

1953

LIND BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS IN EDINBURGH

By A. P. MEIKLEJOHN, M.D.

THE TWO-HUNDREDTH anniversary of the first publication of Lind's classic *Treatise of the Scurvy* was celebrated appropriately on May 22nd and 23rd in his home town, Edinburgh, Scotland, where he wrote the book after his retirement from active service in the British Royal Navy, and before he became chief physician to the largest hospital in Europe—the naval hospital at Haslar, outside Portsmouth.

The celebrations began with a ceremony arranged by the University of Edinburgh, in the 18th-century University library designed by the Adam brothers. The Vice-Chancellor, Sir Edward Appleton, one of Britain's leading physiologists, presided, and conferred the honorary degree of LL.D. on Surgeon Vice-Admiral Sir Sheldon Dudley, R.N. (Ret.), who was Medical Director General of the Royal Navy from 1941 to 1945. Sir Sheldon then gave an oration in praise of Lind—a fighting speech, by a sailor about a sailor. Like Lind, Sir Sheldon has devoted his life to "preserving the health of sailors" and no one, perhaps, is so well qualified to assess Lind's reputation as "the father of nautical medicine." Sir Sheldon emphasized that the conquest of scurvy was by no means the only outcome of Lind's pioneering work in naval hygiene. His remarkable versatility was a lesson for the narrow specialists of today; several other lessons he taught had to be relearned by the navies of the Second World War. Professor R. C. Garry (Glasgow) as President of the Nutrition Society then presented two specially-bound copies of the reprint of Lind's book*—one for

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the Chancellor of the University, H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh, and one for Sir Sheldon. The ceremony concluded with the presentation to Lind's own University of Edinburgh of a handsome bronze plaque, bearing a portrait of Lind and a well-chosen inscription. The presentation was made by Dr. C. Glen King (New York) on behalf of the donors, the Sunkist Citrus Fruit Growers Association of California.

A two-day conference of the Nutrition Society followed, devoted to various aspects of scurvy and ascorbic acid. This was opened by Sir Edward Mellanby, the retired Secretary of the (British) Medical Research Council, who recounted his personal recollections of early vitamin research in Britain. He was followed by Dame Harriet Chick (London) who traced the history of scurvy from before Lind's time to the work at the Lister Institute which led up to the isolation of vitamin C. Dr. C. Glen King (New York) described the actual isolation (in which he himself played a leading part), the unraveling of the chemical nature and the synthesis of the vitamin, with an outline of work still in progress in his laboratory, on the origin of the vitamin in nature.

The afternoon session, presided over by the present Director General of the Royal Navy, Surgeon Vice-Admiral Sir Alexander Ingleby-Mackenzie, R.N., began with a paper by Dr. M. van Eekelen (Leyden, Holland) on dietary sources of ascorbic acid, in which he em-

* *Lind's Treatise on Scurvy*, a Bicentenary Volume, being a reprint of the 1st Edition with additional Notes. Edited by C. P. Stewart and D. Guthrie, The University Press, Edinburgh, 1953.

phasized the dangers of scurvy in infants fed on heated or dried cow's milk, without proper vitamin supplements. Professor H. A. Krebs (Sheffield, England) described the experiment carried out in Sheffield during the recent war (and shortly to be published in full) in which the onset and course of scurvy was studied in volunteer conscientious objectors. The histology of scurvy was described in a paper contributed by the leading authority on the subject, Dr. S. Burt Wolbach (Boston). Dr. A. P. Meiklejohn (Edinburgh), in presenting his paper for him, reminded the audience of his great contribution to the study of diseases affecting connective tissue.

The meeting then adjourned from the University in the "Auld Toon," across Princes Street, to the "New Town" premises of the Royal College of Physicians, where the guests were welcomed by Dr. W. A. Alexander, President of the College of which James Lind was a Fellow and, for a time, Treasurer. He introduced Dr. V. P. Sydenstricker (Augusta, Ga.) who delivered the second Sydney Watson Smith Lecture, in which he gave a scholarly review of the history of vitamin research in relation to Medicine.

On the second day the Chairman for the opening session was Professor R. C. Garry (Glasgow), the retiring President of the Nutrition Society. The first paper was presented by Dr. John H. Crandon (Boston), the first man to have successfully induced scurvy in himself and survived. With objective humility he described the symptoms of the disease, from personal experience, and thereafter gave an account of his recent work on the ascorbic acid needs of surgical patients. Dr. Robert M. Kark (Chicago) followed with a paper in the true Lind tradition—skeptical of contemporary hypothetical guesswork. His own observations led him to doubt whether human requirements for ascorbic acid were increased by physical exertion, exposure to cold or stimulation of the adrenal cortex. Professor E. J. Bigwood (Brussels, Belgium), the former Chairman of the first League of Nations Technical Commission on Nutrition, gave an interesting paper on the urinary ex-

cretion of amino acids in ascorbic acid-deficient infants. The morning session ended with a paper by Dr. C. P. Stewart (Edinburgh) on the occurrence of dehydro-ascorbic acid in human blood plasma, and the relationship of this to hormones of the adrenal cortex and of the possible role of glutathione in this relationship.

At the final session the Chair was taken by Dr. L. J. Harris (Cambridge, England), the newly-elected President of the Nutritional Society. Dr. C. P. Stewart (Edinburgh) read a paper contributed by Mr. A. J. Lorenz (Los Angeles) giving a stimulating account of the early, pre-Lind writings on scurvy. Dr. H. Gounelle (Paris, France), in the delightful French manner, presented his observations on ascorbic acid deficiency during the recent war and after; he particularly stressed the large doses of the vitamin that he had found necessary to obtain saturation in tuberculous prisoners-of-war. The next speaker was Dr. W. J. Darby (Nashville) who ably reviewed the current literature on ascorbic acid in relation to tyrosine metabolism and erythropoietic factors. Drs. L. W. Mapson and F. A. Isherwood (Cambridge, England) followed with an account of their work on the synthesis of ascorbic acid by plants and animals. Dr. L. J. Harris then led a discussion which served to emphasize the differences of opinion that still exist on the true requirements of man for ascorbic acid.

The celebrations ended with a light-hearted dinner at which Scurvy Grass (*Cochlearia officinalis*) appeared as a garnish for the fish and a new savory dish was introduced—Croûtes Szent-Györgyi—the proper recipe for which is adrenal glands on toast, garnished with paprika. Dr. C. P. Stewart proposed the toast of "The Memory of James Lind" which was replied to in fine spirit by Surgeon Rear-Admiral J. Hamilton, R.N., the present holder of Lind's position at Haslar Hospital.

The papers presented at the celebrations are to be published in a forthcoming special number of the *Proceedings* of the Nutrition Society. Becomingly, then, if belatedly, Lind receives his due.

