

Papers and Originals

Charles Hastings (1794—1866): Founder of the British Medical Association

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One hundred years ago members of the British Medical Association were busy preparing for the thirty-fifth Annual Meeting, to be held in Chester early in August. An air of sadness enveloped the widely scattered members; for Charles Hastings, their founder and friend, was known to be dying. After a period of failing health he had been taken acutely ill in March 1865, when Dr. (later Sir) George Burrows, his brother-in-law, was summoned to Worcester to see him, but he recovered so far as to be able to attend the Annual Meeting in Leamington and to address his companions for what they knew would be the last time. In March 1866 his wife died, and from this bereavement he never recovered. Within three weeks he learned of the death of John Conolly, perhaps the closest of his many friends. Throughout an exceptionally hot summer he bore much pain, but on 30 July, in the presence of his old servant, Mary Anne Lipscombe, he passed away peacefully at Barnards Green House, Malvern, in sight of the Worcestershire Beacon. His colleague and friend, Douglas Carden the surgeon, had seen him only a few days earlier, and, as he told the stilled gathering in Chester a week later, had marvelled at the vigour of his mind in a body so utterly weak. The cause of death recorded was "carcinoma of duodenum with perforation—two years certified."

Hastings began his career as an apothecary's apprentice to become a physician of renown in the West Midlands. As a student he was one of the first to use a microscope and as a consultant he was a pioneer of the stethoscope. He lived in an age of progress in clinical diagnosis, not matched, however, in the fields of prognosis and therapeutics. It was a time of spectacular advances in chemical pathology: there were the

exciting beginnings of cellular pathology and haematology. He lived during the pioneer days of anaesthesiology and survived into the age of Listerian surgery; he died on the eve of great bacterial discoveries. He witnessed the coming of railroads, the penny postage, and telegraphy, all of which contributed substantially to the progress of the Association he founded. He watched the progress of photography and its early use in medicine. He saw candles replaced by gas lighting, and at the Clifton Meeting in 1863 he watched a demonstration of electrical lighting with its hint of what was to come. His professional life spanned that epoch of medical reform which extended from the passing of the Apothecaries Act of 1815 to that of the Medical Act of 1858, of which latter he may be considered the principal architect. It was left to this provincial physician, unhampered by the intrigues and jealousies of political life in the metropolis, to point the way to reform and to gain the confidence of the politicians.

His Life and Character

Charles Hastings was born on 11 January 1794, the ninth of a family of fifteen. His father was James Hastings, a graduate of Wadham College and at that time rector of Bitterley, a hamlet near the foot of Clee Hill. His mother was Elizabeth Paget, one of a wealthy family of bankers whose home was in Chipping Norton. In 1795 James Hastings sold the advowson and was instituted into the parish of Martley, the living of which he had earlier purchased along with those of Bitterley and Arely Kings.

When Charles was 12 years old his father suffered a fall from his horse while fording the Teme and was led home in a dazed condition. Four years later, during which time the eldest surviving son was able to carry out his father's parochial duties, the living was placed in chancery and Elizabeth Hastings and her family moved to Worcester into a house in Paradise Row



This photograph of Sir Charles Hastings is believed to have been taken in about 1864, two years before his death in 1866 in his seventy-third year. (From T. Herbert Barker, *Photographs of Eminent Medical Men*, 1867.)

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in the Tything. The rector seems to have remained in a demented state until his death fifty years later in his hundred and first year. The necropsy report suggests that as a result of the accident he had sustained bilateral frontal subdural haematomas.

In 1810 Charles Hastings was apprenticed to Richard Jukes and Kenrick Watson, apothecaries of 23–24 Bridge Street, Stourport-on-Severn, but eighteen months later at their instigation he contested and obtained the post of house-surgeon at the Worcester Infirmary after first attending for a while Joshua Brooke's School of Anatomy in Blenheim Steps, London. The three years which followed were notable for several improvements in the practice and management of the hospital, and these may safely be attributed to the efforts of the keen young resident. It was probably during this time that he became acquainted with the family of one of his chiefs, Dr. George Woodyatt, the eldest of whose eight daughters he was later to marry.

In 1815 he journeyed to Edinburgh to study medicine, but the winter climate proved too much for him and on the orders of Dr. James Gregory he was invalided home on account of a severe "catarrhal inflammation of the lung." Indeed, we have it on the authority of his contemporary and lifelong friend, Sir John Forbes, that no one in Edinburgh expected him to recover. Doubtless it was the same micro-organism that had killed five of the family in childhood and was still to claim four of his sisters, three of them within three years of this time. In spite of this setback and a subsequent relapse, young Hastings succeeded in qualifying in the year 1818. Three months later he was appointed to the junior of two vacancies on the medical establishment of the Worcester Infirmary, the committee first minuting a special resolution accepting his earlier residence in the city as valid for his candidature. He waited fifty years to succeed Jonas Malden as senior physician.

Medical Writings

In 1820 Hastings published *A Treatise on the Inflammation of the Mucous Membrane of the Lungs*, which was later translated into German. It soon gained him recognition as a leading authority on diseases of the chest. His practice grew rapidly and covered a large part of Worcestershire and adjoining counties, but just one year after his marriage to Hannah Woodyatt in 1823 his father-in-law died and the young couple moved into her old home, 43 Foregate Street. It had been built by and was for several years the residence of Dr. John Wall, the founder of the Worcester Porcelain Manufactory and a founder physician of the Infirmary.

Hastings now set to work to improve the Infirmary further and to reform the unsatisfactory state of health of the poorer citizens. In 1828 he initiated a journal, *The Midland Medical and Surgical Reporter and Topographical and Statistical Journal*, the aim of which was to bring together in a literary bond the scattered practitioners throughout the West Midlands. The failure of the publisher of this evidently popular venture was followed by the foundation of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association in 1832. In 1835, while actively engaged in its organization, he was elected an alderman of the parish of St. Nicholas, attending city council meetings regularly for six years, when he had to give up on account of pressure of work. In 1839 he declined the mayoralty. The next twenty years saw progress in the direction of medical reform, the strengthening of the Association, and its recognition by the Government as the only comprehensive and the most authoritative medical organization in the land. In 1850 he received the Royal accolade. At a banquet in the Royal Pavilion, Brighton, in the following year—which was described as "aldermanly"—Dr. John Ayrton Paris, President of the Royal College of Physicians, told members of the Association that the future of

the profession lay with them and with them alone. Mr. John Flint South, President of the Royal College of Surgeons, concurred in this view.

In 1852 Hastings received the D.C.L. of Oxford University. In 1860 he was gazetted a deputy lieutenant for Worcestershire and in the following year resigned from the active staff of the Worcester Infirmary, continuing for a while in private practice. In 1863 he retired from the General Medical Council, of which he had been one of the Crown nominees since its inception. In his latter years he resided at Barnards Green House, which he seems to have acquired as early as 1836, but though in the *Malvern Directory* for 1847 he is listed as a physician in Malvern he seems to have spent most of his week in Worcester. In the winter months of 1863, for instance, it is recorded that Sir Charles and Lady Hastings received guests at three of their soirées—notable occasions in the social life of the city—and it was to Worcester that Dr. Burrows was summoned when he was taken acutely ill, and there that Lady Hastings died.

All too little is known concerning the life of Hastings and only a few of his letters appear to have survived. No diaries have come to light, while the official records of the Association in its early days are incomplete. The picture that we are able to form of him is built up from two paintings, a bust, and a few photographs, together with reports of meetings, eulogies, obituary notices, and his own writings and speeches.

Personal Qualities

He was a tall amiable man of dignified appearance, who walked with a limp, the result of a fall from his carriage early on in his professional life. He possessed an open countenance, a quiet and friendly manner, and was described by his great-niece as being an exceptionally likable companion for children. He was certainly handsome, and if the testimony of one Mrs. Willes is to be believed these good looks were evident even in infancy, for she called on Mrs. Hastings and remarked on "the prettiest baby I ever saw." At this time Bitterley Rectory is said to have been undergoing alterations, and it was for this reason that the expectant mother had been moved into lodgings in Ludlow.

That Hastings was a hard worker, with high ideals, views of his own, and boundless energy cannot be doubted. "Into the meeting came Dr. Hastings with the velocity of a steam carriage," wrote one observer in topical vein to describe a meeting of the local Board of Health following the Sunderland outbreak of cholera in 1831. The same writer on more than one occasion hinted that their Dr. Hastings was over-confident and even dictatorial, but in the latter's defence it should be added that the municipality, scared at the threat of cholera, seems gladly to have vested full responsibility in him, accepting his demand that the inhabitants of overcrowded and low-lying tenements should be evacuated into tents on higher land near by. But if as a young physician he had the reputation of being assertive, and perhaps headstrong, he was at all times fair-minded and invariably heeded all points of view. He was tactful too, and had a natural gift for bringing people together to work in a common cause. An example of these attributes was his cautious approach to John Green Crosse of the Eastern Medical Association and to other local groups in persuading them to resolve their regional differences of opinion and to join up with what they were wont to regard as "the Worcester Association." Even the London-based British Medical Association (1836–1846) led by George Webster decided to do likewise.

Of Hastings at this time an American guest said: "He seems to have the heart of your society, as well as the heart of all others." He was in fact a born leader of men, and his keen sense of purpose and social justice, his religious upbringing, and his fervent dedication to work placed him in the mid-Victorian limelight of fame. He liked to be in the chair and did

not readily relinquish power. He could be obstinate, and was once reprimanded by the chairman of a meeting, when matters were not going to his liking, for "continually interrupting the speeches." But by the time he had reached middle-age and had cultivated a sense of tolerance and patience this astute politician, organizer, and liberal thinker had become the foremost medical statesman of the day. He was the spokesman of the profession on many important occasions, notably in the deputation to Lord Palmerston in 1853 when thirty-two leaders of the profession and fifty-three members of Parliament were present, and two months later he led a deputation to Lord Aberdeen, the Prime Minister. On other occasions he seems to have impressed both Sir George Grey and Mr. Spencer Walpole. Sir Denis le Marchant, a Tory member for Worcester, had earlier commented on his fine oratory from the hustings. Hastings himself was a Liberal.

At anniversary meetings he displayed no more than the usual degree of Victorian sentimentality and sanctimoniousness, and he was certainly less pompous than many of his provincial contemporaries. Convivial occasions he not only enjoyed but planned with care. He spoke well and with conviction, and seems always to have held his audience. We read that his speeches "abounded with warmth and generous feelings." He was probably of a sensitive nature, for at meetings great care seems to have been taken not to upset him. In part this would be due to the high esteem—and indeed affection—in which he was universally held. "This amiable physician," wrote the leader writer in the *Lancet* (1865), "has rendered good service to his profession and has never so far as we know made himself an enemy." "He was a man who had given offence to none," recorded the *Medical Times and Gazette*, after his death.

His Debt to Edinburgh

Hastings appears to have had no family connexions with Edinburgh, but if he aimed to practise medicine as a consultant this would naturally be his first choice of Alma Mater, for Edinburgh was approaching its zenith of fame while the Oxford Medical School was showing little signs of recovery. If he had had any doubt about this decision it is certain that Dr. Alexander Wilson Philip, a pupil of Dr. William Cullen and the most dynamic of the Worcester physicians of that time, would have persuaded him to go to Edinburgh. Wilson Philip saw in him the makings of a physician, physiologist, hospital reformer, and medical writer—a man after his own heart in fact and a potential understudy to himself. He had already helped in some important experiments and shown great promise. When Wilson Philip, after a serious altercation with his Infirmary colleagues, left Worcester in 1818 to seek his fortune among the hypochondriacs in the fashionable vicinity of Cavendish Square, Hastings seems to have inherited something of his turbulence, but he soon settled down and the admirable qualities for which he was later to be renowned began to show.

His Edinburgh teachers had included the Andrew Duncans, father and son, James Home, John Thomson, John Gordon, Alexander Monro *tertius*—who did him the honour of inviting him to repeat for the benefit of the class some of the experiments he had devised in the Worcester Infirmary laboratories—and James Gregory, to whom he had looked for advice when he was taken seriously ill in his first winter on Forthside. It is understandable that Hastings became interested in diseases of the chest and in inflammation, which later topic was the special interest of John Thomson.

His love of the Royal Medical Society stayed with him throughout life. Worcester was not the only provincial town to claim a medical society in the early years of that century, but it sprang into prominence when Hastings returned there in 1818. He was in fact elected president in the following year, a striking testimony to their faith in his ability and leadership. It was in this small friendly forum of the Worcestershire Medi-

cal and Surgical Society—and often round the dinner-table—that general practitioners and consultants pooled their experiences for the benefit of all. This society was foremost in urging the Government to remedy the deficiencies in the law relating to the practice of anatomy. Their petition of 28 February 1828, which antedated that of the Westminster Medical Society, was presented by the Marquis of Lansdowne, and soon afterwards the Warburton Committee was appointed which led to the unsuccessful Anatomy Bill of 1831 and the enactment of 1832. After the establishment of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association we hear nothing further of the local society, the existence of which seems to have been forgotten because, on the death of Hastings, a Worcestershire Medical Society was founded and in their premises the Hastings library was housed until its removal to Tavistock House in 1932. Thus the Royal Medical Society was the model for the first Worcestershire Medical and Surgical Society, which in turn served as the model for the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association.

It was probably a coincidence that Edinburgh was chosen for the 1858 meeting of the Association to which the announcement of the successful third reading of the Medical Bill was telegraphed. Its passing was received with great rejoicing and was the culmination of Hastings's career. He must have experienced great satisfaction on realizing that the Edinburgh qualification he was so proud to possess was then for the first time legalized in England.

Hastings, the Medical Journalist

Edinburgh could boast not only of a fraternity of distinguished teachers and a medical debating society but also of the *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal*. Thus Hastings at the outset of his career learned to appreciate the inestimable advantage of medical communication. The journal served to diffuse medical knowledge to graduates of Edinburgh and others too, scattered within the British Isles and beyond, wherever indeed the Union Jack was hoisted; through it they maintained a valuable if tenuous link with medical thought in their Alma Mater.

In 1818 there were only three other medical periodicals in the United Kingdom, but it is doubtful if Hastings saw them. He was, however, an early reader of the *Lancet*, which first appeared in 1823, rapidly achieving fame by including verbatim lectures of distinguished physicians and surgeons delivered for the sole benefit of their fee-paying pupils, and notoriety on account of the lawsuits consequent upon their publication. It was probably because Hastings saw that Thomas Wakley, the editor, was so preoccupied with leading the fight against the deplorable state of nepotism and privilege in the London hospitals and Royal Colleges that he decided there was a need for a journal which would serve the purposes of the scattered practitioners in the provinces. The success of regional medical journals in Germany, France, and Italy, and the impetus they gave to the quest for more factual information, undoubtedly encouraged him. While the prime purpose of his *Midland Medical and Surgical Reporter* was to record the medical experiences of isolated practitioners and collate data from the rising provincial hospitals, it incontestably served to make the provincial practitioners realize that they had as much in common with one another as had the men in London.

Hastings, already an experienced writer and well known on account of the success of his monograph, was indefatigable in his quest for new contributors and subscribers for his journal. He led the way by recording the medical topography of Worcester and the amenities of the Worcester Infirmary, and soon there were articles from near-by towns. His former master in Stourport-on-Severn, Kenrick Watson, contributed a paper for him, as did his Worcester colleagues, including Jonas Malden, his principal rival in practice. The appeal and

influence of the journal spread beyond the Midlands, and before the sixteen quarterly numbers were completed there were commentaries from as far away as Huddersfield, Derby, and London.

The publisher and printer was Tymbs, of Worcester, but there is no mention of an editor, which is consistent not so much with an essential modesty that Hastings was wont to display as with his tactful nature and his ability to anticipate the reactions of others. As a manufacturing town Birmingham had overtaken Worcester in importance and the General Hospital already had a flourishing medical school. It was to be expected, therefore, that members of the Birmingham medical "establishment" would not wish to see a Midland journal edited except from Birmingham, though they might concede its publication in a near-by city. However, a display of initiative on the part of so well-meaning and genial a man as Hastings would not be resented, because his practice had not at that stage encroached on the environs of Birmingham. Hastings would also argue that as Bristol was a medical centre of equal importance to Birmingham it was perhaps as well that the journal should be managed from neither of these cities, and where better than in an intermediate town? This periodical was well received, being welcomed by the *Medico-Chirurgical Review* as "a fellow labourer in the vineyard," with the encouraging remark that, compared with the metropolis, there "might not" in the provinces "be found so many *suns* but there would be more *stars* of the first magnitude."

In 1832, when Tymbs the publisher unexpectedly failed, Hastings decided that the time had come to found an association of provincial doctors. An unsuccessful attempt had but recently been made to establish such a body in the metropolis, the aim being to unite together the general practitioners and those practising surgeons who comprised the disfranchised membership of the Royal College of Surgeons. The declared objects of Hastings's Association were, however, not medico-political but rather scientific and social. But their first meeting took place only a few weeks after the passing of the Reform Act, so it is not surprising that the question of medical reform came up for active consideration at the first anniversary meeting. However, the implications of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, insulting so far as "union doctors" were concerned, soon made themselves felt and attempts to improve the meagre rate for contract practice took many years of the reformers' time and detracted from the wider question of Parliamentary reform of the profession.

Journal of the Association

Hastings, the journalist, was from the outset aware of the supreme importance of some form of journal for his Association: he wished not only to bring an account of the valuable annual meetings to those associates who were unable to attend but also to publish scientific articles for digestion by the home fireside. It is interesting, therefore, to compare the early numbers of the *Transactions of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association*, which ran from 1833 to 1853, with the *Midland Medical and Surgical Reporter*. They are in fact not dissimilar, except that the former were published only once a year. Again there was no mention of an editor, but Hastings and his co-secretary were instructed to "attend to the printing and correct the press."

In 1840 it was decided to publish a weekly journal, but Hastings accepted no formal responsibility for it; instead Hennis Green, a London paediatrician, and Robert Streeten, of Worcester, were appointed editors. He nevertheless maintained a firm control over the journal, the editor from 1849 to 1853 being Dr. John Henry Walsh, a Worcester surgeon who subsequently became the editor of *The Field*.

The moving of the journal office to London was the result of the agitation of Dr. Charles Cowan and other rebels against

the provincial status of the Association; indeed it was with reluctance, and not without some unpleasantness involving the resignation of Dr. John Rose Cormack from the editorship, that Hastings seems finally to have accepted the fact that the journal must needs be managed from the metropolis. Even so, the *Medical Times and Gazette* as late as 1861 felt constrained to assert that the controlling influence was still "My Lord President of Worcester." However, Hastings was never one to dissent from the generally expressed verdict that members of the Association must aim to have a high-quality scientific journal. He himself was a prolific writer and had an easy style. His ability as a journalist was unquestionably a factor in helping to establish the Association.

Co-Founders of the Association

In a free society a movement has a chance of being launched only if its cause is seen to be just; it is maintained by the conviction and personality of its leaders; and continues until its objects are completed. Hastings saw the need of an association of doctors, and as an Edinburgh graduate knew well the shortcomings of the Apothecaries Act. It was an age of reform, education, and improved communications. The British Association for the Advancement of Science was founded in 1831, with the successful model of the German Society of Naturalists before it. In the first quarter of the century the voices of medical reformers had often been raised, including those of the interesting Lincolnshire group led by Edward Harrison in 1804. The most recent combine had been the Metropolitan Society of General Practitioners of Medicine and Surgery with their headquarters in Regent Street, founded by William Gaitskell in 1830.

When it became clear that the *Midland Medical and Surgical Reporter* would not be able to continue under its then present form, Hastings consulted Edward Barlow of Bath, who was interested in the subject of medical reform, about the propriety of establishing an association of provincial practitioners. He also sought the views of Edward and John Johnstone of Birmingham, two Edinburgh graduates whose father and eldest brother had both once practised in Worcester. Early supporters of the Association included William and John Conolly, the latter present at the inaugural meeting after his short and unhappy appointment at the new University in London; William Hetling of Bristol; John Kidd, professor of medicine at Oxford; and from Birmingham William Sands Cox and Joseph Hodgson, who later became President of the Royal College of Surgeons.

Hastings seems to have had the goodwill of the whole medical fraternity in Worcester and also of the proprietor of *Berrow's Worcester Journal*; he had the loyal support of his co-secretary, Pook Shepherd. But if Hastings was fortunate in his choice of supporters it was always he who led. It was he who took the initiative, instituted new ventures, sought out local groups of promising men, and encouraged the formation of new branches. Though he himself always stressed the role of others in the founding of the Association, notably Edward Barlow and Edward Johnston, all other members took the view that there was but one founder. Without him, as many of them subsequently said, there would have been, at that propitious time, no provincial association of doctors.

Hastings, the Provincial

Hastings's first love was the Worcestershire countryside. His next was the Worcester Infirmary, wherein he first practised his skill as an organizer and became dedicated to his profession. He loved Edinburgh too for the training and culture he acquired, but though he was there invited to fill the vacancy occasioned by the unexpected death of Dr. John Gordon, he chose to return to Worcester, his decision being doubtless

influenced by the poor state of his health and also by his father's incapacity.

Back in Worcester an early preoccupation with infective diseases called for more information concerning the circumstances which led to the occurrence of epidemics. The founding of *The Midland Medical and Surgical Reporter and Topographical and Statistical Journal* had this very object in mind, and the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association was its natural continuation. He knew then that both Parry and Jenner had tried unsuccessfully to start provincial medical associations (and so too had Bedingfield, but this fact he seems not to have known). In 1833, the year after the founding of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association, he convened the first meeting of the Worcestershire Natural History Society at the instigation of John Conolly, and it remained active so long as he lived.

These varied pursuits were in fact interdependent, ranging from morbid anatomy and epidemiology through "medical topography" to climatology, geology, and the study of the flora and fauna. They brought him into contact with medical practitioners in the neighbouring counties, and especially those like himself who were attached to hospitals, as well as to the clergy, minor nobility, and respectable tradesmen who had the time and the will to encourage the spread of knowledge among the public. It was the era of the intellectual emancipation of the working-man. Knowledge was desirable for its own sake, but it was also an opportunity to praise God—for some it was the means of discovering Him. Hastings and the other doctors, who knew the tragedies brought about by epidemic disease and were afraid that the ague might return, saw well that discoveries in natural science might lead to discoveries in diagnosis and so provide a means to cure. They had before them the local example of William Withering.

Hastings's work also brought him into contact with wealthy landowners, industrialists, and members of both Houses of Parliament—men of influence, in fact. Sir Charles Throckmorton, a medical graduate of Edinburgh who had abandoned his career on succeeding unexpectedly to the baronetcy, often called Hastings over to Alcester to see and treat a sick relative. Arriving in the late afternoon, he would see the patient with the local general practitioner and afterwards dine with Sir Charles. He would then spend the night at Coughton Court and after breakfast pay a second visit to the patient before driving back to Worcester. In this way there were many opportunities for the exchange of knowledge among those enlightened in natural history, while every country lane and meadow offered botanical thrills even for the busy professional man. For those like Hastings, who also had an interest in geology, the new railway cuttings provided much of interest. It has been said that he had a liking for horse-racing. Hastings in fact never lost his love of the country life which dated from his early years in Martley. He was not tempted like John Conolly to leave the provinces for London. Perhaps he profited by Conolly's experience, who after nearly three years in the metropolis and in the new University was glad to return to the peace of Warwickshire.

Nevertheless Hastings's provincialism did not always help. He was reluctant to see the management of the journal moved to London, and he was at first actively opposed to the change of name of the Association from Provincial to British—a suggestion made by the *Lancet* as early as 1833. His apparent conservatism arose out of a natural fear that once established in London the Association would tend to neglect the scattered practitioners of the provinces who constituted its heart blood and very origin. But once he had accepted the inevitable change of status and the safeguards proposed he did so graciously, and in fact it was he who proposed the necessary resolution at the memorable meeting at Dee's Hotel, Birmingham, on 20 November 1855.

In the second half of his life he paid frequent visits to London and spent much time on drafting a Bill with his son George Woodyatt Hastings at his chambers, 4 Paper Buildings, Temple. But on his return he must have been glad to see the familiar

form of Bredon Hill and the range of the Malverns beyond as the steam train once more sped down into the lovely Vale of Evesham.

His Views on Medicine and the State

Early on in his career Hastings became convinced that the health of the public must become the responsibility of the State. It did not suffice that the medical practitioner should be concerned in the cure of disease, it was his duty to prevent it. His own experience in the cholera epidemic of 1832, which in the city of Worcester claimed 79 victims, the distressing revelations brought to light by the local Board of Health concerning the misery and squalor of the poor, and the further findings of the Chadwick Report of 1846 made him a firm supporter of Lord Morpeth's Health of Towns Bill of 1847. But he must have envisaged a link between the profession and a central health authority greater than that provided by the Public Health Act of 1848, because three years previously he had said, "I trust that henceforward the profession will be connected as it ought to be with the State, this being the great body which has to guide the onward progress of medical science."

By now he had had nearly thirty years' experience of occupational diseases among the glovers, leather-workers, needle-pointers, and those engaged in the making and painting of china. For years he had been conscious of the baneful influence upon his mind "of the tendency to degenerate into a mere receiver of fees," and now the Graham and Sutton Bill had come out in favour of a supreme council of health and education. Was Hastings looking forward to a State medical service, wherein doctors—or a substantial proportion of them—would be freed of the necessity of having to ask for fees? With a father and two brothers in the Church did he envy them their profession with its close link with the State and a substantial representation in the House of Lords? One can imagine that Hastings and some of his more dedicated contemporaries would have welcomed a national service in medicine, yet he was a firm advocate of the voluntary hospital system and the people's participation in the management of public infirmaries, for of these he wrote: "When once they become so rich as not to require the creative energies of social benevolence, almost all sympathy in regard to their affairs and all active superintendence of their internal economy vanishes. Thus abuses arise and multiply: the heaven-born principle of charity languishes, becomes extinct, and the Institution, our glory and our happiness, is found maimed and inefficient in its agency."

It is not difficult to envisage the disappointment of those reformers who had hoped for a supreme State council on health and education. The General Medical Council, though it fulfilled certain needs as a professional disciplinary body with control of medical education, was not the fatherly figurehead they had wanted; this council was not competent to advise the public and the profession on matters of public health, the prevention of disease, and research. Only after many years did the Ministry of Health and the Medical Research Council come into being to supply these wants. The enactment of 1858 was but an instalment of much that they wanted. One imagines that Hastings, who was sometimes accused of "driving the coach too hard," must often have despaired of ever seeing in his lifetime the satisfactory marriage between Medicine and the State he so fervently desired.

His Legacy to the Profession

The Association assumed its characteristic form at its inception; except in size and the inevitable disadvantages that accompany growth it has altered little since. From the outset it was a scientific society open to all general practitioners and consultants to meet and dine together at least once a year. To them these gatherings were "like an oasis in the desert."

The earliest committees were concerned with vaccination, the chemistry of body fluids, and the progress of anatomy. Their interest in the public weal was evident at their first Annual Meeting when they decided to petition Parliament for an Act for the registration of disease. Their deliberations were on how best to add to medical knowledge and to improve the health and living conditions of the people. However, it soon became evident that the Association, if it was to achieve these objects, must play a leading part in improving the training and status of medical practitioners, and so inevitably it became a medico-political body.

The Association blossomed rapidly and its fame was already established—as was that of its indefatigable senior secretary—at the time of the Liverpool Meeting in 1839. By 1851 it was, as we have seen, the acknowledged voice of the profession. Thereafter it entered an unhappy phase of its life which endured until 1855, when it was agreed that its provincial character should be superseded.

After the eventful year of 1858 the Association seems to have rested on its laurels, though renewed interest in its future was displayed when, in 1862, the Annual Meeting was held for the first time in London. The Clifton Meeting in 1863 was also a great success, and Hastings noted with pleasure that the kindness and good humour of the earlier members had been maintained as a tradition. Indeed a branch president had but recently remarked that a man “feels in joining the Association he has broken through a net of prejudices and follies.” Though the membership had now reached the figure of 2,422, the Association seems nevertheless to have been ageing along with Hastings, its founder and perpetual Chairman of Council. At the Leamington Meeting in 1865, resignations, erasures, and deaths were found to have exceeded the number of new members. One commentator remarked that nearly all the members looked venerable, and this was not entirely due to the fact that “beards were back again.” Young men were not joining their ranks. At dinner there were no more than a hundred present. The Chester Meeting, too, was poorly attended, and the question was woefully asked, Could others navigate the ship that Hastings had so successfully built and launched? But others came forward and the ship has sailed ever since, gathering speed and momentum with time: in the difficult years which followed the death of the founder, his example and devotion to their cause were ever before them.

Hastings's role in fostering the enactment of 1858 and in the tedious steps which led up to it was important. Though this stepping-stone in the emancipation of the profession was a Government Bill introduced by W. F. Cowper, there had been many unsuccessful attempts before it, one of them being the Hastings Bill which attempted to satisfy the demands of the Association and of the corporate bodies. It was strongly backed by Thomas Wakley, who advised the Prime Minister to adopt it, but it was quickly put out of mind when the nation was precipitated into war against Russia.

It would be a mistake to belittle the efforts of other reformers within the profession. Joseph Home, Thomas Wakley, and

James Brady had successfully fought Parliamentary elections in order to help with reform from “inside.” The *Lancet* and *London Medical Gazette* were ever watchful and critical of “The miscreant monopolists” (which included “Gallipot Lodge” and “Rhubarb Hall”), while the six Royal Colleges, in spite of their sectional interests, were not unmindful of the legitimate demands of the poorer members of the profession. The role of the Society of Apothecaries was important and creditable. The colleges, the universities, and the Society produced many leaders. It was the Regius Professor of Medicine in Oxford, Dr. John Kidd, and not Hastings, who seems to have been first in proposing a central examining council composed of representatives of the universities and other licensing bodies, an idea which was adopted in the Graham and Sutton Bill of 1844; and it was Sir Benjamin Brodie, and not Hastings, who in 1848 remonstrated with Lord Morpeth over the proposed exclusion of members of the profession from the Central Board of Health and secured the appointment of Dr. Thomas Southwood Smith. Finally, there were the Parliamentarians, many of them motivated by the highest ideals, who were forced to read warily because of expediencies of party and of dissent within the profession they sought to help.

Hastings deserves to be remembered, too, for his other contributions to medicine. He was the author of many papers on experimental pathology, morbid anatomy, and clinical medicine, the last to be published under his own name being in the year 1855. In 1860 he delivered an important address to the Social Science Association on the diseases attributable to tobacco smoking, rebuking his fellow members—who for the duration of the meeting had been provided with a smoking-room—for indulging in the evil habit “as in the clubs of the aristocracy.” His interesting presidential address to its Public Health Section in 1864, though largely retrospective, was constructive and very well received. He was honoured by several medical societies and was president of the Association of Medical Officers of Asylums for the Insane (now the Royal Medico-Psychological Association). His practical interest in mental diseases (he was in fact one of the proprietors of a private asylum in Droitwich) was doubtless inspired by his association with John Conolly.

Sir Charles Hastings was a dedicated man of many parts. The aspirations he set for his Association were nothing short of “the entire alleviation of the sufferings of humanity.” Much of his life was devoted to the strengthening of the Association and the reform of the profession, but this did not detract from his useful—and indeed exceptional—contributions as a county-town physician and leading citizen. In his latter years his national responsibilities seem to have interfered with his more humble duties at the Worcester Infirmary to such an extent that his resignation appears to have been dictated by criticism. But his principal legacy was our Association, which in the favourable circumstances of that time “spread like a tropical vine” as one early visitor to its meetings remarked; and of this achievement we can only conclude, as Hastings so often did at the anniversary dinner, “by quoting from Horace, ‘*Si monumentum quaeris, circumspice.*’”