

## LORD LISTER IS NOT A SCOTCHMAN.

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To attempt to add to an article on "The Suture; Its Place in Surgery," written by Dr. H. O. Marcy, "is almost to attempt to gild refined gold, to paint the lily." The very eminence of the authority, however, should prevent his reference to Lord Lister as in 1870 being an "obscure Scotchman" going unchallenged. This mistake is as frequently made as to regard Sir John Erichsen, Lister's teacher, as an Englishman. Erichsen was born in Copenhagen, and the old family home, Le Palair Erichsen, is pointed out as one of the places of interest in the Danish capitol. The mistake is made because the great work of Erichsen and his dresser was performed in their adopted countries. Joseph Lister was born in England in 1827. His father, J. J. Lister, was a wine merchant, but of eminently scientific turn of mind. The year of the birth of his son, in connection with Hodgkin, he determined the diameter of the red blood corpuscles and their tendency to run into rouleaux; and "Lister's Law of the Aplanatic Foci," remains the guiding principle as the pillow and source of all the microscopy of the age. The son, Joseph Lister, was graduated in the literary department of the University College in 1847, and five years afterward qualified in medicine. Saturated with scientific heredity and a student and admirer of the physiologist, Sharpey, it is not surprising that the spirit of investigation and experimentation was early infused into his mind, and that his first paper, the year of his graduation, was upon the identity of the muscle of the iris and involuntary muscular fibre. Having served his time, upon the advice of his former teacher and friend, Sharpey, he went to Edinburgh "to take six weeks

of Syme's clinic," but remained six years, and, as Dr. Marcy has told us, married Mr. Syme's daughter. He was called to the Chair of Surgery in the University of Glasgow in 1860, but returned to Edinburgh in 1869, as successor to Prof. Syme, who was stricken down by hemiplegia and died about a year subsequently as the result of another seizure. When Syme was nineteen years of age he had charge of Robert Liston's dissecting room, but a quarrel with the great master kept him out of the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary for a number of years. In 1829 he opened a private infirmary, Minto House, with twenty-seven beds, and commenced teaching surgery and soon rivaled the Royal Infirmary in popularity. It was here that he first divided the sterno-cleido-mastoid muscle in torticollis.

In 1833 Syme agreed to pay Russell fifteen hundred dollars a year to resign the chair of Clinical Surgery at the University, and was appointed to the vacancy by the Crown. About this time Liston and Fergusson went to London and left Syme without a surgical rival in Edinburgh. With Lisbon he revived flap amputation, first proposed by Lowdham, of Oxford, and shared with Fergusson the honor of reviving excision of joints, and is alone entitled to the credit of originating, in 1842, the operation of amputation at the ankle joint that bears his name. He devised many mechanical instruments, performed external urethrotomy for the cure of callous or impassable strictures, and "demonstrated the function of the periosteum in repair of bone." Upon the death of his great enemy and cousin, Robert Liston, he succeeded to the chair of surgery in the University College Hospital of London, but returned to Edinburgh before the end

of the year with a sentiment akin to the Georgia doctor who left New York and returned home because "not so big in the Metropolis, but hell on Pea Ridge." Upon his return home he devoted much time to the treatment of aneurisms. He was the first in modern times to incise, turn out the clot and tie each end of the diseased vessel in the carotid, axillary and iliac. Syme was polemical and a born controversialist, immensely popular with students, but disliked by his colleagues. His great friend and student, the author of "Rab and His Friends," said of him: "He was almost always right in matter, sometimes wrong in manner." When Syme was seventeen years of age he discovered the process of waterproofing cloth, which was afterwards patented by Charles Mackintosh. Upon the death of Sir William Fergusson of Bright's disease in 1877, Lord Lister reluctantly accepted the chair of Clinical Surgery in King's College, London. Lister's predecessor in London was anxious to become a lawyer, but after a two years' trial discovered "that his ideas were mechanical rather than argumentative." Fergusson left Edinburgh for London when he was thirty-two years of age. He was a thorough

anatomist, a brilliant operator, and soon became the rival of Robert Liston and Aston Key. He was an uninteresting lecturer, not well informed about the work of others, and his ideas of pathology were called archaic. On one occasion while lecturing upon caries and necrosis a student reminded him that his views varied from those of Niemeyer. Fergusson replied "Sir, Nehemiah was a gentleman who wrote one of the books in the Old Testament, but I have yet to learn that he had views on caries and necrosis."

I should beg pardon for digressions and for this incomplete reference to these great surgeons, and I will not attempt to speak of the marvelous discoveries of the man who has divided surgery into two great periods, who has made the surgery of the past compare with the surgery of the present like the Indian dug-out to the Deutschland or the love warbling of the golden oriole to the symphonies of Mendelssohn's wedding march, who has reached the realization of hope and desire, the ultimate of human endeavor, and the completion of a work that seemingly would exhaust the brain of a God—Baron Lister.