

Biographical Sketches

Some notable names in renal medicine from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century.

ABERCROMBIE John (1780–1844)

Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. Abercrombie moved from successful general practice into the Royal Public Dispensary as a consultant and was appointed physician to the King in Scotland.

ALISON William Pulteney (1790–1859)

President of the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh and a contemporary of Sir Robert Christison both sharing an interest in renal disease. Richard Bright stayed with him during a visit to Edinburgh. He was better known for his *Observations on the management of the poor in Scotland* (1840).

ANDERSON John (d. 1883)

Clinical Clerk at Guy's Hospital. Read a paper on renal dropsy, illustrated by cases and a dissection, before the Senior Physical Society of Guy's, 7 February 1835. The paper was published in the *London Medical Gazette*, 1835, vol. xv (nos. 25 and 26).

ANDRAL Gabriel (1797–1876)

Professor of General Pathology at the Paris Medical School, member of the Académie Royale de Médecine and member of staff of l'hôpital de la Charité. Andral was an outstanding pioneer of haematology—the publication in 1843 of his *Essai d'hématologie pathologique* was a landmark in the scientific study of the subject.

BAILLIE Matthew (1761–1823)

Scots nephew of John and William Hunter, who, following Morgagni, wrote a fine textbook. He was one of the first to understand that post-mortem appearances were end-results of a disease process. He differentiated renal cysts.

BAILLOU Guillaume de (BALLONIUS) (1538–1616)

Paris graduate and physician to the household of Henry IV. He was regarded by Francis Graham Cruikshank as the founder of epidemiological studies. Described whooping cough (quinta) for the first time, also introduced the term “rheumatism”.

BARBIER Jean-Baptiste Grégoire (1776–1855)

Student at Amiens where he later worked. Awarded doctorate in Paris. Member of the Medico-Botanical Society of London.

BARLOW Edward (1785–1848)

Physician to the Bath United Hospital and to the Bath Infirmary. His work was written up in *Midland Medical and Surgical Reporter*, 1832; see also Diana Berry and Cameron Mackenzie, *Richard Bright, 1789–1858*, London, Royal Society of Medicine Services, 1992, pp. 158, 160.

BAUDELLOCQUE César-Auguste (1795–1851)

He studied in both Amiens and Paris. Aggregated in surgery 1824, then worked as a doctor at l'hôpital des Enfants Malades.

BELLINI Lorenzo (1643–1704)

Evaporated urine and found that the colour, taste and odour were due to variations between water and solids.

BLACKALL John (1771–1860)

An Exeter physician and, like W. C. Wells, described the association of coagulable urine, dropsy and renal disease in 1813, paving the way for Richard Bright's conclusive work in 1827.

BOERHAAVE Hermann (1668–1738)

Founder of the "Electic School" and the greatest physician and teacher of his period making contributions to all aspects of medicine. His reputation was world-wide, which was remarkable in a time when communications between continents were virtually unknown. His work *Methodus studii medici* was extensively translated. He built on the observations of Bellini, measuring the specific gravity of urine using a primitive barometer. In 1720 he described urea, which was later isolated by Hilaire Marin Rouelle in 1771.

BONET Théophile (1620–89)

Collected all post mortems performed from the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries and published them in *Sepulchretum*. It is recorded that he translated the first medical periodical into Latin as the *Zodiacus medico gallicus* in 1680–85.

BOSTOCK John (1772–1846)

He gave up clinical medicine for biochemistry and worked closely with Richard Bright at Guy's Hospital on the changes found in blood and urine in nephritis. He was the first to describe hay-fever from which he suffered.

BOUILLAUD Jean-Baptiste (1796–1881)

He established a link between heart disease and acute articular rheumatism: the law of coincidence. He linked aphasia with lesions of the front lobes of the brain.

BOWMAN Sir William (1816–92)

Although best known for his work on the eye, he nevertheless established in 1842 the theory that renal tubules were responsible for secreting urine formed after the Malpighian bodies had separated the watery portions from the blood and thus paved the way towards understanding glomerular filtration.

BRANDE William Thomas (1788–1866)

The Brande family were apothecaries to George III. Brande was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1809. In 1812 he became Superintendent of Chemical Operations at Apothecaries Hall and the following year succeeded Humphry Davy as Professor of Chemistry at the Royal Institution.

BRIGHT Richard (1789–1858)

Third son of a wealthy Bristol merchant and banker, Bright studied medicine at Edinburgh in 1808. From 1810–12 he continued his medical studies at Guy's Hospital, London, returning to Edinburgh in 1812 to complete his doctoral thesis. He spent most of his working life at Guy's Hospital and his many works on renal disease, including his magnum opus, *Reports of medical cases*, published in 1827, earned him the title "Father of Nephrology" and the eponym "Bright's disease" for the condition known as albuminous nephritis.

BUREAU J.V. (*dates n.a.)

Originally from Lyons, he was an intern of the Paris hospitals, student of the École Pratique and member of the Society of Anatomy. His inaugural thesis (1837) was entitled *De la néphrite albumineuse ou maladie de Bright, affection granuleuse des reins*. He was a member of Rayer's team.

BURROWS Sir George (1801–87)

Fellow of Caius College, Cambridge. He also studied in Paris and Pavia. Goulstonian Lecturer 1834. Clinical Clerk at St. Bartholomew's to Peter Latham and Physician Extraordinary to Queen Victoria in 1870. His chief publication was *On disorders of the cerebral circulation* (1846).

CHAPOTIN Charles (*dates n.a.)

The author of *Topographie médicale de l'Île de France*, Paris, 1812.

CHRISTISON Sir Robert (1797–1882)

President of the Royal College of Physicians in 1838–40 and 1846–8, he was, in some circles, better known for his work on medical jurisprudence but in fact was one of the first to confirm Richard Bright's findings concerning the kidney.

COPLAND James (1791–1870)

From Orkney, a great compiler and one of the early polyhistorians, he wrote a three volume *Dictionary of practical medicine* (1844–58). He was a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians.

CORFE George (*dates n.a.)

In addition to his renal work, *A popular treatise on the kidney* (1839), he completed *The physiognomy of diseases* in 1849.

CORRIGAN Sir Dominic John (1802–80)

Wrote extensively on famine, fever and cholera in Ireland but is best remembered for his original description of aortic incompetence. In addition to his work on the heart he also held strong views on the kidney.

COTUGNO Domenico (1736–1822)

Professor of Anatomy at Naples, 1776. Cotugno was one of Italy's most distinguished scientists—a clinician, anatomist and man of letters. He was perhaps the first to report albumin in a typical case of acute nephritis with anasarca and large quantities of "ovi albumini persimilem" in the urine, although he did not elaborate on the discovery.

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CRAIGIE David (1793–1866)

Worked with Sir Robert Christison, in 1861 became President of the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh. His publications include: *Elements of general and pathological anatomy* (1828) and *Elements of the practice of physic* (1836).

CRAMPTON John (1773?–1840)

Honorary Fellow of the King's and Queen's College of Physicians in Ireland. Worked at Dr. Steeven's Hospital, Dublin. Wrote an account of the fever epidemic in Dublin September 1817 to August 1819.

CRUICKSHANK William (d. 1810/11)

Ordnance Chemist and Lecturer in Chemistry (1795) at the Royal Artillery Academy at Woolwich and Surgeon of Artillery and Surgeon to the Ordnance Medical Department. He was elected a fellow of the Royal Society in 1802. At Woolwich he worked under Surgeon-General John Rollo who, in 1797, published *An account of two cases of the diabetes mellitus*, which incorporated Cruickshank's research on diabetes and urine analysis. This William Cruickshank is often confused with William Cumberland Cruikshank (1745–1800), the anatomist and surgeon who demonstrated albuminuria in dropsical fevers. He ran the Great Windmill Street School with Matthew Baillie after the death of William Hunter. It appears that after their deaths the two were amalgamated into one William Crui(c)shank—the surgeon and chemist at the Woolwich Arsenal disappeared without trace.

DARWALL John (1796–1833)

Physician to the Birmingham Dispensary.

DARWIN Erasmus (1731–1802)

Grandfather of Charles Darwin and best known for his work on the embryology of plants. He published *Zoonomia* in 1794. He worked with William Withering on the use of digitalis in cardiac dropsy.

DESIR A. (*dates n.a.)

A student of Rayer, his inaugural thesis was entitled *De la présence d'albumine dans l'urine considérée comme phénomène et comme signe dans les maladies* (1835).

DOBSON Matthew (1732–84)

Graduated MD from Edinburgh in 1756. In 1770 he was appointed physician at Liverpool Infirmary where he became a pioneer in medical research. He was the first to describe sugar in the urine and blood of diabetics and wrote on renal stones.

DODOENS Rembert (1517(?)–85)

Belgian physician to Maximilian II and Rudolph II and best known for his herbal remedies.

DUPUYTREN Guillaume (1777–1835)

Surgeon-in-Chief at l'Hôtel Dieu in Rayer's time. Dupuytren was a brilliant surgeon, diagnostician and teacher but also, like many of the nineteenth-century "greats", had a breadth of interests including physiology and pathology. Not an easy man, he was known as the "brigand of l'Hôtel Dieu" and "the first of surgeons and the least of men".

ELLIOTSON John (1791–1868)

Professor of the Principles and Practice of Medicine at University College London and, although best known as the first surgeon to use hypnotism for surgical operations, he also contributed to the great renal controversy.

FERNEL Jean (c.1497–1558)

A Paris graduate and one of the greatest physicians of the Renaissance. He became physician to Henry II. He was one of the first to examine medicine in an analytical way and contributed to the best classification of disease between Galen and Platter. He is said to have corrected many Galenic errors, opposed excessive bloodletting and post-mortem studies.

FORDYCE George (1736–1802)

Described “miliaria” (putrid) fever in 1758.

FOREEST Pieter van (1522–97)

Born in Alkmaar, Foreest studied at the University of Louvain. He then went to Bologna where he received his doctorate in 1543. He began practising medicine in Pithiviers, then moved to Delft where he became “Médecin de la Ville”. He cured the Prince of Orange of many diseases and gave the opening lecture of the Chair of Medicine at the inauguration of Leiden University.

FORGET Charles Polydore (1800–61)

Originally from Strasbourg, Forget worked with Gabriel Andral in the field of haematology, notably on the “buffy coat” that formed in the blood under certain conditions. Together Andral and Forget made a plea for a revival of a modified form of humorism, believing that many general phenomena could best be explained by studying variations in body fluids.

FOURCROY Antoine-François de (1755–1809)

Medical chemist and pharmacist analysing urinary calculi and blood. Although a friend of A. L. Lavoisier he was unable to save him from the guillotine during the Terror. He translated the works of Bernardino Ramazzini, the father of industrial health. His dictum was “Read little, see much, do much”, which was later appropriated by Philippe Pinel and Jean-Nicolas Corvisart.

FRANK Johann Peter (1745–1821)

Author of *Traité de médecine pratique*, French translation by J M Goudareau, Paris, 1820–1828.

GENEST Jean-Louis (*dates n.a.)

A student of Rayer, he wrote an article on the perceived wisdom with regard to kidney diseases known under the term “maladie de Bright”. After qualifying as a doctor in 1827 he became Clinical Head at l’Hôtel Dieu. From 1832 to 1838 he was involved in the publication of the *Gazette Médicale de Paris*.

GLUGE Gottlieb (1812–98)

Originally from Brussels, Gluge examined the kidney microscopically and, contemporaneously with Gabriel Valentin, Joseph Toynbee and Rayer, described

changes in the Malpighian bodies, i.e. glomeruli leading to the realization of the presence of different histological appearances in nephritis.

GMELIN Leopold (1788–1853)

From Gottingen, he confirmed William Prout's finding that gastric juice acid was free hydrochloric acid and detected bile in the urine using nitric acid.

GRAVES Robert (1796–1853)

Was the chief physician at Meath Hospital, Dublin, and, apart from his description of the thyroid disease that bears his name, he worked extensively on the kidney, disagreeing with both Rayer and Richard Bright on several points.

GREGORY James Craufurd (1800–32)

It appears that he was not a member of the well-known academic Gregory family but he was clearly a very fine physician and his death at such a young age was a blow to medical science. His inaugural thesis *De hydrope acuto* was written in 1824. He had an Edinburgh University post as Physician in Ordinary to the Infirmary in 1828.

GUERSENT Louis Benoît (1777–1848)

Worked in Paris at l'hôpital des Enfants Malades and published extensively on renal disease in children.

GUILLEMIN Vincent-Victor (*dates n.a.)

Presented his medical thesis 'Essai sur la maladie de Bright' at Strasbourg in 1837.

HAMILTON George (*dates n.a.)

In 1833 he is described by the *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal* as "Extraordinary member and lately President of the Edinburgh Hunterian Medical Society". He was the author of 'On the epidemic scarlatina and dropsical affection which prevailed in Edinburgh during the autumn of 1832', *Edin. med. surg. Journ.*, 1833, vol. 39, and 'On the treatment of scarlatina anginosa', *ibid.*, 1837, vol. 47.

HELMONT Jean-Baptiste van (1577–1644)

Belgian founder of the Iatrochemical School, explaining the importance of the soul in medicine. He was the first to introduce gravimetric measurement into medical analysis and actually weighed twenty-four-hour specimens. As an early physician-chemist he recognized the importance of gas and was the first to use the expression in a medical context. He made the first enquiry into the composition of urine (until then urine examination was based on appearance only). He compared the weight of urine against rainwater and was aware that the young could concentrate their urine more than the old and that dehydration increased the weight of urine.

HEURNE Jan van (1543–1601)

He was a pioneer of medical education. With his son Otto, he introduced bedside teaching of medical students in Leiden. This replaced lectures in Latin accompanied by prescriptions for the students to copy down slavishly.

HOFFMANN Friedrich (1660–1742)

From Halle. Hoffmann wrote on medical ethics in his *Medicus politicus* and produced an eponymous anodine; was said to have only twenty cadavers for post mortem in twenty years. He was best known for his theory of disease conditions described as “tonic” and “atonic”.

HOME Francis (1719–1813)

Working in Edinburgh, he noted the sweetness of urine in diabetes. He served as a surgeon in the Dragoons in the War of the Austrian Succession and while in Flanders he attended lectures at Leiden Medical School in the tradition of the renowned physician Hermann Boerhaave.

HOWSHIP John (1781–1841)

Wrote practical observations on diseases of urinary organs, also on ovarian dropsy, published as *Practical observations in surgery, and morbid anatomy*, 1816.

KÜHN Carl G. (1754–1840)

From Leipzig. Kühn edited books in the early nineteenth century and also tabulated Galen’s citations.

LATHAM John (1761–1843)

Wrote on rheumatism and gout, as well as diabetes.

LATHAM Peter Mere (1789–1875)

He worked at both St. Bartholomew’s and the Middlesex hospitals. He was Goulstonian Lecturer in 1819 and in later life Physician Extraordinary to Queen Victoria. Latham was best known for his lectures on clinical medicine, particularly diseases of the heart. Sir Thomas Watson said Latham’s publications “marked an era in the clinical teaching of this country”.

LE POIS Nicolas (1527–90)

De cognoscendis et curandis praecipue internis humani corporis morbis libri tres was first published in 1580.

LIEBIG Justus von (1803–73)

Pupil of J.L. Gay-Lussac, brought organic chemistry to the study of medicine and introduced the concept of metabolism. He tried to refute ideas of fermentation, inferring that all reactions in the body had to be chemical in origin.

LIEUTAUD Joseph (1703–80)

Physician to Louis XV and then Louis XVI, Lieutaud was the first to teach topographical anatomy. He was one of the earliest writers of books on surgical anatomy, publishing his *Essais anatomiques* in 1742, and *Historia anatomico-medica* in 1767.

LITTRÉ Émile (1801–81)

The greatest medical lexicographer of the nineteenth century, he dismissed all theological and metaphysical dogma noting that real advances in medicine would depend on physical and chemical procedures. He was probably the first to describe polycystic kidney disease.

MALPIGHI Marcello (1628–94)

He was, as a result of his microscopic slide, the father of histology and amongst many other first descriptions he observed Malpighian bodies, i.e. the glomeruli of the kidney.

MARTIN SOLON Ferdinand (1795–1856)

Member of the Académie Royale de Médecine in Paris, aggregate of the Faculty of Medicine of l'hôpital Beaujou, laureate of l'Ecole Pratique, Martin Solon worked at l'Hôtel Dieu as chef de clinique. His work on nephrology included a treatise entitled *Traité de l'albuminurie ou hydropisie causée par les maladies des reins*. The one-volume work, published in 1838, included five coloured plates of diseased kidneys.

MATEER William (*dates n.a.)

He graduated MD from Edinburgh in 1831 with a thesis entitled 'De analogia legum physiurarum et vitalium'. He became Physician to the Belfast Fever Hospital. In 1836 he was appointed to the Chair of Botany of the Medical School of the Royal Belfast Academical Institution.

MONASSOT Jacques (*dates n.a.)

Reported on cases of albuminous nephritis while working with Rayet and others at l'hôpital de la Pitié and wrote *Etudes sur la granulation des reins*, Paris, 1835. He opposed J. C. Sabatier's theories.

MORGAGNI Giovanni Battista (1682–1771)

A pupil of Antonio Maria Valsalva and Professor of Medicine in Padua; he is said to have made pathology a genuine branch of modern medicine.

NYSTEN Pierre Hubert (1771–1818)

Doctor of Medicine, Professor of Materia Medica, correspondent of the Academy of Science of Turin and of the Royal Society of Medicine of Barcelona amongst other honours, Nysten wrote a medical dictionary that was revised and enlarged by Emile Littré from 1821 onwards reaching its 21st edition in 1905.

OSBORNE Jonathan (1795–1864)

Physician to the Clinical Hospital of Sir Patrick Dun, Dublin. He was the founder of Irish nephrology and first described renal vein thrombosis in the nephrotic syndrome in his book *On dropsies* of 1835.

PLATTER Felix (1536–1614)

One of the first to describe deaths in infants from thymus disease; his *Praxeos medicae* (1602–8) was an early attempt at systematic classification of disease.

PLOUCQUET Wilhelm Gottfried (1744–1814)

Like William Cullen, he was a classifier of disease.

PORTAL Antoine (1742–1832)

Founder of the Académie Royale de Médecine in Paris (1820); known for his extensive history of anatomy and surgery (1770).

PROUST Joseph Louis (1754–1826)

Discovered “rosaceous acid” in the urine in 1797; this same substance was later described by William Prout in 1819 as a “purpurate”.

PROUT William (1785–1850)

One of the greatest of the early biochemists as well as a physician, he devoted a great part of his time to the study of urine. He worked closely with John Elliotson as both were on the staff of the United Hospitals of St. Thomas’s and Guy’s.

RIVIÈRE Lazare (1589–1655)

Professor of Medicine at Montpellier and a well-known teacher and physician throughout Europe; he introduced chemistry in medical teaching. Some of his treatment regimes were popularized by Nicholas Culpepper in England.

SABATIER J. C. (d. 1837)

Attached to Rayer’s division as an intern; published several observations collected whilst in Rayer’s service including ‘Considerations et Observations sur l’hydropisie, symptomatiques d’une lésion speciale des reins’, *Archives Générales de Médecine*, second series, 1834, vol. v, pp. 333–89. He wrote on other case histories gathered at l’hôpital des Enfants Malades.

SAUVAGES François Boissier de (1706–1767)

From Montpellier, he translated the Revd Stephen Hales’s work on arterial pressure and renal calculi.

SCHENCK VON GRAFENBERG Johannes (1530–98)

His *Observationum medicarum* (1584–97) was one of the great early collections of medical cases and a source book for the work of later writers such as Franciscus Sylvius.

SCUDAMORE Sir Charles (1779–1849)

He wrote a treatise on gout in 1816.

SEYMOUR Edward James (1796–1866)

Physician at St. George’s Hospital and was considered one of the most distinguished of the staff, being an able physician and a good teacher. He is remembered for his work on diseases of the ovaria and the medical treatment of insanity. He wrote on the nature and treatment of dropsy and also translated F. G. Geromini on dropsy.

SPITTAL Robert (1804–52)

He was a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh having graduated from Gressen in 1834. He was one of the earliest exponents in Edinburgh of Laënnec’s auscultation. He is buried at Greyfriars.

SWIETEN Gerard van (1700–72)

Although from Leiden, he revitalized the old “Vienna School” and as an army surgeon wrote on camp hygiene amongst troops. He wrote commentaries on Hermann Boerhaave’s aphorisms.

SYDENHAM Thomas (1624–89)

Was a Puritan Captain of the Horse in the Civil War before turning to medicine. He is best remembered for his first-hand accounts of common diseases, including gout, scarlatina and, of course, his eponymous chorea. He made contributions to the understanding of dropsy.

THÉNARD Louis Jacques (1777–1857)

Studied the composition of bile and discovered hydrogen peroxide in 1819.

TISSOT Edouard (*dates n.a.)

Author of *De l'hydropisie, causée par l'affection granuleuse des reins*, Paris, 1833.

TISSOT Simon-André (1728–97)

A well-known physician from Lausanne who wrote a popular medical textbook on diseases of men of the world.

VALENTIN Gabriel (1810–83)

An early microscopist he discovered the cell nucleolus in 1836 going on later to report on the microscopic appearance of the kidney. Rayer himself was examining urine under the microscope as early as 1835.

WARD Joshua (1685–1761)

A bit of a quack and physician to George II. He produced a “dropsy purging powder”.

WATT Robert (1774–1819)

Licenciate of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow. Watt wrote on cases of diabetes and consumption, etc. with observations on their history and treatment, 1809. He is most famous for his bibliography, *Bibliotheca Britannica* (1819–24).

WELLS William Charles (1757–1817)

Although born in South Carolina, Wells graduated in Edinburgh and was a physician at St. Thomas's Hospital. He had a remarkable intellect completing work on dew, anticipating Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection and giving an early account of both rheumatic heart disease and, in 1812, albuminous urine in dropsy.

WILLIS Robert (1767–1821)

His main contributions were annotated by Sir John Aldridge in ‘Biographic Notes’, *Dublin Journal of Medical Science*, 1839, vol. 15.

WILLIS Thomas (1621–75)

Best remembered for his description of the cerebral circulation in his *Cerebri Anatome* (1664), illustrated by Sir Christopher Wren. He was the first to bring qualitative study to the examination of urine and described the characteristic sweet taste of diabetic urine. He also wrote extensively on the anatomy of the kidney.

WILSON Alexander Philip (1770–1847)

He published *An inquiry into the remote cause of urinary gravel*, Edinburgh, 1792.

WRISBERG Heinrich August (1739–1808)

Best known for his work on the cranial nerves.