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STATUS AND SOCIAL POSITION

The standard opinion concerning the apothecary's status is embodied in the statement by Hamilton that in 1660, "... a physician was a gentleman, while apothecaries and surgeons were mere craftsmen", with its further elaboration: that "At that time [1617] they [the apothecaries] were compounders and dispensers of medicine, and the stigma of 'tradesmen' clung to them long after the sale of drugs had ceased to be the main function of the individual apothecary, though not of the company". She then said that after the Civil War the status of the apothecary was rising, but "The apothecaries seem to have been mainly sons of small shopkeepers, yeomen and respectable craftsmen. In towns the practising apothecary was of low status: but in the country, where he was usually the only doctor, he was sometimes a man of good family who had qualified in the cheapest and most useful way; there he might take his position according to his family rather than according to his occupation. But the average apothecary did not come of a good or wealthy family; indeed the profession was one way for the lowest classes to climb".³⁰⁴ The physicians of the College would have readily concurred with this view. As Cameron has written, "The Physicians decried the Apothecaries as men ignorant, unlettered, and unlearned in the science of medicine and in opprobrium called them empirics".³⁰⁵

The jealous, ill-founded diatribes of the nervous fellows of the College have echoed and re-echoed down through the centuries and can be heard to this day. "Just as a tinker-soldier or a sailor-ploughboy is impossible, so a gentleman-apothecary is unthinkable." "Edmund Withering [an apothecary], who for his station and time was wealthy met and even more unusually married Miss Hector, the sister of Dr Brooke Hector of Lichfield."³⁰⁶ "At this time [1768]... the apothecaries of the era were not recognised as professional men, and, in an age of quacks, they were barely respectable."³⁰⁷ "George Cooke of Fitton, the object of Corbett's frequent gibes because he had been an apothecary, made his submission and was restored to his living."³⁰⁸

The denigration of the apothecaries continued with a group who were in some degree, their successors, the chemists and druggists. W. J. Reader, in his study of the rise of the professional classes in nineteenth-century England, when considering the effects of the Medical Act of 1886, wrote that it, "... finally shut out the chemists and druggists from the medical profession", and that "... their separation from the doctors, though undesired, was not undignified, but in the nature of things they could never escape the taint of retail trade."³⁰⁹ There is little doubt that the common view is

³⁰⁴ B. Hamilton, 'The medical professions in the eighteenth century', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 1951, 4: 141-169, see pp. 141, 158, 159.

³⁰⁵ Wall, Cameron, and Underwood, op. cit., note 8 above, vol. 1, p. 4.

³⁰⁶ T. W. Peck and K. Wilkinson, *William Withering of Birmingham*, Bristol, J. Wright, 1950, pp. 31, 33.

³⁰⁷ P. Lewis, 'An Aldeburgh apothecary', *Hist. Med.*, 1971, 3: 23.

³⁰⁸ R. W. Ketton-Cremer, *Norfolk and the Civil War*, London, Faber, 1969, p. 81.

³⁰⁹ W. J. Reader, *Professional men. The rise of the professional classes in nineteenth century England*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966, p. 68.

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held that there is a lowering of social status by standing behind the counter of a shop – and that it has always been so. The conclusions to be drawn from this belief are that these shopkeepers, whether apothecary or pharmacist, must have come from near the bottom rungs of society, that they were ignorant and probably quite unethical, even unscrupulous in their efforts to amass money, because they had no professional standards, nor did they associate with those who had.

It has often been claimed that England had in the past (and some say still has) a class-ridden society with inflexible barriers erected between the strata. In fact, this picture is far from the truth. Charles Wilson has written,

The society [of the period 1603–1763] was roughly stratified by contemporaries into the nobility, gentry, merchants, professions, yeomen, freeholders, customary tenants, leaseholders, shopkeepers, craftsmen, labourers and that great mass – perhaps a third or more of the total – they called ‘the poor’. Yet nobles apart, these labels did not imply legal definition of social status, though a man might be labelled knight, esquire, gentleman, yeoman or husbandman, in order to be assessed when a direct tax was being raised. Throughout the period there was a remarkable degree of social mobility, especially between the middle and top ranges of society. Many families contained representatives of the peerage, gentry, merchants, and professions, to say nothing of poor relations, at the same moment in time. . . . The social categories invented by nineteenth century historians – feudal, bourgeois, working class – do not sit happily on such a society. The simple idea of large and more or less solid social ‘classes’ distinguished from each other by different interests is not only unhelpful in interpreting the course of events: it can be positively misleading.³¹⁰

In England, there was no definition of a “gentleman”, any more than there was of a “yeoman”, but for convenience this has been attempted by Anthony Wagner, Garter King-of-Arms. The inheritor of a knight’s fee, or manor, had never been automatically a knight, but was usually knighted by his father or his lord after training, first as a valet and then as an esquire. As time elapsed, the financial burdens of knighthood could weigh so heavily that many did not take it up when they came of age, thus the apprentice to knighthood, an esquire, came to mean a man of knightly rank but one who did not intend to become one. Some time after 1400, the need arose for a general term for a class which centred on the esquires and others who ranked with them, for this the designation “gentleman” or “gentry” came to be used. The valet or yeoman was ranked immediately below the esquire and was regarded as the knight’s servant or retainer. In Tudor times, the name was applied to the class of country freeholders who came next in rank to the gentry. Rich yeomen were frequently richer than poor gentry, and intermarriage was not uncommon.³¹¹

An Act of Parliament and a book of etiquette of the fifteenth century put the merchants, who were in effect the ruling class of the towns, on a level with the esquires. Some, such as London aldermen, could stand higher, and a few of great wealth and power ranked with the upper nobility. As Trevelyan has said, “Yeomen, merchants and lawyers who had made their fortunes, were perpetually recruiting the ranks of the landed gentry; while the younger sons of the manor house were apprenticed into industry and trade.”³¹² It is important to note that, to quote Wilson again, “Trade did not derogate from that status [of gentry]. A Cheshire gentleman could describe himself in 1640 as a gentleman by birth and a linen draper by trade. In

³¹⁰ Wilson, *op. cit.*, note 58 above, preface, p. xiv.

³¹¹ A. Wagner, *English ancestry*, Oxford University Press, 1961, pp. 46–48, 58–59.

³¹² G. M. Trevelyan, *English social history*, London, Reprint Society, 1948, p. 165.

a case in 1634 a witness said that 'many citizens of great worth and esteem descended of very ancient gentle families, being soap boilers by trade even and yet accounted gentlemen'.³¹³

In France, nobility was sharply defined and possessed important legal and fiscal privileges, thus the importance of coats-of-arms as labels gradually lapsed. In England, the opposite happened; as there was no legal definition of gentility, then the outward marks became more important, of which Defoe wrote so pungently, "We see the tradesmen of England as they grow wealthy coming every day to the Heralds' Office, to search for the Coats of Arms of their ancestors, in order to paint them upon their coaches, and engrave them upon their plate, . . . or carve them upon the pediments of their new houses; and how often do we see them trace the registers of their families up to the prime nobility, or the most antient gentry of the Kingdom."³¹⁴ Henry VII, in 1492, had declared that a grant of arms by Garter King-of-Arms established the grantee's gentility beyond question. Heraldic visitations had been already established but now the kings-of-arms were given powers of inquisition to determine whether the bearer was entitled to them, either by ancestral right or by the grant of someone of sufficient authority. After 1530, Clarenceux King-of-Arms in a visitation had to deface or remove any arms that were false or devised without authority. Thereafter, until 1686, visitations were made about once every generation, when arms and pedigrees were examined; if found to be valid they were entered in the visitation books, if false, then the usurper had to make a disclaimer. Apothecaries or their antecedents, men such as Richard Meynell, John Ne[e]dham, Richard and John Conyers, are to be frequently found in the visitation books. By the eighteenth century, the whole system of surveillance had broken down, which inevitably led to false claims and bitter acrimony.

In 1795, John Mason Good, in his book *History of medicine in so far as it relates to the profession of the apothecary*, claimed that apothecaries' profits were no longer attracting sons of respectable families, so making it impossible for apothecaries to demand high premiums for apprenticeships. The validity of this statement is arguable, for a study of the Inland Revenue apprenticeship records for the eighteenth century shows that sizeable sums of consideration money were obtained. As a general rule, it can be said that the larger the sum paid, the higher the social position of the apprentice-master and of his craft or trade.

In mid-century, the apothecary's average premium lay between £50 and £105, the provinces being, in general, rather lower than London, and may be usefully compared with other professions, crafts, and trades. Weavers, nailers, and framework-knitters were amongst the lowest, being a mere £3–4, and even as little as £1 10s. Joiners, butchers, and watchmakers could rise to £16 or £20 but were more usually half those sums; grocers varied from £10 to £50, and saddlers and coachmakers from £25 to £50. Merchants had a wide variation, £40 to £260, with the premiums of the overseas trading organizations, such as the Merchant Adventurers, running to £500 and £600. Attorneys were, on the whole, consistently between £100 and £150. The surgeons of the great London hospitals could command figures between £250 and £400, but the

³¹³ Wilson, *op. cit.*, note 58 above, p. 14.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

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APPRENTICESHIP PREMIUMS FROM THE INLAND REVENUE RECORDS IN THE EARLY EIGHTEENTH AND
EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURIES³¹⁵

<i>Volume I.</i> October 1711–November 1712 (London)			<i>Volume 41.</i> May 1710–January 1712 (Provinces)	
<i>Premiums</i>	<i>Apothecaries</i>	<i>Surgns & Apoths.</i>	<i>Apothecaries</i>	<i>Surgns & Apoths.</i>
£40–£50	14	—	20	—
£50–£75	26	2	19	2
	—	—	—	—
	40	2	39	2
	—	—	—	—
Out of a total of 58 premiums in which the minimum is £20 and the maximum £100		Out of a total of 2 minimum £50 maximum £65	Out of a total of 57 minimum £20 maximum £65	Out of a total of 4 minimum £27 10s. maximum £60

<i>Volume 38.</i> March 1799–April 1802 (London)			<i>Volume 71.</i> May 1803–September 1805 (Provinces)	
<i>Premiums</i>	<i>Apothecaries</i>	<i>Surgns & Apoths.</i>	<i>Apothecaries</i>	<i>Surgns & Apoths.</i>
£50–£100	6	24	1	27
£100–£150	12	33	4	44
£150–£200	4	11	—	23
£200–£250	3	17	—	12
	—	—	—	—
	25	85	5	106
	—	—	—	—
Out of a total of 35 in which the minimum is £50 and the maximum £400		Out of a total of 110 minimum £10 maximum £250	Out of a total of 6 minimum £25 maximum £105	Out of a total of 176 minimum £15 maximum £367 10s

ordinary rank and file were nearer £30 and £50.

For the first thirty years that the Inland Revenue records were kept, the trade, profession, or status of the apprentice's father was usually stated, a practice which unfortunately later died out. Jenkinson, in his examination of the Surrey apprenticeship records between 1710 and 1740, noted that the sons of gentlemen were in four cases apprenticed (or articed) to attorneys, which is not unexpected, whilst three were bound to goldsmiths, four to apothecaries, three to barber-surgeons, and five to mariners.³¹⁶ Members of three of the London livery companies, the merchant-tailors, drapers, and haberdashers, had three gentlemen's sons apiece, and the stationers, four. Clerks, that is clergymen, placed their sons in much the same occupations as gentlemen. Besides mercers, woollen- and linen-draper, the lesser merchants, carpenters, tallow-chandlers, and ironmongers, all of whom could attract reasonably substantial premiums, gentlemen could place their offspring with tanners, blacksmiths, butchers, gardeners, and carriers, and even such lowly beings as cordwainers and framework-knitters. Nevertheless, these were the exceptions. An analysis of the parentage of apothecarial apprentices in the first three years of the Inland Revenue

³¹⁵ Volumes 1 to 40 of the Inland Revenue apprenticeship records are termed "London volumes", and numbers 41 to 72 "provincial"; in the first case the tax was brought direct to the London office, and in the second was taken to a local collecting centre. In fact, particularly as the eighteenth century progressed, the geography of the place of apprenticeship is very mixed.

³¹⁶ C. H. Jenkinson (editor), *Surrey apprenticeships*, Surrey Record Society, 1929, vol. 10, *passim*. By "mariner" was meant the captain of a merchant ship.

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records gives further details of the background from which they were drawn.³¹⁷ The parental position of the 223 apprentices may be divided in the following manner:

- 52 belonged to the professions (apothecaries, attorneys, clergy, doctors of physic, master mariners, scribes, and surgeons, and two citizen and barber-surgeons which are doubtful).³¹⁸
- 31 were craftsmen (brewer, blacksmith, chainmaker, clothworker, coachmaker, cordwainer, farrier, glazier, glover, girdler, herald-painter, joiner, pin-maker, sergemaker, shearmaker, shipwright, stationer, tanner, tailor, thread-twister, wire-drawer).³¹⁹
- 22 were shopkeepers (baker, butcher, draper, grocer, haberdasher, innholder, leatherseller, mercer, victualler, vintner, woollen-drawer).³²⁰
- 13 were merchants (drugster, goldsmith, grazier, maltster, merchant, and merchant taylor, to which should be added two aldermen of London who were almost certainly in this class).³²¹
- 43 were described as gentlemen, to which may be added two esquires.³²²
- 12 were termed yeoman.
- 46 no description given, this figure includes seven widows.

As can be readily appreciated, considerable difficulty was experienced in drawing up the above categories and they are by no means rigid, but, taken at their face value, it can be seen that out of a total of 187 known occupations and positions of status, the apprentices' parents totalled 112 in the professional/merchant/gentleman class, and sixty-six in that of the craftsman/shopkeeper/yeoman.

Holmes has noted the very close link between the sons of the parsonage and the apothecaries' practices: "... in fact in the latter years of Anne, the clergy supplied apothecaries countrywide with more apprentices than did any other occupational group".³²³ He added that "Non-armigerous country gentlemen ... now readily placed their boys with good City apothecaries", and agreed largely with the 1724 claim of the Society of Apothecaries that their membership "... chiefly consists of those that have been the son of the reverend the clergy, and of gentlemen". Holmes believed that the status of the apothecary had so greatly improved in the fifty years between 1680 and 1730 that "... forty years before [1724] the claim would not have been made at all". This belief is not substantiated by the bindings of the London Apothecaries' Society, as a great many gentlemen's sons, most of them armigerous, may be noted in the records, for example, Richard Meynell (1648), Richard Squire (1657), Thomas Denman (1657), Benjamin Charlewood (1672), and Charles Nedham (1679) in the years prior to 1680.³²⁴

Gentlefolk of the period under review did not regard apprenticeship as demeaning.

³¹⁷ Vols. 41 and 42 = May 1710 to June 1713; vols. 1 and 2 = October 1711 to May 1714.

³¹⁸ No less than thirty-two clergy placed their sons with apothecaries.

³¹⁹ Many of these craftsmen, if not most of them, would be well-to-do masters. Those described as belonging to a London company are taken at their face value.

³²⁰ Some of these shopkeepers could have been listed as craftsmen, e.g. bakers. The stationers were also a borderline case, they could be either printers or publishers.

³²¹ The citizen and merchant-taylor may have had nothing to do with the clothing industry, in 1710 out of a livery of 485, 300 members were not tailors. See F. Simpson, *Chester city guilds: the Barber-Surgeons' Company*, Chester, G. R. Griffith, 1911, p. 5.

³²² The lack of precision in the use of the term "gentleman" can be seen in the case of Charles Croughton. In the Inland Revenue records, when he was apprenticed to Ralph Sudlow in 1712, he was stated to be the son of Charles Croughton, gentleman, but when he gained the freedom of Chester on 1 March 1722, he was recorded as "Charles Croughton of Chester, apothecary, son of Charles Croughton of Chester, silkweaver".

³²³ Holmes, *op. cit.*, note 2 above, p. 212.

³²⁴ For further details, see J. G. L. Burnby, 'Three 17th century London apothecaries', *Pharm. Hist.*, 1975, 5: pt. 1, pp. 2-3.

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The signing of articles for training or of indentures for apprenticeship does not seem to have been regarded as significantly different. The Inland Revenue books show that in the eighteenth century, articles were in the main used by merchants and attorneys, and on occasion by surgeons, but that they were not confined to the future professions; bricklayers, butchers, dyers, and joiners could also use them, if less frequently.³²⁵ Many families of impeccable status thought apprenticeship a fine method of entering a career, as witness the Frewens.

Thomas Frewen (1704–91), who has been mentioned in connexion with smallpox inoculation (p. 75), practised as an apothecary and surgeon until at least 1755, when he gained an MD from Leiden. He was apprenticed to George Lake senior of Sevenoaks, surgeon, for seven years in 1719, and his brother Edward was bound to John Spencer, citizen and barber-surgeon six years later.³²⁶ Little is known of Edward's career but the *Medical Register* of 1779 shows him to be at Lewes (probably in partnership with Thomas, who had been forced to move from Rye to Lewes), that he was a member of the London Surgeons' Company, and that he too had obtained an MD. The two brothers were the sons of Thankfull Frewen (1669–1749) of Northiam, Sussex, clerk. Thankfull's father, Thomas (1630–77), grandfather, John (1595–1654), and great-grandfather, John (1560–1628) had all been rectors of Northiam. Thankfull's unusual Christian name was that of his great uncle (1591–1656), purse-bearer and secretary to Lord-Keeper Thomas Coventry, and brother to Accepted (1583–1664), Archbishop of York. As might be guessed, John, the father of Accepted and Thankfull, had been an extreme Puritan and for a period was in danger of losing his living.³²⁷ The Frewen family, so eminently professional, middle class and, latterly, conforming, who could afford university education if so desired, nevertheless chose apprenticeship for two of its sons.

As has been already noted (p. 17), both Roberts and Rook have found in the Tudor and Stuart periods that the background of physicians and apothecaries was remarkably similar, that they were often close friends and frequently helped each other with the administrative and legalistic problems of life and death. Older historians would have found this an unexpected conclusion. In 1950, Poynter and Bishop wrote a paper on John Symcotts (1592?–1662) MD (Cantab.) of Huntingdon. They considered in some detail the training of a physician at Oxford and Cambridge, and they appear to have found the Symcotts family history consonant with that of a physician.

John's twin brother Robert was also admitted to Queens' College in 1608, was ordained priest in 1614, and was rector of Sandy from 1628 till his death eleven years later. Robert's only son William succeeded to most of John's by no means inconsiderable estate; he had been to Trinity College and was an MA by 1659; although Poynter believed him to be the possessor of an MD, no proof has been found. One of John's

³²⁵ Jenkinson (op. cit., note 316 above) has written that it is difficult to define the exact difference between indentures and articles at this period, as the latter were not defined in the law dictionaries of the eighteenth century. He inclined to the view that articles were used when the conventional phraseology of indentures did not cover a particular need.

³²⁶ PRO, Inland Revenue apprenticeship records, I.R./1/7, f. 62, premium £73 10s. Thomas Frewen is known to have taken at least two apprentices himself, Samuel Munn in 1743 and Charles Hill in 1748; I.R./1/10, f. 110, premium £105.

³²⁷ *DNB*, vol. 20, pp. 272–275; *Burke's landed gentry*, 4th ed., 1863, p. 518.

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brothers, George, was a “London merchant”, and another, Thomas, was a “London wine-merchant”.

Further investigation has shown that Thomas, probably the oldest of the family, was a citizen and vintner, and at the time of his death in 1658, was a governor of St Bartholomew’s Hospital. George was a citizen and merchant-taylor, and from his will of 1657, a wealthy man. Although a member of the Merchant-Tailors’ Company, he may well have been a vintner too, for he left the lease of his tavern, the Three Tunns in Newgate Market, to his brother Thomas, who was already living there. George’s daughter Mary received £800, his son Thomas £450 (“... and he knows why I give him no more.”), son John the lease of the Windmill, Fleet Street, and “... any debts he owes me”. His eldest son, another George, educated at Eton, had died soon after gaining an MA at King’s College, Cambridge, in 1655, leaving a wife and child, but the most interesting to us of the older George’s four sons, is Robert.

On 9 October 1655, Robert was bound apprentice to William Rowsewell, citizen and apothecary, for eight years.³²⁸ He took up his freedom of the Society in 1663 and was an active member, carrying out such duties as being steward on the Lord Mayor’s day in 1673 and for the herborizing at Greenwich in 1679. Robert was bequeathed by his father in 1657, £300 when he was twenty-one for the setting up of a shop, a venture which must have been made much easier by the receipt of a £24 annuity from the will of his uncle John, the physician.³²⁹ No doubt Poynter would have found Robert the apothecary’s position in this family as surprising as he found that of Gideon Delaune, when he wrote,

His younger brothers Isaac and Peter ... were trained to professions, Isaac to medicine [MD, Leiden] and Peter to the Church. Another brother, Paul, ... was also trained to medicine and became an MD of Padua and Cambridge and a Fellow of the College of Physicians. We are left to speculate how it was that Gideon, the eldest son and heir, was not given an equally good start in a career. We shall see that he was respected and trusted by his father and there was no question of lack of means. He was later to do better, financially, than any of his family ...³³⁰

Genealogy has long been besmirched with the cry of “antiquarianism”, but the revived enthusiasm for family history, as it now prefers to be known, is beginning to fight back. Elizabeth Simpson has made the plea that the family historian has a role to play that is valuable to all the other groups of historians, local, social, medical, industrial, demographical, and so on, and that ultimately there should be a total acceptance of family history as just one more branch of history.³³¹ Since the social scene in England shows such fluidity, it is essential, in order to determine more exactly the social niche occupied by the apothecary, that family case histories be made. Only

³²⁸ F. N. L. Poynter and W. J. Bishop, ‘A 17th century doctor and his patients: John Symcotts, 1592?–1662’, *Beds. Hist. Rec. Soc. Pubns.*, 1951, 31: introduction, pp. x–xvi.; Guildhall Library, Society of Apothecaries’ court minutes, MS. 8200/2, f. 29. He asked permission of the court on 8 August 1671 to take a second apprentice. He was one of the many apothecaries who stayed in London throughout the Great Plague.

³²⁹ PRO, PCC, Prob. 11 269, f. 452, will of George Symcotts, proved 3 March 1658; PCC, Prob. 11 309, f. 159, will of John Symcotts, doctor of physic, proved 15 December 1662. Besides the annuity, Robert received from his uncle “... thirty four shilling pieces of King James and eight old angels, one is a double duckett to keep for my sake”.

³³⁰ F. N. L. Poynter, *Gideon Delaune and his family circle*, London, Wellcome Historical Medical Library, 1965, p. 10.

³³¹ E. Simpson, ‘Family history societies’, *Local Historian*, 1981, 14: 261.

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when we know something of a man's background, relatives, friends, interests, and civic affairs can a reasonable assessment be made, and the old, glib, inaccurate generalities be discarded.

For our first case history we will take the London apothecary, John Conyers, a man, as far as his Society was concerned, of the middle rank but who was on the fringe of the exciting scientific world of his day. Conyers wrote in his memoranda on 25 January 1677, "... my Father 45 years since, Mr Edward Conyers or Coniers, was espoused to Mrs Jane Clarke my mother" at the church of St Faith's, which then lay under the ruins of St Paul's Cathedral. The following day, he made a reference to his two brothers, "Meeting with my Brother Mr Emanuel Conyers the Confectioner hee . . . tould mee my Brother Conyers at the Tower, the storekeeper, both of them was at Epping forest hunting of the haire. . . ."³³²

Of the father little is known, but all three of his sons were members of London companies, Edward was made free of the Leathersellers' in 1667, Emanuel of the Grocers' in 1664, and John of the Apothecaries' in 1658. Although their parents were married in London, it is known that they were living in Leicestershire at the time of the boys' bindings.³³³ This is not surprising, because a pedigree of John Nichols shows that the elder Edward Conyers was the descendant of an armigerous family of Wakerley, Northamptonshire, near the county border.³³⁴

John Conyers' first shop was at the sign of the Unicorn in Fleet Street, from which he practised all through the Great Plague. He is known to have issued a pamphlet entitled *Direction for the prevention and cure of the plague, fitted for the poorer sort*, which is an indication of the standing of his customers. It is probable that his shop was swept away by the Great Fire, for we next hear of him at the sign of the White Lion in the same street. Early in 1666, he married Mary Glisson, the niece of Francis Glisson, Regius Professor of Physick at Cambridge, who later lived nearby in Newe Street.³³⁵ Another neighbour was Thomas Tompion, the clockmaker, to whom he lent one of his hygrosopes, and not much farther away, that controversial figure, William Salmon. Salmon was a prolific author, and in the preface of his *The practice of curing diseases* (1681) he complained "... of a late scandalous Abuse put upon Me by one Con . . . s a Potecary or Pot-carryer of Fleet St. who reports . . . that only as an Amanuensis I wrote them by the Instruction of another Gentleman. . . ." From which it seems that Conyers approved of Salmon's books but found the man's flamboyancy

³³² British Library, Sloane MSS., Conyers' memoranda, MS. 958, ff. 127, 127v.

³³³ Communication from the clerk to the Leathersellers' Company; Guildhall Library, the Grocers' Company records, bindings, MS. 11593/1, f. 262 (2); Apothecaries' Society court minutes, MS. 8200/1, f. 477r, "2 August 1649, John Conyers, son of Edward Conyers of Little Bowden in the county of Northampton, exam'd . . . bound to Robert Phelps for 8 years from 29 September 1649". Little Bowden is now in Leicestershire; later Edward senior was living at Elmthorpe.

³³⁴ Nichols, *op. cit.*, note 91 above, vol. 2, p. 456. The Conyers brothers were descended from Reginald of Wakerley, who died in 1514, see pedigree.

³³⁵ Francis Glisson was one of nine sons and four daughters, the children of William Glisson of Rampisham, Dorset (J. P. Rylands (editor), *Visitation of Dorset, 1623*, London, Harleian Society Publications, 1885, vol. 20, p. 46). Two of Francis' brothers, Paul and John, were in the church. Francis, and probably John Conyers too, was a Parliamentarian; he was a classical fellow of Caius College, Cambridge, and did not obtain his MD until 1634, when he was thirty-seven. He probably spent little time in Cambridge after 1640; he was president of the College of Physicians and a founder fellow of the Royal Society.

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so disagreeable that he did not wish to believe that Salmon had written them.³³⁶

John Conyers' brother, Edward, the Keeper of His Majesty's stores in the Tower, made money and became determined to return to the root-stock of their family by becoming a landed gentleman. In the 1680s, he bought the manors of Blaston and Bradley in south Leicestershire. Unfortunately for his aspirations of re-founding a county dynasty, he had but one child, Sarah. Nothing daunted, a marriage was arranged between her and a certain Baldwin Conyers, who was in no way related.³³⁷ Tragically, the centre of all Edward's plans died in 1698, only eight months after her marriage, to be followed by Edward's wife a year later. Edward married for the second time in August 1701, but only lived a further six weeks.³³⁸

Both of Edward Conyers' brothers predeceased him, John, our apothecary, in 1694, and Emanuel, the confectioner in All Hallows Staining, in 1690. Although John had had a large family, only two daughters lived to adulthood, and consequently Edward's considerable estate passed to a son of Emanuel, also named John, who was born in 1684.³³⁹ Although this younger John married in 1706, there was again a failure in the male line, and by the strange terms of Edward's will, the Leicestershire estate passed to yet another Conyers family. Once again, there was no relationship, but the Conyers of Walthamstow were well known, for they were immensely wealthy.³⁴⁰

Such was the family of apothecary John Conyers, one which sprang from good county stock, made a fair competence in the great city, but in the long term failed to re-establish a dynasty of landowners. (For Conyers' scientific work, see pp. 44–46.)

Holmes has noted that the sector of society that comprised both "bona-fide professionals and pseudo-professionals" expanded more rapidly in numbers, wealth, and relative weight in the late seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries than any other. He remarked also that by 1730, owing to the growth of urbanization, there was offered more opportunity for social intercourse between the practitioners of law, religion, and medicine, which slowly led to an awareness of the separate social identity of professional people.³⁴¹ Interchange and cross-fertilization of beliefs and standards occurred between clergy and attorneys, medical practitioners of all hues, and the parsonage or manse, all of which was enriched by the newly emergent engineers, schoolmasters, civil servants, and officers of the army and navy. Although

³³⁶ W. Kirkby, 'A quack of the 17th century', *Pharm. J.*, 1910, **84**: 259. Although over-fond of self-advertisement, Salmon was no illiterate mountebank. His *Botanologia* shows him to have been to the Carolinas, and he is likely to have been originally a ship's surgeon, a suggestion supported by his will, in which he bequeathed £1,000 obtained from the sale of his library to his brother Francis Salmon of Gosport, physician (PRO, PCC., Prob. 11 532 f. 91).

³³⁷ Baldwin Conyers' father was John Conyers of Gray's Inn, son of Christopher of Horden, Durham.

³³⁸ His first wife, Sarah, had been the daughter of a fellow citizen and leather-seller, Matthew Bateman; the second, Madam Mary Norwich, sister of Sir Erasmus Norwich of Brampton, Northamptonshire, baronet.

³³⁹ Nichols (loc. cit., note 334 above) erroneously believed that Edward's Leicestershire estate passed to the apothecary; the pedigree produced by him is defective and in parts clearly impossible. The estate, of nearly 1000 acres and eight messuages, was sold in 1750 to John Owsley of Hallaton, an apothecary.

³⁴⁰ The Conyers of Walthamstow originated in Whitby and Scarborough. Tristram and Robert, two of Anthony Conyers of Bagdaile-hall's five sons, came south to find their fortunes. In this Tristram, at least, was eminently successful, for he built a capital messuage in Hoe Street, Walthamstow, and had estates in Lincolnshire and East Ham. Members of his family were William Conyers MD, who died of the plague in 1665, and Sir Gerard Conyers, governor of the Levant Company and director of the Bank of England.

³⁴¹ Holmes, op. cit., note 2 above, pp. 7, 11.

not all the professions are represented, at least four are to be found within the family of Thomas and Lewis Dickenson, apothecaries of Stafford.

The Dickensons' origins lay in a substantial Staffordshire yeoman family which, in 1575, was the tenant of a house in the manor of Acton Trussell, four miles south of Stafford. The century still had another seven years to run when the property was sold to the Dickensons.³⁴² Lewis's son, Lewis (a confusingly common name in the family), matriculated at St Alban's Hall, Oxford, in 1601, when he was seventeen, but this was the family's sole contact with the university world for well over a century. The Lewis of each succeeding generation inherited the small estate at Acton, until we come to the great-grandson. This particular Lewis and his wife Elizabeth died young, leaving their two boys, the inevitable Lewis and his younger brother Thomas, to be brought up by their grandfather.³⁴³ As was proper, the elder son was guided in the ways of being a landowner, but Thomas was made an apothecary. Where he was trained is not known, but he was certainly practising in Stafford by 1707. Like his parents, Thomas did not live to middle age; both he and his wife were dead by 1721, and left two sons, another Lewis and another Thomas, to be brought up by their father's brother, Uncle Lewis, and his wife Mary.

It was decided that this youngest of the Lewis Dickensons was to be an apothecary like his father, and accordingly he travelled to Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire, for a seven-year apprenticeship, starting on 1 September 1729 under John Mynors.³⁴⁴ Before his time was finished, the young man, who must have been remarkably competent for his age, was recalled in August 1735, to deal with the problems that had arisen as a result of his Uncle Lewis's death the previous year. His Aunt Mary was now responsible for four young people, her own three, Lewis, Edward, and Mary, and her nephew Thomas. She received help from her brother, Thomas Ward, a banker in Fleet Street, London, but the person who increasingly and successfully organized the whole family was the young apothecary.

Whilst Lewis Dickenson had been living in Ashby, his younger brother Thomas had been packed off in the autumn of 1732 to Worcester to be trained as a grocer. Earlier, Thomas had been educated at Newport, Shropshire, by his father's cousin, John Dickenson, who, like his brother Joseph, subsequently entered the church.³⁴⁵ John and

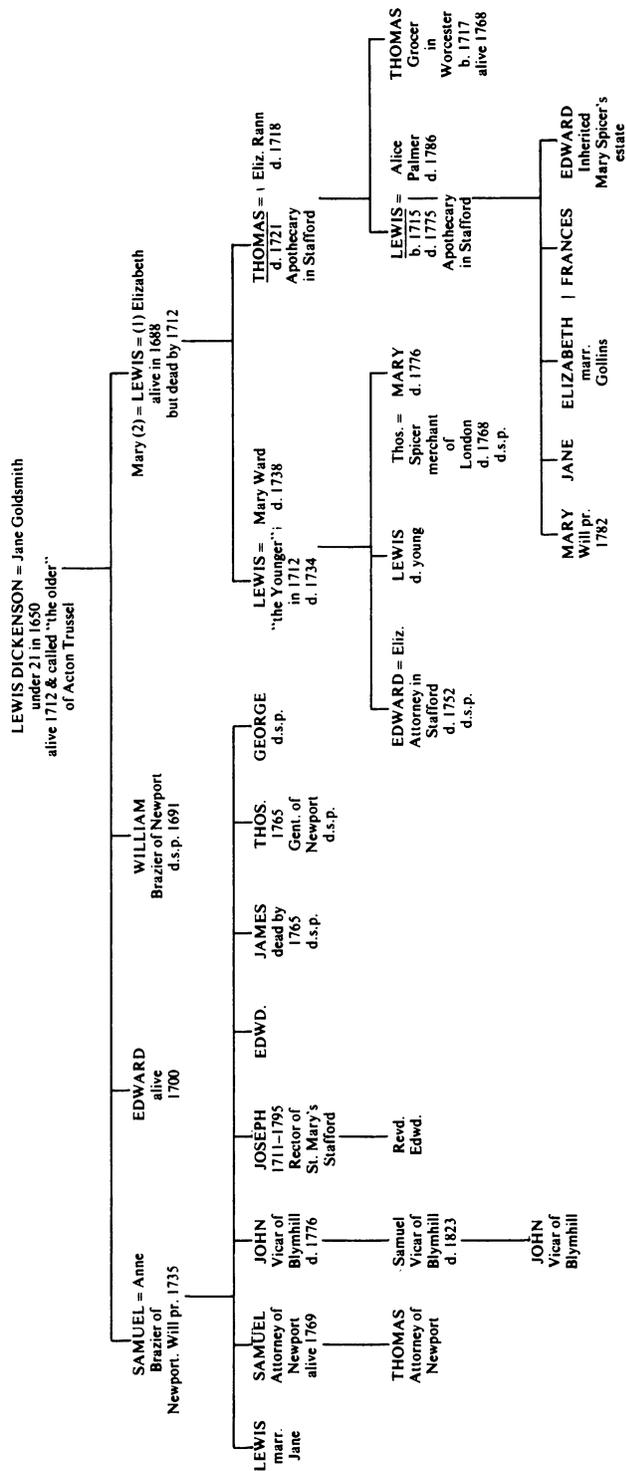
³⁴² *Victoria county history, Staffordshire*, Institute of Historical Research, 1959, vol. 5, pp. 12–14.

³⁴³ The William Salt Library. Most of the information about the Dickenson family has been taken from the Hand-Morgan collection, which is not yet fully catalogued. On 10 February 1648, an indenture was made between William Goldsmith, yeoman, and Lewis Dickenson of Acton for the marriage of Goldsmith's daughter Jane and Lewis's son Lewis; Goldsmith supplying a £600 marriage portion and Dickenson lands and tenements. Litigation arose and there were law suits in 1649, 1687, 1689, 1690, and 1712, in which there was much useful recapitulation.

³⁴⁴ PRO, Inland Revenue apprenticeship records, I.R./1/12, f. 1, premium £50. John Mynors was obviously a man who believed in frankness; he died on 26 June 1749, and had written on his mural monument in St Helen's church that he had "... by a successful practice carried on many years here enjoyed the pleasure of doing good, both to himself and those about him." He had a number of apprentices, as did Thomas Dickenson, including a boy from Ashby and another from London.

³⁴⁵ John became vicar of Blymhill and was followed there by his son Samuel and his grandson John Horatio Dickenson. Samuel was a man of parts; he had a degree in law from St John's College, Cambridge, and a famous garden where he grew many aromatic Mediterranean plants collected when he travelled as tutor to Charles Darwin (1758–78), uncle to the famous zoologist. Joseph became rector of St Mary's, Stafford, and on 12 September 1772, he married William Withering to Helen Cooke, daughter of the town clerk. Joseph was followed at Stafford by his son Edward.

THE DICKENSONS OF ACTON TRUSSELL, STAFFORD, AND NEWPORT, SALOP



Compiled from MSS. at Wm. Salt library, Stafford, and Wills of members of the Dickenson family.

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Joseph Dickenson were among the eight sons of Samuel; another, Samuel, became an attorney. By this time – early mid-eighteenth century – representatives of four professions were to be found in the family – and two trades.

Lewis took the guardianship of his young brother very seriously. Early in 1738, Thomas, living with Mr Edwards, grocer, in the High Street, Worcester, received a very terse and admonitory letter, "... you will receive about the same time two guineas sent by Martin the carrier. Your demand of twelve guineas put me upon looking whether so much was due to you, and upon enquiring found your letter of 21st. Feb. was in a very improper language. I will do everything I possibly can in my power to oblige and serve you but reckoning £5 per cent you are still outgone your allowance. I would have you take this into serious consideration for it is your own loss, and not lay out money as though you had twice the Income you have."

The year before, Lewis Dickenson had helped his Aunt Mary, who was rapidly failing, to place her eldest son Edward as an articled attorney's clerk with their father's cousin, the previously mentioned Samuel Dickenson of Newport. Edward's articles stated that Samuel was to "... instruct his clerk in the profession of law and practice of an attorney of the Court of Common Pleas at Westminster ... as a Solicitor in the Courts of Equity and in conveyancy ... and will take his clerk to London in term time to learn the method of managing and transacting the business of attorney and solicitor and at the end of the said five years at the request and cost of the said Edward Dickenson procure him to be admitted an attorney in the Court of Common Pleas."³⁴⁶ It is not known if he ever practised in London, but, in any case, he was living at his house in Gaolgate, Stafford, at the time of his death in 1752. His brother-in-law, Thomas Spicer, citizen and haberdasher of London and husband of his sister Mary, had the thankless task of bringing order into Edward's affairs. There were problems with the Acton Trussell estate, which he had inherited, more trouble with another estate farther north in the county at Millmece, and a very sizeable mortgage. At considerable cost to himself, Spicer sorted things out, the final act being the sale of Edward's house when Edward's widow married a Stafford surgeon and apothecary, Brooke Crutchley, in 1767.³⁴⁷

Spicer died the following year, and his will led to many furious letters and allegations between the Dickenson family and Spicer's brother John, a clergyman in Reading, in which Lewis was involved to the hilt.³⁴⁸ The apothecary was no stranger to litigation; there was the case of Dickenson v. Clarke, which concerned a trespass at Cotonfield, and that of Dickenson v. Drakeford, in which he acted as the executor of

³⁴⁶ Hand-Morgan collection, *op. cit.*, note 343 above, MS. S.R. 249/6. Samuel was to find meat, drink, washing, and lodging, and to pay Edward £10 10s. at the end of his term, premium £105. The witnesses were Thomas Unett, ironmonger, and Lewis Dickenson, the apothecary. Young Edward did not join Samuel's law firm, possibly because Samuel's own son Thomas was the successor.

³⁴⁷ Brooke, the son of John Crutchley of Hatherston, Warwickshire, had started his seven-year apprenticeship on Christmas Day 1732 with Edmund Seager, surgeon and apothecary, of the same town. Crutchley had at least three apprentices himself in Stafford between 1744 and 1760.

³⁴⁸ Thomas Spicer had already let off his Reading house at £65 a year and also his bleaching ground there. John Spicer did some much-needed arithmetic and came up with the figures of £8,294 for his brother's assets and £8,460 for his commitments, which thus left no residue for John; equally disturbing was the fact that the London house John had been left in Fleet Street was in need of extensive repairs and adjoined a poor and noisy area. Mary Spicer departed from the fray and spent most of her last years in Bath, living for long periods with Lady Stanley.

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Richard Drakeford of Forebridge, member of a well-known Staffordshire family.³⁴⁹ Even more complicated was his involvement with the Palmers of Aston Hall outside Stafford. His wife's brother, John Palmer, had died intestate in 1766, leaving a widow and two infant daughters. As there was doubt as to Mrs Palmer's probity, the inheritance was put under the direction of the Court of Chancery, which appointed Lewis Dickenson receiver and manager of the rents and estates.

In the midst of such activity, he practised medicine and pharmacy and found time to be busy with civic affairs. He was mayor of Stafford from 1755 to 1759, and amongst his papers are lists of ale-house licences, constable's court papers, and accounts for the payments of electors. This busy life came to an end in July 1775, when he was just over sixty.

So lived the Dickensons. Not a family that was involved in national affairs, nor one that made a noteworthy mark in the academic world, but one which could certainly be described as professional and which was well known and respected in the west Midlands. The Dickensons are illustrative of those well-to-do families of yeoman status which proved a rich source for the consolidating professional corps. It is no less true of the minor gentry families that they proved a fine ground for recruitment.

Such a family was that of Septimus Bott (1646–1702), the son of Thomas Bott, an armigerous gentleman of modest pretensions at the family home of Dunstall-hall in the Forest of Needwood.³⁵⁰ Thomas, dying in 1652, left his widow with six children, ranging in age from eleven to five, for whom provision had to be made. The estate of some 220 acres (and so probably only of the order of that of the Dickensons), was preserved intact for the eldest son John, who helped matters along by marrying into the landowning Wolferstan family. The other three boys had to fend for themselves, the youngest, Septimus, becoming an apothecary.

His apprentice-master is unknown, but Septimus took the step of obtaining the freedom of the London Society of Apothecaries by redemption in June 1670. He was still on the yeomanry list three years later, the probable year of his marriage to Joan, the widow of Thomas Pidgeon, alderman and apothecary of Coventry.³⁵¹ Septimus died in 1702, aged fifty-six, having outlived his brother John by sixteen years. It is apparent from his will that his thirty years' work in Coventry had done much to restore the family's fortunes. He owned not only his house in the Cross Cheaping but also lands in Warwickshire and Kent, and had arranged an advantageous marriage between his daughter Ann and Thomas, the son of the Reverend Michael Armestead of Waddington. No mention is made of the career of Septimus's elder son, but the apothecarial business was inherited by the second son, Thomas (1680–1739). It is assumed that Thomas, then twenty-two, had been trained by his father, though

³⁴⁹ Matthew Drakeford, son of Richard, in 1731, was apprenticed to Thomas Addenbrooke (a Staffordshire man), citizen and apothecary of London. Twenty years later, Drakeford was practising in Cannock and taking apprentices himself.

³⁵⁰ S. Shaw, *The history and antiquities of Staffordshire*, Wakefield, E. P. Publishing Co., 1976 (reprint), vol. 1, p. 111; R. Plot, *The natural history of Staffordshire*, Oxford, 1686. The Bott arms are engraved on the attached map; John Bott was a friend and correspondent of Robert Plot.

³⁵¹ In the church of Holy Trinity, Coventry, is a handsome marble monument to Thomas Pidgeon and his two wives, Elizabeth Foxley and Joan Foster née Greene. Pidgeon had four sons and a daughter, Elizabeth, who married John Dugdale, the eldest son of William of Blithe Hall; it was she who raised the monument.

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possibly he had been to London for a short while.³⁵²

When he was nearing forty, Thomas married. His bride, Elizabeth Gresley, was related to him, as she was the granddaughter of Uncle John, who had inherited Dunstall-hall. John's daughter, Anne, had married Charles, the son of Sir Charles Gresley, baronet. The Gresleys of Drakelow were an important and powerful landed family in the counties of Stafford and Derby. Whilst it may have been thought unusual for a son of the Gresleys to have married a daughter of an impoverished minor gentleman, later generations would have decreed that the marriage between a Gresley daughter and a man who was indisputably involved in retail trade as an apothecary was totally inappropriate, not to say unacceptable. The shop counter does not seem to have caused social ostracism at that period.

Thomas was by no means ashamed of his own family, the Botts, as can be seen from his will made in 1734. He wished his eldest son John "... to be bred to the Law if qualified for such employment". In the event, John was not put to the test, as he died within a few weeks of his father. The second son, Henry, predeceased his father, so that Thomas left no heir, a situation he had envisaged. He wrote in his will that, should his sons die under the age of twenty-one, then the residue of his real estate was to pass to his cousin John Bott of Burton-on-Trent, mercer, (son of his father's brother Daniel), and his male heirs, but if in default, it was bequeathed to his cousin Thomas Bott of Stratford-upon-Avon and his male heirs, "... it being my desire that the said estate should continue in the name of Bott."³⁵³

Elizabeth Bott (née Gresley, and soon to be Beardsley) would have been surprised and possibly indignant to have heard apothecaries described as "barely respectable" (p. 92), because apart from her husband there were at least five in her own family. Her father Charles, like his older brother Thomas (1668–1743), had been bound apprentice to wealthy City of London merchants; neither stayed on in the capital but returned to the country to live on their estates, Charles at Dunstan-hall with his wife Anne Bott, and Thomas at Nether Seale on the estate given to him by his mother.³⁵⁴ Thomas's fifth son John (1711–83) married twice and had a large family. Two sons entered the church, another became an army officer, and two, James Henry (1751–?) and William Theophilus (1754–1826) Gresley became the apprentices of Walter Lyon and James Oldershaw, surgeons and apothecaries and men-midwives of Tamworth, who have already been mentioned (p. 31).³⁵⁵ James Henry died young, but William

³⁵² PRO, PCC, Prob. 11 468 f. 20, February 1703. At the time of his death, he was an alderman of Coventry and his memorial in Holy Trinity proclaims him to have been a faithful supporter of the monarchy and the Church of England. Septimus's brother Thomas sent his son John to London in 1693 to be apprenticed to John Blankley, citizen and barber-surgeon. John did not take up his freedom but started a dynasty of apothecaries and surgeons in Stratford-upon-Avon.

³⁵³ PRO, PCC, Prob. 11 697 f. 189, July 1739. John Bott, the mercer, was in fact dead at the time Thomas made his will in the autumn of 1734, having died the previous year, but he left five sons, Edward, John, Thomas, Daniel, and James.

³⁵⁴ F. Madan, *The Gresleys of Drakelow*, William Salt Archaeological Society, 1898, vol. 19, pp. 95, 98–99.

³⁵⁵ James Oldershaw had married Ruth Wilcockson, a relation of James Henry and William Theophilus Gresley's mother. Theophilus called in Oldershaw and Lyon to the confinement of his wife on 29 September 1781. When it was apparent that all was not well, William Withering was brought in on 5 October; matters did not improve and she was buried on the 26th. Allegations of neglect were brought against Withering. See Peck and Wilkinson, op. cit., note 306 above, p. 97.

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Theophilus, like a distant cousin, Philip Gresley, became a member of the London Company of Surgeons.³⁵⁶

Families were clannish in the eighteenth century, and contact was maintained for generations between the spreading branches, so that it is no surprise to find marriages between first, second, and third cousins. The aunt of James and Theophilus, Elizabeth Gresley, married into the Gresleys of Bristol. She thereby became the second wife of a merchant, Henry, the sister-in-law of an Oxford MB, Robert (1696–1760) and of an apothecary, Francis (1708–91), and the daughter-in-law of another apothecary, Charles (1660–1735). Charles was the son of Thomas Gresley MA (Oxon.), royalist, tutor to the Earl of Clare's son, prebend of Worcester Cathedral, and a writer and translator of repute.³⁵⁷ It is scarcely in dispute that the Gresleys were an upper-middle-class family, amongst whom were representatives of the landed gentry, clergy, attorneys, army surgeons, army officers, merchants, and apothecaries.

The detailed examination of the connexions of Septimus and Thomas Bott showed a not dissimilar pattern. Their antecedents were minor landowners; two of Thomas's sisters married clergymen, one set of cousins were mercers, another surgeons and apothecaries, a girl cousin married an MA who became a schoolmaster in Wolverhampton. It all provides an interesting commentary on provincial life in the first half of the eighteenth century. Landowner, merchant, parson, solicitor, and apothecary, their lives intermingled and they were on intimate terms with each other, a far cry from the nicely adjusted social stratigraphy of Victorian England. Lewis Dickenson and the two Botts were men of position and influence in their towns. Their opinions and help were sought by many sections of society. They had a close and familiar, not to say family, relationship with the local gentry, with London merchants and bankers, and with members of the well-recognized professions of the law and the church. One is forced to the conclusion that a man who participated in retail trade in the early and mid-eighteenth century was by no means condemned to social ostracism. Willan has made the suggestion that, "... it was the social snobbery of the Victorians that invented the tradesmen's entrance."³⁵⁸

Snobbery relating to retail trade does not seem to have had much weight with the two young men of non-conformist background, Richard Pulteney and James Taylor, when they were discussing the latter's future career. Taylor, when he was at the Northampton Academy in 1749, wrote, "I have been very uneasy with regard to my future employment in life and cannot think of any profession because of the close

³⁵⁶ Both of them are to be found on the Surgeons' Lists for 1777, Philip as an army surgeon and Theophilus as living at Ashbourne. Two years later, the latter was in Tamworth, probably with Oldershaw, but after the death of his infant son in 1784, he moved away. After another short marriage, he became house-surgeon at the Liverpool Infirmary for twenty years; Philip Gresley (1751–1825), the son of an attorney, was more closely related to the Bristol Gresleys; he was an apprentice of Timothy Healy, surgeon and apothecary of Amersham for seven years, and was appointed to the 11th Dragoons in 1776.

³⁵⁷ Madan, *op. cit.*, note 354 above, p. 134. Charles Gresley, apothecary, became a burgess of Bristol in 1684 and built up a very successful practice. He married twice and fathered seven sons, three of whom entered the church, one became a physician, and two merchants. His next-to-youngest son Francis followed Charles in his apothecary's practice and was equally successful. Francis was the grandfather of Anthony Trollope's redoubtable mother, Fanny Milton, see J. Johnston, *The life, manners and travels of Fanny Trollope*, London, Constable, 1979, pp. 15, 25.

³⁵⁸ T. S. Willan, *An eighteenth century shopkeeper, Abraham Dent of Kirkby Stephen*, Manchester University Press, 1970, p. 146.

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application necessary in the pursuit; and as to a trade I am sure I could not support the confinement of a shop, nor bear to sit behind a counter from one weeks end to another." Seven weeks later, he enlarged on the subject, "If you ask what employment I should chose myself . . . of all the different mechanic business . . . or employment which go under the denomination of trades I think I should prefer that of a 'Retail Draper', it seems such a neat cleanly business and what prejudices me in its favour is the good hours they keep, the leisure for reading and improving the mind, and the liberty which it affords to sanctify the Sabbath." In the end, he decided to become a grazier, ". . . it is genteel employment and affords much spare time . . . I dont on any account intend to mingle farming with it which I am prodigiously aversed to."³⁵⁹

Social snobbery was not invented by the Victorians, but they inherited and embellished it. If one were to place a date for the origin of the denigration of retail trade, one might hazard that of 1750. The three London medical organizations enacted three far-reaching statutes in the middle years of the eighteenth century: (1) the Surgeons' Company's by-laws of 1748, which forbade the election to the Court of ". . . anyone who practised as an apothecary or followed any other trade or occupation besides the profession or business of a surgeon."³⁶⁰ (2) the College of Physicians' statute of 1758, which stated that no one who had ever practised as an apothecary or kept open shop was eligible under any circumstances for election to the fellowship;^{361a} (3) the Society of Apothecaries, by 1774, felt it was time for its higher echelons to dissociate in some degree from retail trade and so resolved that only those apothecaries practising medicine would be allowed on the livery.^{361b}

An interesting comparison may be made with the rapidly increasing interest in plantsmanship and the rise of the nurseryman in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. On 12 August 1740, a sermon was preached by Charles Lamotte DD, chaplain to the Prince of Wales, "at a meeting of Gentlemen Florists, and Gardeners" at Stamford. Harvey has written,

The coming together of gentlemen florists and gardeners was a symptom of great significance. . . . The archives of the Ancient Society of York Florists, complete from its foundation in 1768, show by the actual signatures on the roll the almost complete coverage of society by the keen interest in flowers . . . the membership included knights, baronets and lords of great estates as well as professional men and minor shopkeepers. . . . It is known that the Exeter society, after a good start, became divided by the new snobbery early in the 19th. century, and an attempt was made – though happily defeated – to remove the tradesmen from its ranks.³⁶²

The successful legislation of the London medical bodies against retail trade nurtured this snobbery until such ridiculous statements as the following could be made in 1811: "Mr Cunnington's account of the different articles displayed very considerable powers of mind, as well as originality, and was conveyed in a language and manner peculiarly his own; and left us in admiration of acquirements so rarely met with in men of his rank and calling, who affected no other character than that of a respectable tradesman. . . ."³⁶³ Or, in the mid-nineteenth century: "He lived to show

³⁵⁹ Linnean Library, Pulteney letters, 3 March [1749], 22 April 1749, 14 July 1749.

³⁶⁰ Wall, op. cit., note 24 above, p. 54.

³⁶¹ Wall, Cameron, and Underwood, op. cit., note 8 above, vol. 1, (a) p. 189, (b) p. 188.

³⁶² John Harvey, *Early nurserymen*, Chichester, Phillimore, 1974, p. 37.

³⁶³ R. H. Cunnington, *From antiquary to archaeologist*, Princes Risborough, Shire Publications, 1975, p. 92. William Cunnington was a fine archaeologist of the latter part of the eighteenth century, who was ins-

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how much of the coarser duties of this busy World may be undertaken by a man of quick sensibility without impairing the finer sense of the beautiful in nature and in art. . . .'³⁶⁴

The denigration of the apothecary and the delicate drawing away of skirts from anything that smacked of retail trade was in full swing by 1800. Richard Smith junior, surgeon of the Bristol Infirmary from 1796 to 1843, wrote a valuable account of medical practice in Bristol. Of the apothecary at the turn of the eighteenth century, he wrote,

About the year 1793 there were in Bristol 35 professed Apothecaries and 20 Surgeons, amongst the latter there were 8 or 10 who considered it to be *infra. dig.* to put 'Apothecary' upon their doors, yet the greatest part among these practised Physic and dispensed medicines. Amongst the Infirmary list Mr Godfrey Lowe and Mr Noble confined themselves to Surgery. But Mr Yeatman acted as an Apothecary and dispensed his medicines. . . . Mr Allard although he held himself very high and was very indignant at the idea of being otherwise than 'A Surgeon' – yet he not only practised Physic but was actually known by the name of 'Shop'. He however had his Bills for medicines made out in the name of his Apprentice and pretended that it was a perquisite of his 'young man' – but the fact was that every shilling . . . went into his own pocket.³⁶⁵

These curious ideas of the last two hundred years have been extrapolated backwards, and the belief has been, and still is by the majority, held that there was an almost absolute rupture between the professional physician and the trading apothecary throughout their mutual histories. Wherever a community or a family is studied in detail, this has not proved to be the case. Of the Bromfields of London it has been written,

It was then [the Victorian era] strongly held that in some mysterious way trade was denigrating . . . never could it be intermingled with the true professions of the church, medicine and the law. In this country it has never been denied that a family might start from humble origins but in the upward climb all such associations had to be ruthlessly discarded. Yet here is a family which remained in close and intimate terms with each other, who covered a wide spectrum of social position, from an apothecarial shopkeeper, a druggist and tea-man to a barrister of Gray's Inn, an MD of Oxford, and a surgeon to the royal household.³⁶⁶

This conclusion was borne out by Dr Zuck's researches into John Mervyn Nooth. He discovered that John's father, Henry, apothecary of Sturminster Newton, Dorset, was the son of the Reverend Nooth, prebendary of Wells. Henry married Biddy, the daughter of John Mervin, apothecary, and probably Nooth's apprentice-master. Mervin had sent his son, Edward, to Balliol in 1728, where he obtained a BA. In his turn, Henry sent his son, John Mervin, to Edinburgh and then on the "grand tour"; he purchased a commission for his other son, Henry, in a fashionable regiment. The younger Henry married into the landed gentry, his wife being the female survivor of the extinct baronetcy of Vavasour of Spaldington. This background would have been

trumental in liberating the new subject from the thralldom of the classics. He was a draper who later became a successful wool merchant.

³⁶⁴ *Chronicles of Cannon Street*, published privately by Messrs. Joseph Travers & Sons, [n.d. ?1957], p. 20. This is a reference to William Smith, citizen and grocer of the Sugar Loaf, Cannon Street, London, reformer and first avowed non-conformist to take the oath in the House of Commons.

³⁶⁵ F. H. Rawlings, 'The decline of the apothecary in Bristol', a paper read at the British Society for the History of Pharmacy conference at Bristol in 1979; it was extracted from the second volume of Richard Smith's 'Memoirs of the Infirmary'.

³⁶⁶ Burnby and Whittet, *op. cit.*, note 178 above, p. 9.

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assigned to a physician without question.³⁶⁷

With this evidence before us, it is not surprising to find such county families as the Turvilles, the Herricks, and the Dixies of Leicestershire, the Parkyns and the Scroops of Nottinghamshire, the Meynells and the Bagshaws of Derbyshire figuring in the apprenticeship records both in London and the provinces.

³⁶⁷ D. Zuck, 'The provincial apothecary', *Pharm. Hist.*, 1978, 8: no. 2, unpaginated. Dr Zuck wrote, "During my researches on Nooth I began to have doubts about the validity of the picture of the provincial apothecary painted by such writers as Lester King. . . .".