

SOME CUMBERLAND COUNTY
PHYSICIANS OF FORTY YEARS AGO.

BY ISRAEL H. BETZ.

*Delivered at the Hamilton Library, Friday
evening, November 1st, 1907.*

[COPYRIGHT RESERVED]

It is indeed an Unalloyed pleasure to have the privilege of appearing before the Hamilton Library Association this evening to turn back to the period when I first became a resident of Cumberland County. Although forty years have elapsed since that period, and fifteen years have passed since I removed from your midst, I am sincere when I state that nowhere else have I made and retained better and warmer friends than those I left in the Cumberland Valley. There is something in your charming landscape, in your beautiful scenery and in your romantic history embalmed "In Old Bellaire" and its setting that must be the secret you have in retaining the affection and esteem of those who have been residents in your midst.

The period from 1867 to 1907, coming so soon after the gigantic struggle for the preservation of the Union—at its beginning, forms a transition period which in its course and development is one of, if not the most interesting period in our history. Its social, political, scientific and

especially its medical aspects and adjuncts with which we are more particularly concerned on this occasion have been greater than the sum of those taking place in all previous historical periods. Before this time medicine was still very largely based on methods which were metaphysical in character. Authority rather than verification was still largely dominant in its domain. Inductions based on insufficient facts, or formed on misinterpretations were still held and accepted to a considerable extent. Old time traditions and institutions had been rudely overthrown during this period and every growing and developing phase of knowledge partook of reconstruction and change. Science is a universal living whole and its divisions cannot be dissociated and dis severed apart and independent from others. Thus when heat, light, electricity and other domains advanced, their concrete embodiments were appropriated and adapted by medical science.

The thermometer for recording human temperature at the bedside was still a novelty in the Cumberland Valley in 1867-8. Even humorous designations and comparisons were made by the laity to whom its use seemed so incongruous. The world very largely overlooks the fact that medicine is a growing and developing department of knowledge. Hypodermic medication about the same time was still a novelty and its undeveloped state sometimes brought it into startling notoriety, if it did not lead to its disadvantage.

Auscultation, percussion and the application of physical methods of diagnosis were just being applied. Reliance was still largely placed on the vital sign and Phenomena. To elicit a new collection of signs by the aided senses with instruments

of precision, seemed a marvelous advance to both patient and physician. The lancet, which had once been so familiar to our elders, had now become unpopular and had very largely fallen into disuse. The mercurial preparations were now largely disappearing from use but reminders and reminiscences of their potency were still frequently rehearsed. Inquiries from patients about the advisability of drinking water, were echoes of a past condition of affairs, but as the years sped by these inquiries were seldom heard. The method of Lister had just been announced but it was years before it permeated the profession as a whole. Just as antiseptic measures advanced so antiphlogistic methods declined. This period also saw the beginning of improved methods and measures in the application of remedies to the human economy. Chemistry had lent her aid in this direction. With its assistance and that of the microscope the growing domain of Biology was wrested in name and reality from empiricism to whose questionable claims it had thus far been relegated.

These are but several of the impulses which coming about forty years ago served as it were to give the medical profession a new awakening and rejuvenation. The men of the past did their duty as they saw it with unflinching courage and fortitude. We are the heirs of the past and while to as a wider horizon may have opened, we must never forget that we are indebted to the brave pioneers of every age who have blazed the way for us. But if much is given, much is also expected and it also behooves us to do our full duty which if well done more cannot be expected.

All this is but introductory to the repetition of some remarks upon the members of

the Cumberland County Medical Society of forty years ago which I gave extempore at the meeting of the Fifth Censorial District Medical Association at Mt. Holly Springs last August, and which at the request of its president, Mayor Jamas Evelyn Filcher, I have committed to manuscript for rehearsal before the Hamilton Library Association.

It was with mingled feelings of pleasure and sadness that I appeared before that association of medical men. Many of their faces had become familiar to me in later years. Others had appeared at our medical meetings more recently. But my thoughts reverted to "forty years ago" when I entered the profession of medicine. We had then passed through a gigantic struggle which had even come to our own doors and which fortunately for humanity and for civilization had terminated triumphantly.

Medical organizations for scientific and social purposes had existed in former times. Their beginning and development was crude, but gradually they progressed until in 1832 the British Medical Association was organized, which was followed in 1846 by the formation of the American Medical Association. Through the latter organization grew our State Medical Societies among which arose the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania, in 1848. County Medical Societies had been formed in various parts of our State before the Civil War. During that period their progress was slow. Immediately after the termination of the war, in 1866, Cumberland County took steps to organize a Medical Society to be in affiliation with the State and National Societies. In 1867 Cumberland County perfected its society and printed its constitution and by-laws,

with a list of its membership which embraced nearly every available member of the regular profession in the county. I held a little pamphlet, yellowed with age, in my hands from which I read the following roll of honor, viz:

CARLISLE.

DR. W. W. DALE,
 DR. S. P. ZIEGLER,
 DR. S. B. KIEFFER,
 DR. J. J. ZITZER,
 DR. A. J. HERMAN,
 DR. E. SCHELLING,
 DR. D. CORNMAN,
 DR. D. R. BIXLER.

MECHANICSBURG.

DR. J. B. HERRING,
 DR. R. W. SHORT,
 DR. E. B. BRANDY,
 DR. R. G. YOUNG,
 DR. IRA DAY,
 DR. A. DAY,
 DR. C. G. LOOSE.

SHIPPENSBURG.

DR. R. C. HAYS,
 DR. W. W. NEVIN,
 DR. ALEXANDER STEWART,
 DR. WILLIAM RANKIN,
 DR. C. A. HOWLAND,
 DR. C. B. RUBY.

NEWVILLE.

DR. DAVID AHL,
 DR. M. F. ROBINSON,
 DR. GEORGE W. HALDEMAN,
 DR. J. C. CLAUDY,
 DR. S. H. BREHM,

HOGUESTOWN.

DR. JOSEPH CRAIN,
 DR. R. M. CRAIN.

NEW CUMBERLAND.

DR. E. H. COOVER,
 DR. GEORGE R. HURSH.

SHIREMANSTOWN.

DR. M. B. MOSSER.

WHITEHILL.

DR. J. D. BOWMAN.

WEST FAIRVIEW.

DR. D. W. BASIIORE.

MOUNT ROCK.
 DR. J. W. C. CUDDY.
 DICKINSON.
 DR. W. H. LONGSDORF.
 NEWBURG.
 DR. WILLIAM G. STEWART.
 BIG SPRING.
 DR. GEORGE GROVE.
 PLAINFIELD.
 DR. CHARLES ZITZER.
 SHEPHERDSTOWN.
 DR. D. W. ROSS.
 CHURCHTOWN.
 DR. L. H. LENHART.
 LISBURN.
 DR. L. LAMAR.
 MOUNT HOLLY SPRINGS.
 DR. W. H. LAUMAN.
 BOILING SPRINGS.
 DR. H. MOWER.
 NEW KINGSTON.
 DR. I. L. SIBBETT.
 GREENVILLAGE.
 DR. J. A. MCCLAY.
 HONORARY MEMBERS.
 DR. D. MALIGN, CARLISLE, PA.
 DR. J. J. B. WRIGHT, U. S. BARRACKS, CARLISLE, PA.

Never were the physicians of a county more fully and harmoniously organized.

The first president was Dr. Joseph Crain, of Hoguestown. He was a venerable gentleman, long and favorably known in the profession and among the people.

The secretary was Dr. George W. Haldeman, of Newville. He had previously practiced five years at Manchester, in York county. He later removed to Paola, Kansas. He was a practical man of marked ability.

Of the Carlisle physicians Drs. Dale, Ziegler, Kieffer, Zitzer and Herman were especially well known and practiced in Carlisle and its vicinity for a generation. Dr. Dale was a man of suavity, of gentle manners and possessed much influence.

Dr. Zeigler possessed a quiet bearing and was deferential in demeanor. Dr. Kieffer was a man of courtly manners, of genial presence, fertile in resources, persistent in his manner and apt in repartee. He was president of the State Medical Society in 1873. Dr. Zitzer was first known as the "Hungarian Doctor" from the fact that it was believed he was connected with the Hungarian uprising in 1848. Being confined in a prison, he escaped to America and commenced practice at Plainfield and later at Carlisle for many years. He was brusque in manners, sententious in speech, and very deficient in the English language. His clientage was largely from a distance. He was a man of good judgment, cool and calm demeanor and inspired the utmost confidence in his patients.

Dr. Herman first commenced practice in one of the adjoining towns and later removed to Carlisle and enjoyed a large practice. Of Drs. Schelling, Bixler and Cornman we have but little data. These gentlemen are all dead.

Mechanicsburg at this time had Drs. Herring, Short, Brandt, Young, Dr. Day and his son, Alpheus Day and Dr. C. O. Loose who later removed to Reading and is still engaged in practice. He is the only survivor of the Mechanicsburg physicians. Dr. Herring had been preceded in practice by his father in that place. Dr. Short was of southern birth, a man of fine presence and popular as a practitioner.

Dr. E. B. Brandt practiced in New Cumberland, Shiremanstown and for many years in Mechanicsburg.

Dr. Robert G. Young was a practitioner of note, being a man of fine literary tastes and educational qualifications. He was the preceptor of the late Dr. William E. Swiler who practiced in Yocumtown, York

county, for a period of thirty-five years and for fifteen years, until his death, at Mechanicsburg.

Dr. Young met with an accident which necessitated the amputation of a limb which incapacitated him for further active labors.

Dr. R. L. Sibbett, whose ancestors settled near Big Spring, was born near Shippensburg in the early part of the century. He had been a teacher, and many who later became prominent in life afterwards were under his instruction. He graduated at Pennsylvania College, Gettysburg, in 1856. Comparatively late in life he took up the study of medicine under Drs. Stewart and Howland, of Shippensburg, and graduated at the University of Pennsylvania in 1866. He first located at Harrisburg, later at New Kingston. In 1870 he went to Europe and was in Paris during the siege by the Prussians. He later recorded his experiences in a volume. In 1872 he returned and located in Carlisle and remained there until his death, which occurred in 1898. He was the founder and the first secretary of the American Academy of Medicine, one of the leading national medical societies of the country.

Dr. Ira Day was a native of Vermont. For many years he was an active practitioner in Mechanicsburg. He was a man of high literary acquirements, and was respected by the public. His son was associated with him in practice. The elder Day practiced medicine in Mechanicsburg forty-one years and at his death was president of the Cumberland County Medical Society.

Of the physicians of Shippensburg embracing Drs. Stewart, Rankin, Howland, Nevin, Ruby and Hays, but a single one is living, Dr. Nevin. Dr. Stewart practiced

in Shippensburg during a long lifetime. He was a man of fine physique, of terse epigrammatic utterance and was looked up to with veneration by his patients. He was a public spirited citizen and was connected with a number of business projects which he executed with propriety and integrity. He was the father of George H. Stewart, Judge John Stewart, Hon. Alexander Stewart and the late Dr. Robert C. Stewart.

Dr. William Rankin, born in 1795, was probably the oldest man in the society. As a practitioner Dr. Rankin was careful and painstaking. He was a student and writer to the last. He was kindly and pacific in the highest degree. He practiced for fifty-three years and his funeral was attended by nearly all the physicians of Cumberland and Franklin counties. A chair is in our possession which belonged to the original office outfit of Dr. Rankin in 1819.

Dr. Howland was for a time associated with Dr. Alexander Stewart. In later years he removed to Kansas where he died.

Dr. Nevin was an active practitioner for many years and is now the only surviving one of the charter members of the Medical Society of 1867. Of Drs. Hays and Ruby we have not sufficient data to enter upon any further notice.

Of the physicians of Newville Drs. Robinson, Ahl, Haldeman, Claudy and Brehm, not a single survivor remains. Dr. David Ahl was a native of York county, and a brother of the late Dr. John Ahl who was at his death the oldest practitioner in York county. Dr. David Ahl was a cadet at West Point but on account of a defect in vision he resigned and later entered upon the study and practice of medicine. For a time he practiced at Dover and later removed

to Newville. He was the inventor of "Ahl's Adaptable Porous Fracture Splints" which had great sale during his lifetime.

Dr. M. F. Robinson we recall as a genial gentleman, who had a large practice. Never robust, he suffered from infirmities which impede the pathway of the active practitioner.

Of Dr. Haldeman we have already spoken.

Dr. J. C. Claudy was a native of the community and during his career enjoyed a large practice. He took great interest in the workings of the society during the many years he was connected with it.

Dr. S H. Brehm was also a native of the community. He and the late Dr. Witherspoon, of Shippensburg, and the writer entered upon the practice of medicine at the same time in Cumberland county. Dr. Brehm was a careful, conscientious practitioner and a close student of medical literature. He enjoyed a large practice. After practicing about twenty years at Newville he removed to Hutchinson, Kansas, where he died suddenly of apoplexy some five years later.

Of Dr. Irwin and son we have already spoken.

Dr. E H. Coover, of New Cumberland, enjoyed a large practice in that locality. He was a man of ability and held in high repute by the people.

Dr. Geo. R. Hursh was a fellow student with Dr. Win. E. Swiler and practiced at several points during his career. He entered politics and served in the Legislature for a term. Neither of these gentlemen is now living.

Dr. M. B. Mosser at that time practiced at Shiremanstown but later removed to Mechanicsburg. He had a good army record

as a surgeon during the war. The Mosser or Musser family have been noted for furnishing a number of medical men to the profession.

Dr. J. D. Bowman practiced at White Hill but we did not enjoy his acquaintance and therefore have no data concerning him.

Dr. D. W. Bashore, of West Fairview, is still living at an advanced age and has retired from the profession. He has been succeeded by his son Dr. H. B. Bashore.

Dr. D. W. Ross, of Shepherdstown, died during the past year.

Dr. J. W. C. Cuddy at that time practiced at Mt. Rock. After some time he removed to Baltimore where he was elected to fill the chair of Materia Medics and Therapeutics in the Baltimore University Medical School which he still fills.

Dickinson or Centreville, was represented by Wm. H. Longsdorf who enjoyed a large and lucrative practice. His son, H. H. Longsdorf, later became his successor and his daughter, Dr. Hildegard H. Longsdorf, is a practitioner in Carlisle.

Newburg was represented by Dr. Wm. G. Stewart, who later removed to Newville where he died some years ago. His father Dr. Thomas Stewart and his brother Dr. Thomas Stewart, Jr., engaged in practice in Carlisle some years later. Dr. Stewart had been preceded at Newburg for a short time by Dr. A. A. Thomson recently of Carlisle. Dr. David Smith had been practicing in Newburg from 1833 to 1863. He had a great reputation in fevers among the people. He was a man of the most kindly disposition giving his undivided attention to his profession to the exclusion of his financial interests.

Big Spring, was represented by Dr. George Grove a lineal descendant of the

celebrated Hans Graeff of Holland descent. Dr. Grove entered the profession in 1836, about the time that Dr. Senseny of Chambersburg and Rutherford of Harrisburg, commenced their medical careers. Dr. Grove was of an ardent, impulsive temperament yet withal genial and kindly. He did an immense amount of hard work and for 55 years no man was more constantly found at his post ready to answer all calls in or out of season. He upheld the amenities and dignity of the profession and was the soul of truth and honor in its maintenance. His name was a household word in the Cumberland Valley.

Plainfield at that time was represented by Dr. Charles Zitzer, a brother of Dr. J. J. Zitzer, of Carlisle.

Dr. L. H. Lenhar had practiced at Churchtown for many years. He was a practical man and did a large practice.

Dr. Lamar, of Lisburn, was a man of considerable literary ability and practiced at that point during his active life.

Dr. W. H. Lauman, of Mt. Holly Springs, practiced there during his medical life dying during the past year. He was a practitioner of worth and standing.

D. H. Mower, of Boiling Springs, practiced at that point for a number of years. He later removed to Kansas where he died some years ago.

Greenvillage, Franklin county, was represented by Dr. J. A. McClay, who was descended from the noted family of that name. A number of members of the medical profession have descended from this family.

Of the honorary members Dr. Mahon had been a naval surgeon in the early part of the century. He later resigned and entered upon private practice in Carlisle. Being highly educated and attracted by

elegant literature he was a favorite among the cultured class of a college town. He died in the Centennial year.

Dr. Joseph Jefferson Burr Wright was a distinguished surgeon in the United States Army with the rank of Colonel and Brevet Brigadier General who was long stationed at Carlisle Barracks, where he retained his residence after his retirement from active service and where he died in 1878.

Of the twenty two hundred thousand individual union enlistments not counting reenlistments during the Civil War about forty years afterward nearly one million survivors were reported. Almost one half.

It must be remembered however that the largest number of enlistments were made between 17 and 21 years of age, in fact of the 130th Pennsylvania Volunteers which was almost wholly recruited in Cumberland and York counties, the average was about 19 years. Probably the average age of the medical men here enumerated would reach between 45 and 50 years. That the ratio of mortality in 40 years should be one half or five tenths of the total in the former case and nine tenths in the latter does not after all afford so great a disparity when the relative ages are considered. Moreover the mortality is greater as we advance in life as the mortality rates of the veterans are showing during the last few years.

The speaker's connection with Cumberland county and its medical society was 25 years. For the last fifteen years he has been connected with the York county medical society. He is therefore the only surviving member of the Cumberland County Medical Society and who is now connected with that of York county. The

York County Medical Society was organized in 1873 with a membership of 19. Three of those early members were present with us at the Mt. Holly Springs meeting in August, 1907, viz: Dr. S. J. Roan (1852), Dr. M. J. McKinnon (1853) and Dr. B. F. Spangler (1868). But 4 of its 19 original members survive. During its existence in all it has had about 200 members. Its loss by death has been 35—an average of one yearly. At present it has a membership of 80. About two thirds of the medical men of the county are affiliated with it.

One of the charter members of the York County Medical Society was Dr. Charles Garver, of Scotland, Franklin county. Mrs. Charles Garver nee Kimmell was associated with her husband in practice. Later when women became eligible to the county and state medical societies she became a member of both. For a number of years she was assistant superintendent of the hospital for the insane at Harrisburg, Pa. She died a few years ago. Dr. Charles Garver was a man of high literary culture but died early during his career.

The Franklin County Medical Society was organized in 1869. Several medical societies had existed previously. It has had an active career and has done notably good work locally and generally.

Its energetic long time secretary, Dr. J. J. Couffman, of Scotland, was with us at Mt. Holly and is the secretary of the Censorial association. Our first president Dr. A. A. Long, of York, has ever been to the front in medical organization and has now given way to the yearly elected presiding officer, Dr. James Evelyn Filcher, whose eloquent address of welcome to the society and acceptance as president was heard with pleasure and interest.

And now after this long recital of

reminiscences of the past and of those "who have joined the innumerable caravan that moves" a last word is in place. After forty years I faced a new audience. Not one member of that goodly company of 1867-8 was present in 1907. Time like a river is ever onward in its flow. The great majority of those present in 1907 were young men. Upon them will rest the responsibility of the future. They are the heirs of the past and with its added wealth of knowledge attained their ideal must be upward and onward.

As for us who have borne the beat and burden of the day so far as ability and earnestness have permitted we too feel that we soon must follow the footsteps of those who have preceded or accompanied us. With genial Thomas Moore, whose words and songs have made us all his debtor I will close and re-echo.

"I feel like one
Who treads alone
Some banquet hall deserted
Whose lights are fled
Whose garlands dead
And all but he departed."