

NOTES ON THE MEDICAL HISTORY OF THE COUNTY OF HURON

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The medical history of Huron begins in the days of mud roads, and no roads, in most instances only blazed trails through the bush. In the early "fifties" there was not a gravel road in the county. On most of the farms there was but small clearance; conveniencés of life were very scarce, and money scarcer. Log shanties were very much in evidence, and cultivated fruit *non est*.

At this period the doctors in Huron were not numerous. There was Dr. Cole, a graduate of Dublin University, a genial Irishman, who possessed the confidence of the whole community. The doctor and his horse were known throughout the whole neighbourhood. His saddle bags held the whole of his armamentarium, which I daresay

* Dr. Graham was one of the early physicians in the County of Huron. He died in 1929 at the age of 85. The present notes were given by him to Dr. J. W. Shaw, of Clinton, who has kindly sent them to us through the Huron Medical Society.—[EDITOR].

consisted chiefly of calomel and jalap, morphine, and a pocket surgical case, with perhaps a single-tube stethoscope. Other representatives of the profession about that time were: Drs. Dunlop and Shannon, of Goderich; Dr. Birtch, of Brucefield; Dr. Chalk, of Harpurkey; Dr. Reeve, of Clinton; Dr. Cowan, of Exeter.

By the middle "sixties" great advance had been made in the settlements. The gravel roads from Clinton to London, from Clinton to Wingham, and from Seaforth to Wroxeter, were completed. By 1870 the number of doctors had increased considerably, with the growth of population and advance in new settlements to the northern townships. Dr. Alex. Taylor settled in Goderich. In Clinton were Drs. Cole, Reeves, and Appleton; in Brucefield, Dr. James Stewart and Dr. Hurlburt; in Blyth, Drs. Carden, Thomson and Wm. Sloan; in Wingham, Drs. Peter MacDonald, Tamblyn and Towler; in Seaforth, Drs. Coleman, Campbell, Varcoe and Metherill; in Exeter, Drs. Hyndman, Cowan, Moore and Amos; in Manchester Dr. Moore; in Ainleyville, Dr. W. J. R. Holmes and Dr. Wm. Graham; in Bayfield, Dr. Stanbury.

About the latter "sixties" I do not think there was a fever thermometer, a Cannon's stethoscope,

or a microscope in use by the profession in Huron. Indeed, many laughed at the thermometer as a toy or plaything.

The Huron Medical Association came into being somewhere about the middle "seventies", through the efforts and leadership of Dr. James Stewart, of Brucefield, who afterwards became professor of materia medica at McGill College. Dr. Stewart seemed to be married to his profession; he was a careful and persistent student, a thorough diagnostician, modest and retiring in manner, loved and respected by the members of the Huron Medical Association, who presented him with a handsome gold Waltham watch on his removal to Montreal. The charter members of the Association were: Drs. James Stewart, John Campbell, Peter MacDonald, Wm. Sloan, A. Hurlburt, Alex. Taylor, Hodge, of Mitchell, Worthington, of Clinton, and Wm. Graham, of Brussels. Dr. Stewart was elected first president. The Association was instrumental in inducing many of its members to take great interest in the profession. I had the pleasure of accompanying Sir William Osler from Toronto to Hamilton just previous to his translation to Baltimore. Amongst other things he said:—"You must have some good men in Huron. I read your transactions in the journals. I have no hesitation in saying that you have the best medical society in Canada."

But the enthusiasm of our Association did not extend throughout the county as much as could have been wished. Soon after the London, Huron and Bruce Railway was opened the Society decided to hold one of their meetings in Exeter, and although interesting papers were read and cases shown not a medico from Exeter was present except Dr. Hyndman, Sr.

In 1883 the Ontario Medical Association suggested that Branch societies should be formed throughout the Province, and the Huron Society called a meeting in Palmerston, which was successful and well attended. The writer was appointed secretary, but owing to a year's absence in Europe the secretaryship was left in the hands of Dr. Yeomans, of Mount Forest. On my return I wrote to most of the medicos in the neighbourhood of Palmerston but only received answers from two. Thus the effort to establish a branch society proved abortive in that locality.

Dr. John Campbell, of Seaforth, was an enthusiastic member of the Association, seldom absent, a typical Celt, and well saturated with Scottish lore, particularly with the life of Robbie Burns. He eventually moved to Brooklyn, N.Y., and while there was invited to address the Caledonia Society of Newark on "Burns". The President, Dr. S. E. Robertson, told me that the Society had never heard the equal of it in all its history.

Dr. Wm. Sloan, another standby, was one of the most genial, lovable souls possible. He took a genuine interest in the Association, and was thoroughly honest with his patients; humbug was foreign to his character. He eventually moved to Toronto, where he received the appointment of surgeon to the Central Prison at Toronto.

Dr. Peter MacDonald, of Wingham, was another of the stalwarts who was a valued member. He did not attend as regularly as some others, but at the same time was an acquisition to the society; he was an able debater and always possessed reasons for the faith that was in him. He was a good deal of a politician. He represented East Huron for many years in the Dominion Parliament as Deputy Speaker, and received as reward the postmastership of the City of London.