

# THE YORK MEDICAL SCHOOL

*by*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

FEW British cities have a history which is equal, either in interest or importance, to that of York. Through the centuries it has been of consequence in many spheres, and its place in medical history is not without significance.

St. Leonard's Hospital, founded in the City in 936, was at one time the largest hospital in England. During the medieval years many small hospitals were in existence in York, caring for the sick and the old. The County Hospital was founded in 1740, and was 'for some time the only institution of its kind north of the Trent'.<sup>1</sup> In 1777 the 'Asylum for the Insane' opened, and it is now the oldest psychiatric hospital in the country still used for its original purpose. A public dispensary was established in 1788.<sup>2</sup> In 1792 the Retreat Mental Hospital was founded, and since then it has influenced the treatment of mentally-ill patients throughout the world.<sup>3</sup> The York Medical Society was formed in 1832<sup>4</sup> and two years later a medical school was opened in the City.

The purpose of this article is to outline the history of this York Medical School. There are three reasons which justify this account.

Firstly, the York Medical School is typical of other schools founded during the same period. Its history mirrors some of the influences which were affecting medical education and therefore this study has more than local interest.

Secondly, the School is of interest in its own right. During its existence it was responsible for a major portion of the medical education of such men as Sir Jonathan Hutchinson and John Hughlings Jackson.

Thirdly, no concise history of the School seems to have been written hitherto. Mr. Rendall, a former Keeper of the Department of Printed Books at the British Museum, reported that he could find no reference to the School in the very comprehensive catalogue of the Surgeon-General's Library, Washington D.C., and he could only conclude 'an account of this school has yet to be written'.<sup>5</sup>

The writer is well aware that this account is superficial and fragmentary, and that it leaves many relevant matters unexplained and some unexplored. It is offered in the hope that it may interest those who read it, and that the gap which it does not adequately fill will soon be further investigated.

## II. BACKGROUND HISTORY

At the close of the eighteenth century organized medical training in the British Isles was limited to Aberdeen, Dublin, Edinburgh and London;<sup>6</sup> many practitioners received all their education under the apprenticeship system. Many factors influenced the formation of the provincial medical schools. The

Industrial Revolution had led to the rapid aggregation of population, which of necessity produced a demand for the building of large general hospitals in the provinces. The new medical schools were established in association with these hospitals.

During the first half of the nineteenth century there was a definite move towards imposing more regulation upon medical education. In 1815 an Act was passed which granted the Apothecaries' Society of London the power to hold examinations and to grant licences. This Act made the qualification to practice medicine available to all members of the profession, although many continued without any qualification until the Medical Act of 1858 introduced compulsory registration.<sup>7</sup> In 1832 the passing of the Anatomy Act gave further impetus to the development of formal medical education in the provinces by removing some of the difficulties under which the anatomists had been working before that date.

National legislation and local clinical opportunities thus coincided to suggest to the medical men of many cities that they should establish a local medical school. In some cases local organization led to the foundation of a school, and most of the schools formed, excluding the private schools, are still in existence today.

The following provincial schools were founded:

Manchester 1824	Birmingham 1825	Sheffield 1828
Leeds 1831	Hull 1831	Newcastle 1832
Bristol 1833	Liverpool 1834	York 1834

A school was also established in Nottingham, about which information is lacking.<sup>8</sup> The records of the Government's Inspector of Anatomy for 1833 also mentions medical schools at Exeter, Bath and Cambridge.<sup>9</sup>

The School at York was thus the ninth English provincial school to be founded within eleven years—four of these schools being in Yorkshire. The factors which influenced the fortune of the York School will be further studied in the following sections.

### III. THE FOUNDATION AND PREPARATIONS

The suggestion that a medical school might be formed in York was first put forward in 1833. In that year the members of the profession met together on a number of occasions to discuss the proposal, and these early meetings owed much to the services of Mr. James Atkinson. Dr. Simpson, speaking at the prize-giving ceremony in 1838, acknowledged the great debt owed to Mr. Atkinson ('that veteran in the profession') for chairing the early meetings and for ensuring the ultimate success of the project.<sup>10</sup> No plan directly evolved from the first discussions because, as Dr. Simpson explained, 'Unfortunately what was everybody's business was nobody's business and nothing was done.'

Mr. Needham was especially enthusiastic and in an attempt to further the proposal he called a meeting which was held in his own home. The outcome of

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this was another general meeting of the profession; Dr. Wake was in the chair on that occasion. At that meeting each individual present was asked 'Whether he was disposed to become a teacher in the School, and what department he would take.' This appears to have been a sudden move, and a strange and insular method of assembling a staff for so important a venture. The most satisfactory explanation of these events, until further details appear, is that the all-important decision to found a medical school in York was taken at the meeting in Mr. Needham's house. The general meeting was then called to forward the arrangements.

It is of interest to note that the York Medical Society had been founded the previous year and although there is no evidence of it having any direct effect upon the plans for the medical school it is obvious that the Society would provide an excellent opportunity for members of the profession to meet together to discuss matters of common concern.

The decision to found a school in York was no doubt influenced by the fact that six other schools had been founded in the previous decade, including one at Leeds only twenty-four miles away. All decisions and arrangements for the foundation of these schools were made locally and in this way provincial towns attempted to demonstrate their medical reputation—the schools were the object of local pride.

It was decided that the clinical teaching provided by the School should be given at both the York County Hospital and the Public Dispensary.<sup>11</sup> This implied that the whole-hearted support of the Trustees of the County and the Subscribers to the Dispensary had been obtained. Permission was also gained from the Yorkshire Philosophical Society to use the laboratory of the Yorkshire Museum for the lectures in chemistry.<sup>12</sup> It was arranged that the other lectures should be delivered in the lecture room at the County Hospital. It was decided to incorporate the medical library into the School and to allow the students full use of it during term-time—in return for which facility they would pay an annual subscription.

The early months of 1834 were spent in making the above, and similar, arrangements, but the major task which had to be completed before the School could open was the detailed preparation of the lecture courses. The contents of these courses, and the provision of illustrative material, were left in the care of the gentlemen who had agreed to deliver them. Each lecturer was fully and independently responsible for his own subject.

The foundation of the School cannot be fully discussed without mention of the objections which were raised when the proposal was announced. The nature of these objections is not always explicit but they were serious enough to cause the founders to consider carefully their motives. Three weeks before the School was due to open a number of these criticisms were answered in a letter which was published in one of the local newspapers.<sup>13</sup> This letter was most likely a quite unofficial reply to the objectors for it was signed 'A Medical Pupil' but it is of interest because it does clarify some of the reasons which had been put forward discrediting the School.

1. The School was a 'mere speculation'. In reply it was stated that serious and careful preparations had been made, and that the lecturers were busy 'burning the midnight oil' (a fine thought for 'A Medical Pupil'<sup>3</sup>).

2. The School had been founded by certain gentlemen for their own gain. This was strongly disputed, for it was more than likely that the founders would lose financially in the matter. Even if the School was successful it would be many years before the lecturers could expect any profit.

3. The lecturers 'are not in possession of sufficient material to illustrate their lectures'. In answer the defender of the School stressed that this was a personal criticism which could not be fairly offered until the lecture courses had begun, and then it would be apparent to all whether they were sufficiently well illustrated or not.

4. The fees were 'not a little exorbitant'. The fees were the same, with one exception, as those charged at the Leeds School and these, the writer thought, were 'generally considered moderate'.

5. There were only seventy lectures in the proposed anatomy course. It was admitted that 140 were required, and it was thought that the lecturers in anatomy would agree. In fact the course was changed to include 140 anatomy lectures.

The letter which defended the School against these adverse comments closed optimistically:

No effort will be wanting to give respectability to the School and make it what it ought to be—an Institution possessing every facility for acquiring medical knowledge. I have no doubt but that ultimately the School will succeed and crown its advocates with laurels of professional honours.

During the early years of the School's existence reference was made to these and similar criticisms and there were speeches delivered in which mention was made of the 'founders being vindicated'.

Despite any opposition which did exist the School opened, as will now be described.

#### IV. THE OPENING

The School opened on Thursday, 30 October 1834. It is not possible to speak of it 'opening its doors' for there is no evidence of the Medical School existing as a separate building, but on that day the lecture courses commenced in the various rooms set aside for them.

Notices had appeared in the local newspapers during the summer outlining the purpose of the School and giving information which would be of especial interest to students who were considering applying for admission. On 16 August the following appeared as one of the items included in the 'Local Intelligence' column of the *Yorkshire Herald*:

York Medical School. We hear that a school for improvement in Medical Science has been organized in York; and that lectures on Medicine, Anatomy, etc. will be commenced in a short

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time. These lectures will be open to any who choose to procure admission tickets; and it is intended ultimately to render the lectures so excellent as by them to supercede the necessity of the students who may have attended them, from having to attend the lectures in London.

This note was sandwiched between information about 'Grouse', and 'Improvements in the Great North Road'.

The admission tickets were obtained from the lecturers on payment of the required fee. A separate ticket was needed for each course of lectures. It may also be noted at this point that the lectures did prove 'so excellent' that by 1838 Dr. Simpson was able to say that the school offered 'a complete education in the profession'.<sup>10</sup>

On 13 September the list of the proposed lecture courses for the first session was advertised.<sup>14</sup> The courses offered and the respective lecturers were:

The Principles and Practice of Medicine—Dr. Simpson.  
Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology—Messrs. Hopps and Hey.  
Demonstrations and Dissections—Messrs. Hopps and Hey.  
The Principles and Practice of Surgery—Messrs. Champney and Henry Russell.  
Materia Medica and Therapeutics—Mr. Needham.  
Botany—Rev. W. Hincks, F.L.S.  
Midwifery and Diseases of Women and Children—Messrs. J. Allen and W. Anderson.  
Chemistry—Mr. Tate.  
Natural History and Diseases of the Teeth—Mr. Downing.  
Clinical Lectures on Medicine—Drs. Wake and Belcombe.

This is as comprehensive a list of courses as that published by any other medical school in the country—on paper at least.

The lecturers were fully responsible for the preparation of their own course, and for issuing tickets of admission. They also received the fees, but these, certainly in later years, were pooled.

On 25 October the *Yorkshire Gazette* announced:

We understand that Dr. Simpson will deliver his introductory lecture, on the Practice of Medicine, in the Theatre, at the Museum, Thursday next, at one o'clock, the use of that elegant room having been given by the Council.

The introductory lecture in each of the various courses was reported upon in the Press, and Dr. Simpson's was open to any member of the public who could obtain a ticket. There is no advantage in repeating the Press comments upon all these lectures, but a full account of Dr. Simpson's is justified because it was the opening lecture of the School as well of his own course.

The audience was described as being 'very numerous', and it contained both members of the profession and 'friends of science generally'.<sup>15, 16</sup> Dr. Simpson

was warmly greeted when he reached the rostrum 'shortly after one o'clock'. He commenced by apologizing that there was not a more suitable man taking his place—this was a humble overture which Dr. Simpson repeated on most formal occasions! He then expanded 'the plan for the incipient institution which they were met to open, and the objects which that institute had in view'. He spoke of the great advances which were being made in science and invention and emphasized that medicine was also sharing in that advance. Then, as never before, the medical practitioner needed a wide and accurate knowledge of the subject. The School had not been established 'merely to be in conformity with Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds . . .', and here Dr. Simpson's conscience led him to add:

Yet the advantages which have been derived from the establishment of provincial schools were such as to incite all large towns and cities to follow their example.

He then detailed some of these advantages.

1. It would allow the professional gentlemen to continue to receive private pupils (—a paradoxical advantage, or so it seems).
2. It would exalt higher the character of the medical profession in the city.
3. It would 'confer upon medical students here the advantages enjoyed by the students in Hull, Leeds and Sheffield'.

Continuing, Dr. Simpson found time to stress the importance and responsible role which the physician should play within the community; and to remind the audience that the spiritual nature of man exalted, not lessened, the need to care for his body.

Next followed a brief survey of the 'departments of knowledge which would be taught'. Anatomy was described as 'the keystone of medical science', and botany as 'not less interesting and delightful in its pursuit, than valuable and important in its aid to medicine'. The classification of diseases was explained; and the personal qualifications necessary for the successful practice of medicine were indicated.

Before coming to his final remarks Dr. Simpson considered the adverse comment which had been passed concerning the establishment of a school in York. He 'vindicated himself and his colleagues from a charge of rashness in establishing the school, it having been the result of much anxious thought'. He thanked the professional gentlemen in the City who had refrained from criticism and had 'liberally subscribed' to the School, without whose help the expenses would have fallen heavily upon the lecturers.

The final remarks, as was traditional on such occasions, were addressed to the students present, and following the exhortation addressed to them 'the lecture was brought to a close a little after two o'clock. Dr. Simpson retired amidst loud and marked applause.'

It is quite remarkable that Dr. Simpson had been able to cover so many topics within an hour. It is also remarkable that much of what he said would not sound out of place on a similar occasion today.

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The other introductory lectures were all received with enthusiasm; at each one the audience was described as numerous; at each one there was marked applause; at each one the students were exhorted. Mr. Needham 'drew forth the admiring plaudits of the auditory', and Mr. Hopps 'gave universal satisfaction'.

It will be appropriate to complete this section by quoting Mr. Hopps' directions to the students—directions worded in a manner suitable to the year in which they were given.

Whoever of you wishes to acquire eminence in anatomy must tread the rugged path of the dissecting room, stemming every adverse tide and persevering in the cheerless path, relying upon no exertions but your own; and divesting your mind of every false theory, and all hypothetical reasoning, to study the book of nature, which is to be found a book of facts, and will not deceive you, unfolding the beauty of organization, and the law by which it is governed.

#### V. PROGRESS

The School opened in 1834 and there is absolute evidence of its full existence until 1862. It would be possible to compile extensive lists of the courses offered year by year, but it will be more helpful to limit this survey to consideration of the general features of the life and progress of the School. This will be done under the following sub-headings: Terms, Lecture Courses, Fees, Clinical Opportunity, Buildings and Amenities, Examinations and Prizes and Number of Students Attending.

##### *Terms*

The academic year was divided into the Winter and Summer terms. In a typical year (1853–4) the Winter term extended from 1 October to 15 April; the Summer term 1 May to 31 July.<sup>17</sup>

##### *Lecture Courses*

Each lecture course lasted for one term and was given year by year in either the Winter or the Summer. In 1861 the courses were divided as follows:

###### *Winter Term*

Anatomy and Physiology  
Anatomy Demonstrations  
Chemistry  
Medicine  
Surgery

###### *Summer Term*

Materia Medica  
Midwifery, etc.  
Botany  
Medical Jurisprudence  
Psychological Medicine  
Clinical Lectures in Medicine  
Clinical Lectures in Surgery

For many years York and Newcastle were the only provincial schools offering lecture courses in psychological medicine.

A number of courses were given which were soon discontinued. Examples of

these are Mr. Downing's lectures on 'Diseases of the Teeth', and Mr. Moore's on 'Aural Surgery'.

The number of lectures in a full course varied from subject to subject. In chemistry there were 80; in medicine 140; midwifery 65; surgery 85; anatomy 140. The number of lectures given in these same subjects in Liverpool at that period (1839) were chemistry 100; medicine 100; midwifery 60; surgery 70; anatomy 140.<sup>18</sup>

The time appointed for some of these lectures appears strange to students of today. Mr. Proctor lectured in the Winter at 7 p.m. (chemistry); Mr. Anderson in the Summer at 8 a.m. (midwifery); Mr. Bell in the Summer at 5 p.m. (botany).

The time-tables at first-sight may seem to have been very full, but it should be remembered that the student would only be attending a small number of the courses at any one time. Regulations came into force which demanded that the student should be in training for four years. A suggested curriculum for such a period was:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Winter</i>	<i>Summer</i>
First	Chemistry Descriptive Anatomy Physiology	Botany Materia Medica, Therapeutics Practical chemistry
Second	Anatomy and Physiology Anatomy Demonstrations and Dissections Principles and Practice of Medicine. Clinical Practice throughout the year	Midwifery, etc.
Third	Principles and Practice of Medicine	Clinical lectures Forensic Medicine, Toxicology
Fourth	Clinical Practice and Morbid Anatomy throughout the year Practical Midwifery, Vaccination and Clinical Practice all throughout the year.	

The above curriculum was suggested by the Apothecaries' Society and did not refer particularly to the York School. At York the study of pathology (morbid anatomy) was combined with that of anatomy and physiology.

The admission tickets were obtained by the students prior to the commencement of the course, and these were valuable documents because they had to be produced when applying to the Royal College of Surgeons and Apothecaries' Hall for permission to take their examinations. There was no official check by the College or Hall upon whether the student attended the lectures; the production of the admission ticket implied *bona fide* attendance.

### *Fees*

These were changed for each course and were paid when receiving the admission tickets. Two sums were quoted in connection with each subject—the fee for the single course, and a perpetual fee which would cover any subsequent attendance at lectures in that subject should the student desire, or need, it.

The fees charged for the 1861–2 session<sup>19</sup> included the following:

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<i>Subject</i>	<i>For single course</i>	<i>Perpetual</i>
Anatomy, etc., lectures	£6 6s. od.	£10 10s. od.
Demonstrations and Dissections	£4 4s. od.	£7 7s. od.
Botany	£2 12s. od.	£4 4s. od.
Lectures in Medicine	£5 5s. od.	£8 8s. od.
Lectures in Surgery	£3 3s. od.	£5 5s. od.

The fees for the surgical lectures were less than those for the medical because the course was shorter.

The total fee required for the lectures which were necessary for the College and Hall was £42.

Separate fees were charged for admission to the clinical parts of the course.

Clinical medicine £12 12s. od. for an eighteen months' course; clinical surgery £12 12s. od. for a twelve months' course. The perpetual fee was £15 15s. od. in both cases.

Students were also charged 10s. 6d. per annum as a subscription to the library.<sup>20</sup>

In 1858 the total combined fee for the course at York was £68 5s. od.<sup>21</sup> This included the lecture fees, charges for clinical studies and library subscriptions for the whole of the (minimal) course of training. The comparable fee (in that same year, 1858) at Glasgow was £38 8s. od.; at Newcastle £59 7s. od., and at Bristol £103 8s. od. There was a wide variation between the cost of medical payment in the different centres.

No residence was provided for the student and therefore no fees payable to the School for accommodation.

### *Clinical Opportunity*

It was usual for students to commence clinical studies in the second year of their training.

The County Hospital and the Dispensary were both open to the students, and they were allowed 'attendance at the practice of the Ophthalmic Institute without additional fees'.<sup>20</sup> In 1853 the Institute for Diseases of the Ear was opened and it offered further scope for clinical teaching. Jonathan Hutchinson, while still a student, was able to examine cases at the Retreat,<sup>22</sup> but it is not certain whether this opportunity was available for all the students.

It seems likely that midwifery cases were freely available to the students for Jonathan Hutchinson records that he had completed his twenty-third delivery within a year of entering the school.<sup>22</sup>

In 1858 there were 100 beds at the County Hospital used for teaching purposes.<sup>21</sup> In that year there were 141 beds available in Leeds, 132 in Hull and 60 in Dublin (Trinity College).

Students took it in turns to dress the patients 'without extra charge'. In Leeds a different system was employed in which there were three clinical clerkships 'at the disposal of the physicians and surgeons'.<sup>23</sup> The students were able to watch operations and attend the out-patient clinics, in addition to examining the patients in the wards.

### *Buildings and Amenities*

The County Hospital was founded in 1740. The building which stood in 1834 when the school was opened, was demolished when the new hospital was built in 1851 (Fig. 1). The second building, which was associated with the clinical teaching of the School for about a decade, continues to stand in Monkgate serving the medical needs of the present generation.

Most of the lectures of the School were delivered in the lecture room at the County Hospital.

In 1841 the School purchased from the executors of Mr. James Atkinson

the whole of his museum . . . consisting of preparations of Human and Comparative anatomy, etc., the whole to be placed temporarily in an outbuilding or apartment of the York County Hospital which has been fitted up with shelves and glazed cupboards. . . .<sup>24</sup>

The museum cost the School £170, and a further £30 was paid for the shelves and cupboards. This museum was open to the students daily during term-time. It is not known how the need for such a museum was met before 1841.

The library which the students used was also placed in the County Hospital. This library had been founded in 1810 by donations from the medical men of the city. The position of librarian was combined with that of house-surgeon at the County Hospital.

The Dispensary opened in 1788, and in 1834, after moving from two previous sites, it stood in New Street. The building was described as 'well arranged, having a large waiting room. . . .'<sup>25</sup>

The Institute for Diseases of the Ear, which was the only centre in the North devoted wholly to that speciality, was opened in 1853 and stood in Fossgate.

The Institute for Diseases of the Eye was established in 1831 at the Merchant Tailors' Hall in Aldwark.

Students were able to examine patients and receive clinical instruction at all the above-mentioned hospitals.

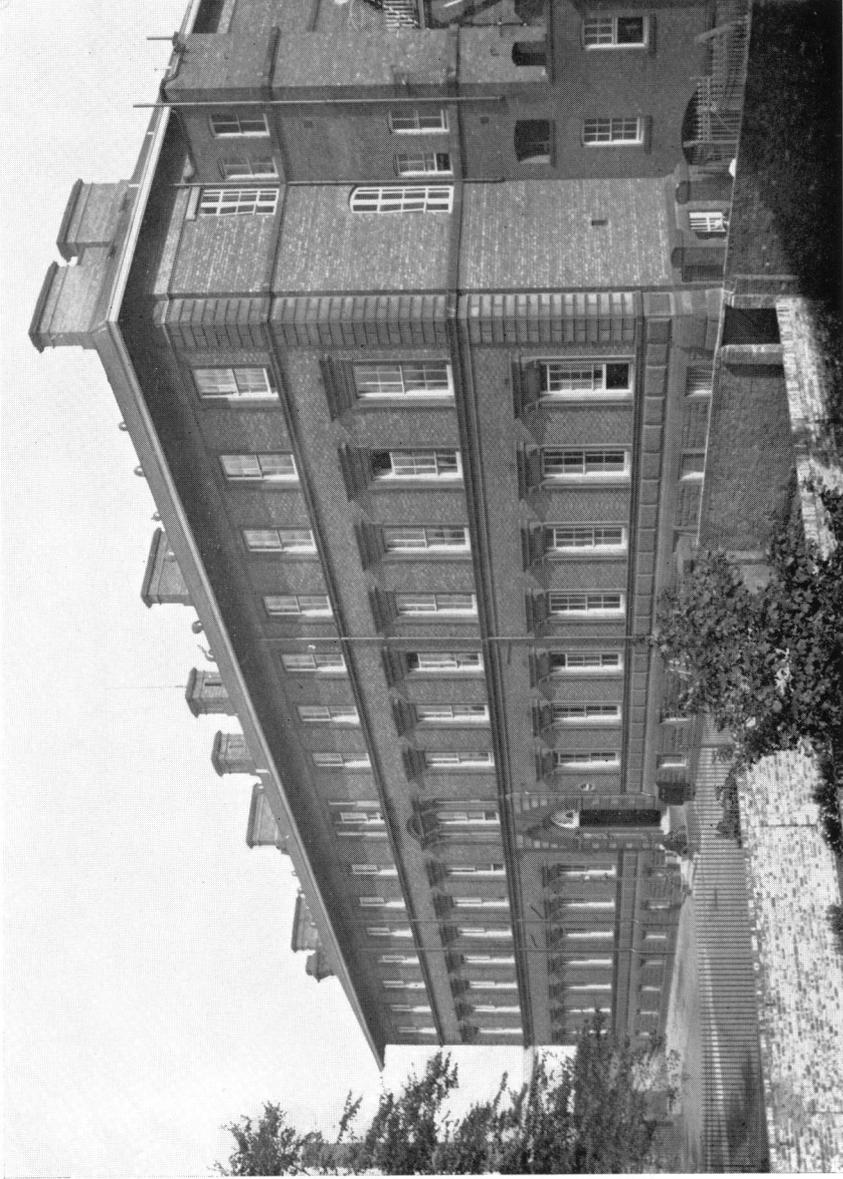
There is no evidence that students had the same opportunity in connection with the Asylum for the Insane (now the Bootham Park Hospital) but it is likely that they did, especially when the lecture courses in psychological medicine were commenced.

A dissecting room existed for Jonathan Hutchinson, in his diary, writes of taking his chess-board 'into the dissecting room . . . played many games'.<sup>22</sup> The site of the dissecting room is not known.

### *Examinations and Prizes*

Examinations were held in each subject annually and prizes were given to any who excelled. Each year a prize-giving ceremony was held when a suitable visitor was invited to present the prizes.

In 1838 the prize-giving was held a few days after the close of the summer term. The Lord Mayor had been invited to distribute the prizes on that occasion. 'At nine o'clock 60 gentlemen assembled at the George Inn, Coney Street'.<sup>10</sup> There is no mention of these gentlemen forming a procession and so



**Fig. 1**  
The York County Hospital which was built in 1851.  
(From Dr. J. B. Morrell's *The City of our Dreams*, St. Anthony's Press, 1955)

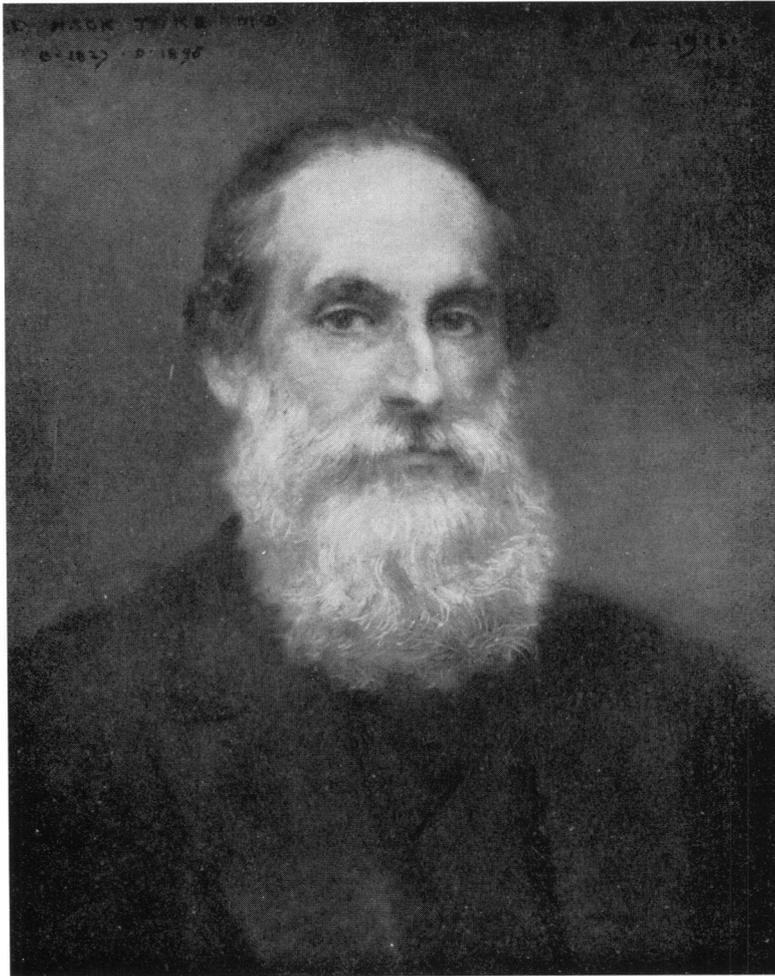


Fig. 2

Portrait of Dr. Daniel Hack Tuke, 1827–95: presented to The Retreat by his son, the artist, H. S. Tuke, R.A.

*(Photograph by R. B. and E. D. Richards, York)*

one concludes that the ceremony took place at the George Inn. It was thought necessary to explain to those present the manner in which the examination had been conducted—how each student had been given a sheet of questions ‘which was not disclosed until the student was in the examination room’; the student did not add his name to the answers but inscribed them with a ‘suitable motto’. Each lecturer presented the results of the examination in his own subject, and commented upon the work of the students whom he had been teaching. These comments were unfailingly complimentary. Mr. Hopps was sure that the prize-winners in his class would soon be receiving prizes in London, and Mr. Barker had just read the best paper which had been produced in his class. Mr. Needham was in some embarrassment as the first prize in his class went to a student who lived with him; he was worried lest the audience should consider this suspicious and he stressed that he had invited Dr. Simpson to re-mark all the papers.

All the prizes given consisted of medical books.

Dr. Simpson took this opportunity to review the progress of the School and he was able to report, among other things, that students from York had done very well in the London examinations and that the lecturers at the York School were held in ‘high repute’ by the ‘College and Hall’.

Dr. Belcombe spoke with great enthusiasm:

Whatever difficulties were attendant upon the establishing of the York School I am happy to say they have been overcome, and there is fair prospect for its complete success. From the situation of York and the advantages which the School offers, I have no doubt a body of pupils will soon arrive which will render it the second in the empire.

### *Number of Students*

It is impossible to say how many students were trained at York, and difficult to know how many were in attendance in any particular year. There are a few guides as to the number of students at the School.

In 1838 there were eight students who received prizes. In that same year prizes were not given in some classes because of the small number of students who took the examinations.<sup>10</sup> Considering the number of classes which were held it seems likely that there were at least twenty students in the School.

When Hughlings Jackson entered the School in 1853 it was thought that there were about a dozen students in attendance.<sup>26</sup>

If the number of students did not increase above these figures it is surprising that the Trustees in 1841 considered there was sufficient demand for them to spend £200 in equipping the museum.

In 1856, at the Introductory Address, Dr. Swaine noted with pleasure that the students in the audience ‘were more numerous than for many past years’.<sup>27</sup>

It is worth noting that the Newcastle School had only eight or nine students in its first year of existence,<sup>28</sup> and that in Liverpool there were thirteen or fourteen students present in 1843, and an average of twenty-five during the years 1847 to 1851.<sup>29</sup>

VI. STUDENT LIFE

A brief sketch of the manner in which the student lived while studying in York will give a fuller understanding of the activities of the School.

The student would arrive in the city at the commencement of his course either in a stage-coach, or perhaps in the family carriage. Those who started their course after 1839 could have come by train. Whichever means of transport they chose it is more than likely that they were coming from some other Yorkshire town.

On arrival the student's first task was to find his lodgings. Most of the students lived with medical practitioners, and they often gave assistance in the practice in return, or part return, for their accommodation.

The student had to arrive in York within fifteen days of the commencement of the Winter term if he wished to satisfy the requirements of the 'College and Hall'.

Once settled in his lodgings the student would then have the task of going to see the various lecturers to seek admission to their courses. This admission would be granted, and an official admission ticket given, if the student provided the necessary fee. No questions would be asked in regard to the student's aptitude or ability.

It is hardly necessary to mention that all the students who came to seek admission to the School were males; the day of the female student had not then dawned.

The keen student was perhaps in York in time for the Introductory Lecture to the session, and he would attend this and receive further guidance as to the manner of his life and the necessity for hard work. The prime importance of anatomy and the superiority of clinical learning over second-hand information were stressed on these annual occasions.

After the introductory lectures were delivered the student entered into the full life of the School. Lectures five days a week; clinical work in the wards; attendance at out-patient clinics; watching operations; post-mortems and inquests; quick walking from the County to the Dispensary—and back again; and also the recurring duties required at the lodgings by his medical landlord. The days were full ones, and Jonathan Hutchinson's diary opens a few windows upon this day-to-day activity. He found time to play chess in the dissecting room, and to note 'the glorious view from the front windows of the ward. . . .' The only other recreations to which he admits are boating on the River Ouse and walking.<sup>22</sup>

There were no organized recreations for the students, and no mention of any students' society, or even a 'common room'.

On Sundays work was minimal. Some of the students were members of the Society of Friends, and so also were many of the York practitioners so week by week staff and student would join together in the quietness of the Quaker Meeting.

In the Summer months the student had to be at the County Hospital by

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8 a.m. if he wished to hear Mr. Anderson deliver his lectures on 'Midwifery and the Diseases of Women and Children'. That would mean early rising, for breakfast was not a hurried meal in those days, and there would perhaps be some duties to complete at the lodging, and then the walk to the hospital.

At the end of the year there were examinations to sit and then the prize-giving to attend. After four years of this training the student had still to face the one hurdle which stood between him and qualification—and so he would make the journey to London (only 20 hours by train after 1846) in order to sit the examinations at the Royal College of Surgeons or at Apothecaries' Hall. Some of the students also spent some time studying in London before taking the examinations.

### VII. NAMES ASSOCIATED WITH THE SCHOOL

A number of the notable medical men of the nineteenth century were associated with the York School. This is not a suitable opportunity to mention all who taught at York or who are known to have been trained there, but the lives of a few of them will be outlined.

#### *James Atkinson*

1759–1839. Son of a doctor; for many years the leading medical practitioner in York. He was surgeon to the County Hospital and to the Dispensary. He never taught in the Medical School but he was keenly interested in the project, and he gave practical support by chairing some of the early meetings which discussed the matter. Atkinson was a friend of Laurence Sterne and a noted bibliographer. He published his main work, *Medical Bibliography*, in 1834. This book, dedicated 'To All Idle Medical Students . . .', was full of anecdotes, humour and unusual information; it only referred to the letters A and B, and Atkinson did not indicate that he intended to publish further volumes.<sup>30, 31</sup>

#### *Sir Jonathan Hutchinson*

1828–1913. Born in Selby, the son of a flax trader, Hutchinson came to York in 1845 when he was apprenticed to Mr. Caleb Williams. He entered the School the next year and remained there as a student for four years. After spending a short time at St. Bartholomew's Hospital he returned to the York County Hospital as house-surgeon. Few doctors have had such a good influence upon medicine. Hutchinson was a most careful note-taker and observer. He became an acknowledged authority on dermatology, syphilology and ophthalmology, and was described as the 'greatest general practitioner in Europe'. He became the Professor of Surgery at the London Hospital, a Fellow of the Royal Society and President of the Royal College of Surgeons. He was also editor of the 'Archives of Surgery'. In 1908 he received a knighthood.

While a student Hutchinson was especially influenced by Dr. Laycock, and he mentions this and other matters pertaining to his training in a diary which he kept. This diary is one of the few documents referring to the York School.

Hutchinson was York's most distinguished pupil.<sup>22, 30, 32</sup>

*John Hughlings Jackson*

1835–1911. If Hutchinson was York's most distinguished student, Jackson was a close second. He was born in Green Hammerton; schooled there and in Tadcaster before becoming apprenticed to Mr. Anderson and studying in York. Like Hutchinson he mentions the good influence which Laycock had on him. In 1856 after a period studying at St. Bartholomew's he became house-physician at the York Dispensary.

Hughlings Jackson has been called 'The Father of English Neurology', and his name will remain honoured for the great advances which he made in that subject. It was Hutchinson who first persuaded him to devote his attentions to that speciality.

One of the first cases which Jackson reported was of 'hemiplegia on the right side with loss of speech'—a case which had been under his care at the Dispensary

Jackson was one of the first men to stress the importance of the ophthalmoscope.<sup>30, 33, 34, 35</sup>

*Thomas Laycock*

1812–76. Born at Wetherby, he attended Woodhouse Grove School near Bradford. After studying anatomy and physiology in Paris he completed his training at University College Hospital.

In 1837 he published his paper on *Acid and Alkaline Reactions of the Saliva*. There followed some 300 papers and a number of books from his pen.

Laycock was especially interested in the relationship of the nervous system to psychological phenomena; and he was the first to formulate the theory of the reflex action of the brain.

He found time to translate important Continental works on physiology and neurology into English; and for a short time he turned his attention to the study of public health.

In 1846 he was appointed Lecturer in Clinical Medicine at York. He remained in York for five years, and then he was elected to become Professor of Physic at Edinburgh. He was the first Englishman invited to fill that esteemed position.

Both Hutchinson and Hughlings Jackson mention the good influence which Laycock had on them while they were studying under him in York.<sup>30</sup>

*Daniel Hack Tuke*

1827–95. Born in York, a member of a renowned Quaker family. He was a great grandson of the founder of the Retreat Mental Hospital. Tuke worked for a time in a solicitor's office in Bradford but he could not settle down, and in 1847 he returned to York and entered the service of the Retreat. His work at the hospital persuaded him to enter St. Bartholomew's in 1850 and to gain full medical qualifications.

In 1858 he was joint author, with Sir J. E. Bucknill, of *A Manual of Psychological Medicine*; a book which for decades was the standard work upon the subject.

### *The York Medical School*

In 1853 Tuke had become visiting physician to the Retreat and the York Dispensary. He was appointed Lecturer on Psychological Medicine, instituting the course himself at a time when the subject was taught at few other schools.

In 1859 Tuke had to leave York for health reasons and he moved to Falmouth. Years later he commenced a practice in London, and in 1878 he became editor of the *Journal of Mental Science*. In 1892 he published his main work, a *Dictionary of Psychological Medicine*.<sup>30, 35, 36</sup> (Fig. 2)

#### VIII. THE CLOSING OF THE SCHOOL

The optimistic hopes of the York School becoming one of the best 'in the empire' did not materialize and the School closed after a little over a quarter of a century's existence. The closure was so quietly performed that it is difficult to describe it in any detail, or with authority.

There are two questions which must be considered—When? and Why?

##### *When?*

The *Lancet* published an annual *Educational Number* in which details were given of the various medical courses offered in the British Isles. Time-tables, fees, dates of terms and the names of the lecturers were announced, and also a short account was given of the hospitals providing the clinical teaching. The fullest possible details of the York School appeared until 1862, but they did not reappear in that or succeeding years. From 1862 to 1867 the County Hospital and the Dispensary continued to be described as hospitals related to provincial Schools of medicine.

The evidence provided by these entries in the *Lancet* suggest that the School closed in 1862, but it is strange that no notice can be found during that year announcing the intended closure.

When the possible reasons for the closure are discussed it will be seen that 1862 was a most likely year for it to occur, and thus provide some confirmation of this suggested date.

##### *Why?*

In 1858 the Medical Act was passed, and this introduced many new regulations affecting the training of medical students. The General Medical Council was appointed and compulsory registration introduced. Following this Act the examining bodies also introduced more stringent controls to limit the number of students who would be eligible to take their examinations in general education before being allowed to enter a medical course. Also students were only able to take the qualifying examinations if they had studied at an approved medical school. An approved medical school had to employ only lecturers who were members of the legally constituted medical colleges; and had to provide a minimum of 100 beds for clinical teaching (150 beds in the case of the London schools). These regulations came into full force in October 1862.<sup>37</sup>

Hargrove, in 1908, offered the following reason for the closure of the School:

... but unfortunately, the Hospital was not provided with a sufficient number of beds to justify the Authorities continuing the School in York, and the Governors had either not the means, or the inclination, to extend the Institution as required, the result being that the School was transferred to Leeds, very much to the loss of prestige of the City (i.e. York).<sup>11</sup>

In 1858 it was stated that there were 100 beds available at the County Hospital but this may have been some exaggeration for in 1883 there was only a total of 110 beds at the hospital.<sup>38</sup>

This suggests that the main reason for the closing of the School was the insufficiency of beds available for teaching purposes.

There is no co-lateral evidence to support Hargrove's statement that there was an official transfer of the School to Leeds. The matter is not mentioned in the history of the Leeds Medical School.<sup>39</sup>

One of the factors which would discourage 'extending the Institution as required' was the introduction of the preliminary examination in general education which for some time tended to reduce the number of students entering medical schools. The number of students attending the London schools did decrease at that time—1,228 in 1860; 1,124 in 1861 and 1,045 in 1862.<sup>40</sup>

It is interesting to note that the two Yorkshire medical schools which have survived were associated with scientific institutes. It has been stated that the Sheffield Medical School would have closed had it not associated itself with the Firth Institute.<sup>8</sup> These institutes undertook the training in botany and chemistry. Later the medical schools and the scientific institutes were further combined when they became departments within the universities which were founded in Leeds and Sheffield. York had no such scientific institute and no doubt the School found it difficult to provide courses in botany and chemistry which were of comparable standard to those found in other schools. This suggestion that competition from other schools was a factor influencing the closing of the York School was also made by Rolleston who, when writing on *Provincial Medical Schools a Hundred Years Ago*, said:

The Medical School at York closed about 1859, probably, as in the case of the School at Hull, on account of the larger School at Leeds.<sup>41</sup>

Two other factors have been advanced as possible reasons for the closure of medical schools—a shortage of bodies for dissection, and irregular teaching. There is no evidence that the York School was affected by either of these difficulties. It is unlikely that there was a shortage of bodies as Assizes were held in the City, and the bodies of the executed would be available to the School. All that is known of the teaching indicates that it was fully approved of by the examining authorities.

To recapitulate; unless new evidence is forthcoming to suggest otherwise, it seems most probable that the main reason was the shortage of beds for teaching purposes. Thus ended a chapter in British medical history—a chapter which this article has attempted to recount.

## The York Medical School

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my thanks, to Dr. S. T. Anning for his encouraging suggestions and for reading the manuscript; to the Librarian of the York Medical Society for permission to use the Society's Library; to Dr. J. B. Morrell for permission to reproduce the photograph of the present York County Hospital; and to Miss Nancy Mercer for help with the typing.

I am also grateful to the Secretary of The Retreat, York, for permission to include the portrait of Dr. D. H. Tuke (Figure 2).