MEDICAL HISTORY

Centenary Commemoration of Sarcoidosis and of
Jonathan Hutchinson

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In January 1869 a 58-year-old coal-wharf worker attended Jonathan Hutchinson at the Blackfriars Hospital for Skin Diseases complaining of purple skin plaques, which had gradually developed over the preceding two years somewhat symmetrically on his legs and hands (Fig. 2). They were neither tender nor painful and did not ulcerate. Hutchinson considered that the skin lesions were in some way related to the patient's gout. "He came on account of a number of peculiar patches of dark purplish colour on his extremities. . . . He had an attack of gout in the metacarpophalangeal joint of his left forefinger while under treatment. No medicine had much effect on the eruption; he took at different times, colchicum and magnesia, arsenic, acid iron mixture, iodide of potassium, and simple alkaline mixture. No special local treatment was adopted, only an ointment of lead and mercury being ordered. . . ." Hutchinson's first published account of this patient appeared under the title "Case of livid papillary psoriasis" in his *Illustrations of Clinical Surgery* (1877). In a much later publication, "On eruptions which occur in connection with gout," Hutchinson (1898) recalls this first example with the remark, "He had suffered from gout, and he finally died of contracted kidneys. I was inclined to consider the skin-disease as essentially connected with gout. . . ."

John W. died in 1875 at the age of 64 years from kidney disease, after treatment at King's College Hospital, London. It is now recognized that patients with sarcoidosis, particularly those with chronic skin lesions, have disordered calcium metabolism leading to renal calculi and terminal renal failure.

Jonathan Hutchinson (1828-1913)

We should attribute to 1969 not only the centenary of the first recognition of sarcoidosis by Jonathan Hutchinson, but also the centenary of his editorship of the *British Medical Journal*. In 1869 he succeeded Ernest Hart, and was soon launched on a variety of topics, including the constitution of the Royal College of Surgeons, public health, medical reform, hospital architecture, Listerism, antivivisection, medical examinations, syphilography, malthusianism and over-popula-

tion, pediculosis, Davy's discovery of Faraday, and *Ars Longa* (Hutchinson, 1946).

As though editorship of the *B.M.J.* was insufficient challenge, he was during 1869 President of the Hunterian Society. He earned the title of the most famous general practitioner in the world because of his wide range of interests and appointments as dermatologist at the Blackfriars Hospital for Diseases of the Skin, ophthalmologist to the Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital, venereologist to the Lock Hospital, physician to the City of London Chest Hospital, and general surgeon to the London and Metropolitan Hospitals. In addition to his Presidency of the Hunterian Society, he was founder-secretary of the New Sydenham Society (1859-1907); President of the Royal College of Surgeons (1889); President of the Pathological Society of London (1879); President of the Ophthalmological Society of the United Kingdom (1883); President of the Neurological Society (1887); President of the Medical Society of London (1892); President of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society (1894-96); and President of the 1896 International Dermatology Congress.

Indelibly printed in the world literature are Hutchinson's triad of interstitial keratitis, congenital syphilitic teeth, and labyrinthine disease; Hutchinson's mask-like facies in tabes dorsalis; Hutchinson's chronic skin plaques in sarcoidosis; and Hutchinson's unequal pupils in meningeal haemorrhage.

He became a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1882, and a knighthood was conferred on him in 1908; other honours included the LL.D. Glasgow, Cantab., and Edinburgh; D.C.L. Oxon.; hon. M.D. Dublin; D.Sc. Leeds; and corresponding member of the Society of Surgery of Paris.

Hutchinson the Hunterian

Hutchinson was a true Hunterian in the manner in which he studied diseases, in his love of specimens and scrupulous collectings, and also in his profound admiration of John Hunter. He became a member of the Hunterian Society in 1853, and within a year or so addressed the Society on dyspepsia and phthisis. He became President in 1869, gave the Hunterian oration to the Royal College of Surgeons in 1891, and inevitably became trustee of the College's Hunterian collec-

FIG. 1.—Sir Jonathan Hutchinson (1828-1913). From a lithograph in the Wellcome Institute of the History of Medicine. By courtesy of the Wellcome Trustees.

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tion. Hutchinson's Hunterian oration reveals how he had consciously followed in the footsteps of John Hunter. Paragraph after paragraph might apply almost equally to either man (Hutchinson, 1946). "Hunter was an early riser. . . . He was capable of contenting himself with but short hours of sleep. . . . One of Hunter's secrets of strength was his patience. . . . He was not one of those who draw a strong distinction between business and pleasure. . . . As regards his fellow men and their published opinions, he was self-confident in the highest degree: before nature and her facts he stood in humble self-distrust. . . . The sources of Hunter's success lay in his combination, in one person, of the qualities of thinker and observer."

FIG. 2.—Sarcoid skin plaques on hand of first patient described by Hutchinson.

Hutchinson chose the letter H as one of the symbols of his life because of his veneration for John Hunter, who was born exactly 100 years before him—and also possibly because of William Harvey, whose *De Motu Cordis* had been published precisely 200 years before Hutchinson's birth.

For its 150th anniversary, the Hunterian Society (founded 3 February 1819) has brought out a tie on which is embroidered the profile of John Hunter. But occasionally, when the light falls obliquely on it, is there not a trace of the countenance of its 1869 President?

Hutchinson and Osler

In this, the 50th anniversary of the death of Sir William Osler (on 29 December 1919), it is appropriate to remind ourselves of the close friendship between Hutchinson and Osler, who often visited him at Haslemere. Osler was descended from an American branch of the Hutchinsons, of Lincolnshire. It is not quite clear that it is the same family as that of Jonathan Hutchinson; but, being Quakers of the same name, and living

within a dozen miles of one another, it is more than likely. Sir William Osler's ancestor, Ann (Marbury) Hutchinson—a great transcendentalist preacher, and champion for the freedom of spiritual religion—suffered some persecution and exile at the hands of the New England colonists, went to live in Red Indian territory, and one night was massacred with all her family, except one son, Edward Hutchinson, who was the ancestor of Sir William Osler (Hutchinson, 1946).

Haslemere

Hutchinson was fond of shooting and riding, and swam in a cold water pool in his grounds until nearly the end of his long life. He died at his house, the Library, Inval, Haslemere,

FIG. 3.—Sarcoid eruption in 64-year-old woman patient presented by Hutchinson at a meeting of the Dermatological Society of London.

on 23 June 1913, and was buried at Haslemere. By his orders there was inscribed on his gravestone, "A Man of Hope and Forward-Looking Mind." Portraits accompany his obituary notices (*British Medical Journal*, 1913) and he figures in the portrait group of the 1884 Council of the Royal College of Surgeons (Plarr, 1930). His wife predeceased him in 1886; their family included six sons and four daughters. One son, Jonathan, followed his father as surgeon to the London Hospital; another, Proctor, a laryngologist, died early; Roger Jackson was in practice at Haslemere; and H. Hutchinson became an architect.

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