

BARBIER PRIZE AWARDED TO DR THOMAS R. FRASER OF EDINBURGH BY THE FRENCH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES.

At the annual meeting of the French Academy of Sciences, held on the 14th of June, the announcement was made of the award of one of the two Barbier prizes to Dr Thomas R. Fraser of Edinburgh. According to the deed of the late Dr Barbier, this prize is to be conferred on any one who makes "a valuable discovery in surgery, medicine, pharmacy, or in botany, in so far as it is connected with the art of curing disease." The commission of the Academy appointed to adjudicate the prize has awarded it to Dr Fraser for his researches on the physiological action of the Calabar bean, and especially for his discovery of the remarkable action of this substance on the iris. This discovery was first announced in Dr Fraser's "Inaugural Thesis," published in this Journal, for which a gold medal was given him by the Medical Faculty of the University of Edinburgh. These investigations were extended in a paper read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1867, and subsequently published in the Transactions. After enumerating the results of both papers, the commissioners state in their report:—"This brief mention of the principal results obtained by Dr Fraser from his numerous experiments, the accuracy of which has since been frequently established, seems sufficient to justify the favourable decision of your commission, and the reward which it proposes to confer on that savant. We must bear in mind that it is to the first researches of Dr Fraser that we are indebted for the introduction into therapeutics of the pharmaceutical preparations of the Calabar bean, which have since been employed with considerable frequency in the treatment of numerous diseases of the eye." The report is then occupied with an account of Dr Rabuteau's investigations into the physiological effects of the fluorides and of metallic compounds in general; and it concludes as follows:—"Finally, the commission recognises in the two classes of researches that have now been briefly analyzed, a real advancement of physiology, pharmacology, and therapeutics." It will be remembered that some months ago Dr Fraser received, jointly with Professor Crum-Brown, the Makdougall-Brisbane prize of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, for a memoir on the connexion between chemical constitution and physiological action.

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ADDRESS TO PROFESSOR SYME FROM INDIA.

The following has been sent to the *Lancet* for publication:—

To JAMES SYME, D.C.L. Oxon., M.D. Dublin, F.R.C.S. and F.R.S.E., Professor of Clinical Surgery in the University of Edinburgh, Surgeon to the Queen in Scotland, etc.

DEAR SIR,—It was with feelings of deep concern and sorrow that we, the undersigned, lately received the intelligence, by the *Lancet* of the 10th April, that you have been suffering from a serious illness. We are glad to observe that the Editor of that journal remarks: "The attack was not of a severe character, and strong hopes are entertained of a complete recovery."

We hope, dear Sir, it may not prove troublesome to you, under the circumstances, that we, a few of your former students, now in Bengal, should lay before you our good wishes, and beg you to receive this expression of our cordial sympathy.

In doing this, we find it difficult to convey to you the true nature of our feelings in such a matter. We look back, through the vista of many years, to the days when it was our privilege to listen to your teachings, and to mark the skill with which your unerring hand afforded relief to many a sufferer. We recall the intelligence, the intuition, and the masterly confidence ever guiding your actions, whereby, in thousands of instances, the most terrible human miseries have been brought to a happy issue. We remember, with undiminished admiration, that quickness of perception, that steadiness and self-posses-



sion at emergent moments, which you so often and so instinctively evinced when the life or death of a fellow-being rested with you. Your professional precepts have been of great value to us throughout life. Your example (as regards calm wisdom and great practical success) has continually proved an incentive to us in pursuing an honourable and useful ambition. We are proud in keeping before us recollections of your character, and many of us think with feelings of peculiar gratitude of your unforgotten acts of personal kindness to us, your pupils. Indeed, it is chiefly from this point of view, as disciples addressing a master for whom they entertain unbounded respect and regard, that we now desire to communicate with you.

Although your eminence reflects dignity and honour on the profession to which we belong, whilst your name is familiar to the whole civilized world as that of one greatly distinguished among surgeons, and whilst your reputation as a public teacher is of the very highest order, it is not our wish at present to dwell particularly on those remarkable characteristics. We rather desire to tell you, in simple words and with genuine sincerity, that we have been grieved to hear of your late illness; and, without presuming to encroach on the privacy and sanctity of your domestic life, we beg you, dear Sir, to believe that the undersigned, who so well know your public character, with all its honest independence and fearless candour, and at the same time your great private worth, feel deeply interested in your wellbeing and happiness, and truly sympathize with you in the anxieties, griefs, and bereavement which have lately fallen to your lot.

We trust, for your own sake and for the good of mankind, that you may soon be restored to sound health; that, as you yourself have during a lifetime healed others, so now you may be healed; that you may enjoy the great comforts of human sympathy and friendship, and be fully sustained in your hours of sickness by Divine compassion and support.

In expressing such thoughts and wishes from a distant land, we, the undersigned (who are but a few out of a vast number of men scattered abroad who cherish great admiration for your distinguished character), beg, dear Sir, to subscribe ourselves, with unqualified respect and esteem,

Your devoted pupils,

J. P. BROUGHAM, M.D., Surgeon-Major and Presidency Surgeon.

F. W. INNES, M.D., Deputy Inspector-General, British Forces.

H. MITCHELL, Surgeon, 96th Regiment.

ROBT. SUTHERLAND, Assistant-Surgeon, Statistical Officer to Inspector-General.

C. PALMER, M.D., Surgeon-Major, Presidency Surgeon.

J. FAYRER, M.D., Surgeon, Professor of Surgery and Senior Surgeon Med. Coll. Hospital, Calcutta.

ROBERT BIRD, M.D.

DAVID B. SMITH, M.D., Surgeon, Sanitary Commissioner for Bengal.

J. PHIN SMITH, M.D.

KENNETH B. STUART, M.D., F.R.C.S.E.

D. DOUGLAS CUNNINGHAM, M.B.

K. MACKENZIE DOWNIE, M.B., C.M.

T. EDMONSTONE CHARLES, M.D., M.R.C.P. Lond. Art. Obstet. Prof.

A. FITZGERALD, F.R.C.S. Edin., Graduate of the University of France, M.R.C.S. Lond., Licentiate in Midwifery (Dublin), Surg. 9th B. N. I.

JOHN H. BEATH, M.D., Staff Assistant-Surgeon.

*P.S.*—As considerable unavoidable delay must occur in circulating this letter throughout the Bengal Presidency, it is thought well to despatch it as it is, with the above fifteen signatures obtained in Calcutta alone, or its vicinity. The names of gentlemen stationed in other parts of Bengal who are interested in, and approve of, the sentiments above expressed, will be shortly forwarded.