to the English-speaking youth of Quebec. Dr. Morrin delivered the inaugural address at the opening of the Quebec School of Medicine, replete with much statistical information concerning the same. Before the incorporation of the old Quebec Medical School with Laval University, Dr. William Marsden, born in 1807, lectured on anatomy, physiology, surgery, materia medica and botany. He was also for a time President of the Provincial College of Physicians and Surgeons and from 1851 to 1854 a member of the *Quebec Mercury* editorial staff.

It was not until the end of the last century, that English-speaking colonies began to spring up in the rural parts of this province, and these colonies were perhaps most numerous in the districts situate on the southern shore of the St. Lawrence and known as the Eastern Townships. The earlier settlers were largely of New England origin, coming for the most part from New Hampshire and Vermont, and among the granite hills and green mountains of their native states, these hardy pioneers had had a training which enabled them successfully to cope with the rugged forces of nature in their new homes. The life of the country practitioner to-day in the Province of Quebec, as many of you know, is a trying and arduous one, but it is an elysium compared to that experienced by our brethern of a century or even fifty years ago, when often the man of medicine, mounted on horseback, had to find his way to a distant patient, without even a blazed tree to mark his path through the forest. Such was the state of the old township of Shipton, when in 1803 Dr. Abraham Perkins Silver settled within its borders. Born in the city of Boston in 1770, Dr. Silver graduated at Harvard in 1795, and eight years later established himself in Shipton, where he practised for over half a century. During most of this period he was the only physician between Sherbrooke and Drummondville, and to-day you will still hear in these localities many a tale of the blunt, but large hearted, Dr. Silver.

The first medical man who made Richmond his home, was William Hollingworth Fowler, an Englishman born in 1808. He graduated at Glasgow, was for some time in the Royal Navy, in which capacity he visited nearly every portion of the globe, and finally settled down at Richmond in 1842. A man of great natural capacity and varied

gifts, he contributed in prose and verse to the journals of the time, and his active habits only terminated with his death in 1860.

Another land-mark of medicine in the Richmond district was Richard Norris Webber. Dr. Webber while at Harvard, witnessed the first operation performed under ether, and a thesis on "Ether as an Anæsthetic" written during 1847, his graduating year at Harvard, gained for Dr. Webber considerable reputation. Shortly afterward he established himself at Richmond, where for the fifty remaining years of his life, he was a constant and busy worker. St. Francis College numbers him among its list of founders, and an honored name remained behind when Dr. Webber passed away in 1897.

The township of Durham welcomed in 1849, the advent of a man who for nearly fifty years ministered faithfully to its medical wants—Dr. White, born in England in 1811, graduated in Edinburgh 21 years later, and then took a subsequent course at Trinity College, Dublin, after which he went to Australia, remaining in that colony for five years, returning to London, he spent two years in the metropolis, and finally emigrated to Canada, settling down in Durham in 1849.

Dr. White who was in every sense a cultured gentleman of the old school, had the distinction of being the first, and for many years the only physician in the county of Drummond, consequently his work extended over a very large area.

Among the hills of Missiquoi. Shefford and Brome, the names of Chamberlin, Brigham, White, Stowe, Shannon, Searles, Cotton, Butler, Pattee, Frary, Foster, and Abbott, are still held in grateful remembrance by the descendants of the pioneers who first settled these districts early in the present century. Among the most noted members of this group were perhaps Drs. Chamberlin, Cotton and Butler.

Joshua Chamberlin was born in Vermont in 1799, an able surgeon, a man of great resource and forceful character, the 56 years of his professional life were almost entirely spent in the vicinity of Frelighsburg.

Dr. Charles E. Cotton, a native of the township of Durham, where he was born in 1816, graduated at Jefferson College in 1837, and practiced nearly the whole of his medical life time at Cowansville. Dr. Cotton was a remarkably skilful surgeon and was once heard to remark after reading the account of a successful ovariectomy "If I had only known forty years ago, that the peritoneal cavity could be safely entered, I too might have had successful ovariectomies." Although frequently tempted to present himself for political honors, Dr Cotton always remained loyal to his chosen profession, and

literally "died in harness" after 50 years unwearying combat with disease.

The settlements along the north shore of the Ottawa, have had since their inception, many men of whom the profession may well be proud, and the Churches, Robertsons and Christies, who were among the early medical pioneers of these districts, are still perpetuated in medicine by descendants bearing the same honoured names.

I hope at some future day to go more deeply into the history of our medical forefathers, but for the present, space is too limited to permit of further extension. My purpose for the moment has been fulfilled, if I have only stimulated to a slight degree, your interest in a subject which it seems to me should command our admiration and respect, for not only is it due to the noble dead of our profession, but also due to ourselves, that we should occasionally become retrospective and look back to the heroic men who in our own country, led the van in warfare against the King of Terrors "Lest we forget, lest we forget."