

Abercrombie and Syme, who put little trust in drugs. He came finally to the conclusion that in sickness neither medicine nor alcoholic stimulants nor food are necessary as a general rule, but on the contrary are often absolutely injurious, and that the golden rule of practice is that "the sick are in most cases to be left to Nature's methods and to these only." For the Hippocratic maxim, *Melius remedium dubium quam nullum*, he substituted, *Melius medicamentum nullum quam dubium*.

On this plan of "masterly inactivity" he treated his patients, and—although he met with a good deal of opposition, being even threatened with the terrors of the law on one occasion—he says that for thirty-five years he had more clients than he could do justice to without assistance. He did not publish his views till he retired from active work, but he adhered to them to the end. He practised what he preached, and attributed his length of days to his system. Speaking of the banter of younger medical friends who used to laugh at him as a very poor specimen of the mode of life he recommended, he says:

The element of Time was a great one in my case, and now, when I am not ashamed to offer myself as a specimen of an old man who lives a most simple life, I have no one left of the old scoffing friends whom I was most anxious to appeal to. They have all had the short life, but not, I fear, the merry one. In most instances one severe illness carried them off when at the height of their work and prosperity. It is a sad recollection.

In this utterance we can almost hear a soft chuckle as the old man thinks of his having outlived those who preferred Burgundy to hot water, and beefsteak to milk and white of egg. But Dr. Keith, in his zeal for the simple life, seemed to forget that in diet, as in everything else, we cannot all follow the same path. He did not make allowance for the fact that many people are so constituted that they are compelled to echo Sir James Paget's frequent thanksgiving for good food and good wine. That great surgeon found that for him these things were good, just as much as Dr. Keith felt the benefit of his own mode of life.

One remarkable incident in Dr. Keith's professional career was the part he took in the first experiments with chloroform as an anaesthetic. Miss Eva Blantyre Simpson says in her life of her famous father:

Contemporary accounts as to its first trial differ slightly. Dr. George Keith and my aunt, Miss Grindlay, are the only two survivors. My aunt says the professor came into the dining room one afternoon holding a little bottle in his hand, and saying, "This will turn the world upside down." He then poured some into a tumbler, breathed it, and fell unconscious. This may have been some other drug, for many were tried, but till recently, when dimmed by age, Miss Grindlay's memory was a veracious one. Miss Petrie, her niece, was much at Queen Street in these days, and in a journal she kept, mentions that my father "tried everything on himself first," and once, after swallowing some concoction, was insensible for two hours. Dr. Keith recalled another experiment, when, not content with chloroform, he tried a compound of carbon, which brought on such irritation in breathing that he had to be kept under chloroform to relieve him.

In later life apparently Dr. Keith was not particularly proud of his association with this far-reaching discovery. When preparing a special issue of the JOURNAL to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of anaesthesia, we wrote to Dr. Keith asking him to contribute some recollections of the early experiments. The answer was long and the purport of it not very clear, but it may be summed up in a remarkable declaration to the effect that "the whole thing is best forgotten."

Dr. Keith had travelled much, and was fond of the study of languages. When considerably past 80 he read some of the Latin classics with pleasure. He is described by those who knew him as a man of attractive personality, whom his wide knowledge and experience made a delightful companion.

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News of the unexpected death of Dr. Thomas Dixon Savill reached London last week, and is the cause of much regret. It took place while on a holiday in Algiers, on January 10th, as the result of a fracture of the skull incurred through a fall while riding. It is a premature end to a career which traversed, on useful and thoroughly scientific lines, a considerable section of the general field of medicine.

Dr. Thomas Savill, born and educated in London, commenced the study of medicine at St. Thomas's Hospital, continued it at St. Mary's, and completed it abroad at Paris, Hamburg, and Vienna. His student career was one of distinction; he entered St. Thomas's Hospital as a natural science scholar, took several class prizes, won the Tite Scholarship, and finally graduated with honours at the M.B.Lond. examination in 1881. Later on he became in turn M.D. of the same University, a member of the Royal College of Physicians of London, and D.P.H. Cambridge.

On first settling down at home, Savill joined the West London Hospital, which he served as Assistant Physician and Pathologist, but gave up this appointment on election to the post of Medical Superintendent of the newly opened Paddington Infirmary in 1885; during his seven years' tenure of this post he studied medical Poor Law work in all its aspects, held office as President of the Medical Superintendents' Society, and became an early advocate of the utilization of Poor Law institutions as fields of clinical study. Having meantime commenced to do work for the Royal Commission on Vaccination, he gave up this appointment in 1892, and afterwards devoted himself to literary work and to the specialities of dermatology and nervous disease. Neurology he had studied at the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris, his first literary essay being an English version of the lectures he had heard delivered by Charcot. On dermatology he wrote some papers quite early in his career, and soon after leaving Paddington joined the St. John's Hospital for Skin Diseases. He was one of its Senior Physicians at the time of his death, and held a similar appointment at the West End Hospital for Diseases of the Nervous System.

It was indeed to nervous diseases, especially those of a functional character, that he had devoted most of his time in late years. A book which he published on the subject of neurasthenia in 1899 had gone through four editions at the time of his death. A later work on an allied subject was his lectures on hysteria, which he endeavoured to prove was due to a vasomotor condition. A third book, his second in regard to date of first publication, was a *System of Clinical Medicine*, founded largely on his experiences while working at Paddington Infirmary. It has reached a second edition, and is markedly original both in arrangement and matter. It is entitled in many respects to be regarded as of much value, and but for the special form adopted in giving expression to the author's views might have been expected to obtain much greater popularity. It is an attempt to write on disease from the standpoint from which it is considered at the bedside. The symptoms which disorder of any one of the various systems of the body may bring about are described and so grouped as to enable a differential diagnosis to be reached. In addition to these books Dr. Savill contributed a good many papers to the *Lancet* and was a valued member of its outdoor staff. He also for some time acted as an examiner in medicine to the University of Glasgow and to the Society of Apothecaries of London, and was a corresponding member of several foreign societies.

His life, therefore, was very full, and being only 53, he may be regarded as perhaps not having reached his zenith when death overtook him. For the past seven or eight years he had been greatly assisted in his literary work by his wife, Dr. Agnes Savill (formerly Miss Blackadder), Assistant Physician at the St. John's Hospital for Diseases of the Skin, in whose loss all must feel the deepest sympathy.

THE death occurred on January 10th, from acute tuberculosis, of SEPTIMUS J. LEE, L.R.C.P.Lond., M.R.C.S.Eng., of Brampton, Cumberland, in the Hospital for Epilepsy and Paralysis, Maida Vale, W., of which he had been Resident Medical Officer since April, 1909. Mr. Lee, who was educated at Edinburgh and the Middlesex Hospital, was appointed to the Hospital for Epilepsy and Paralysis as soon as he had qualified, and a promising career has been terminated by his untimely death whilst engaged in the hospital's service.

PROFESSOR LORTET, Honorary Dean and Professor of the Medical Faculty of the University of Lyons, died in that city on Christmas Day in his 74th year. He had filled the office of dean since 1876. Dr. Lortet was commissioned