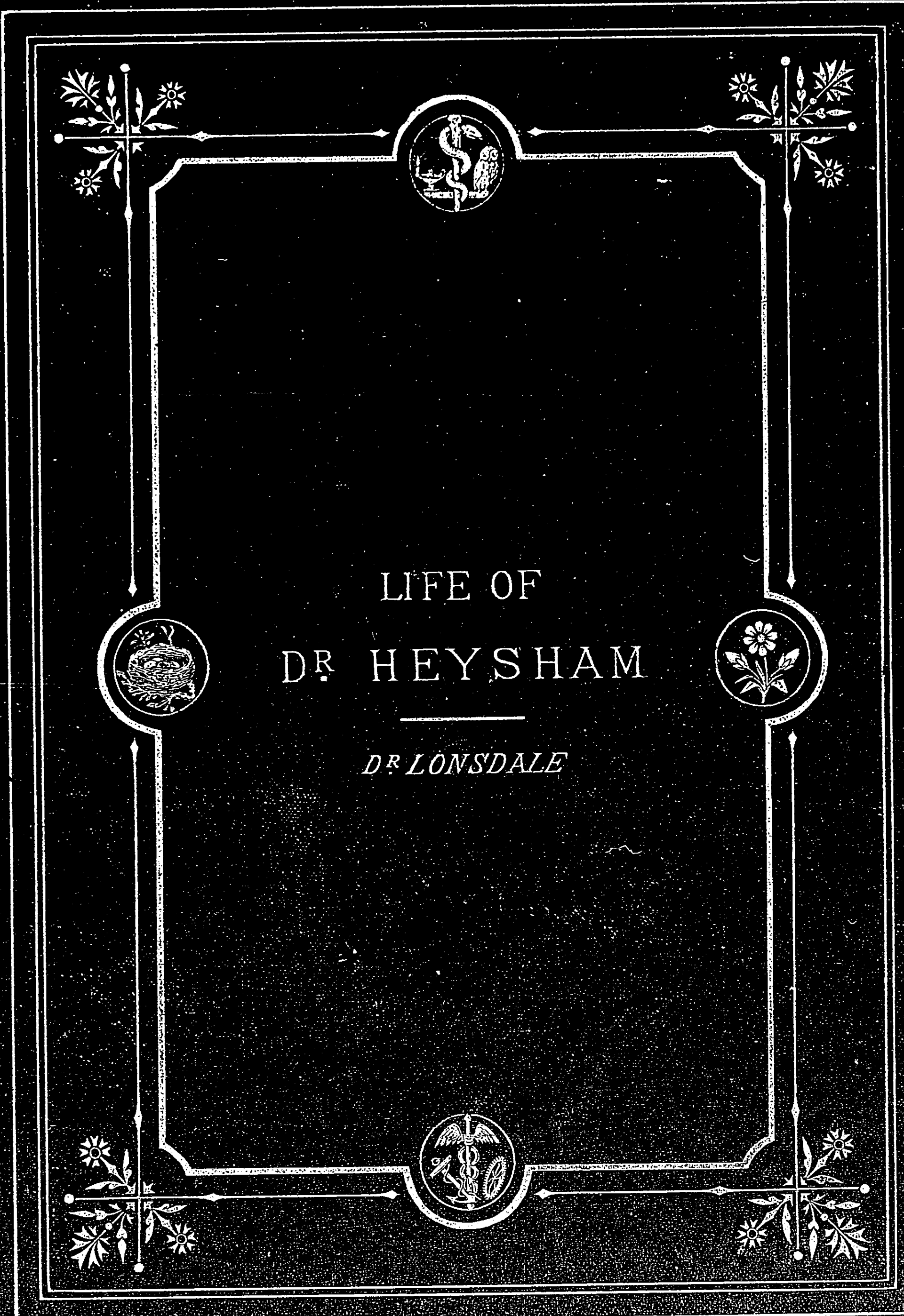


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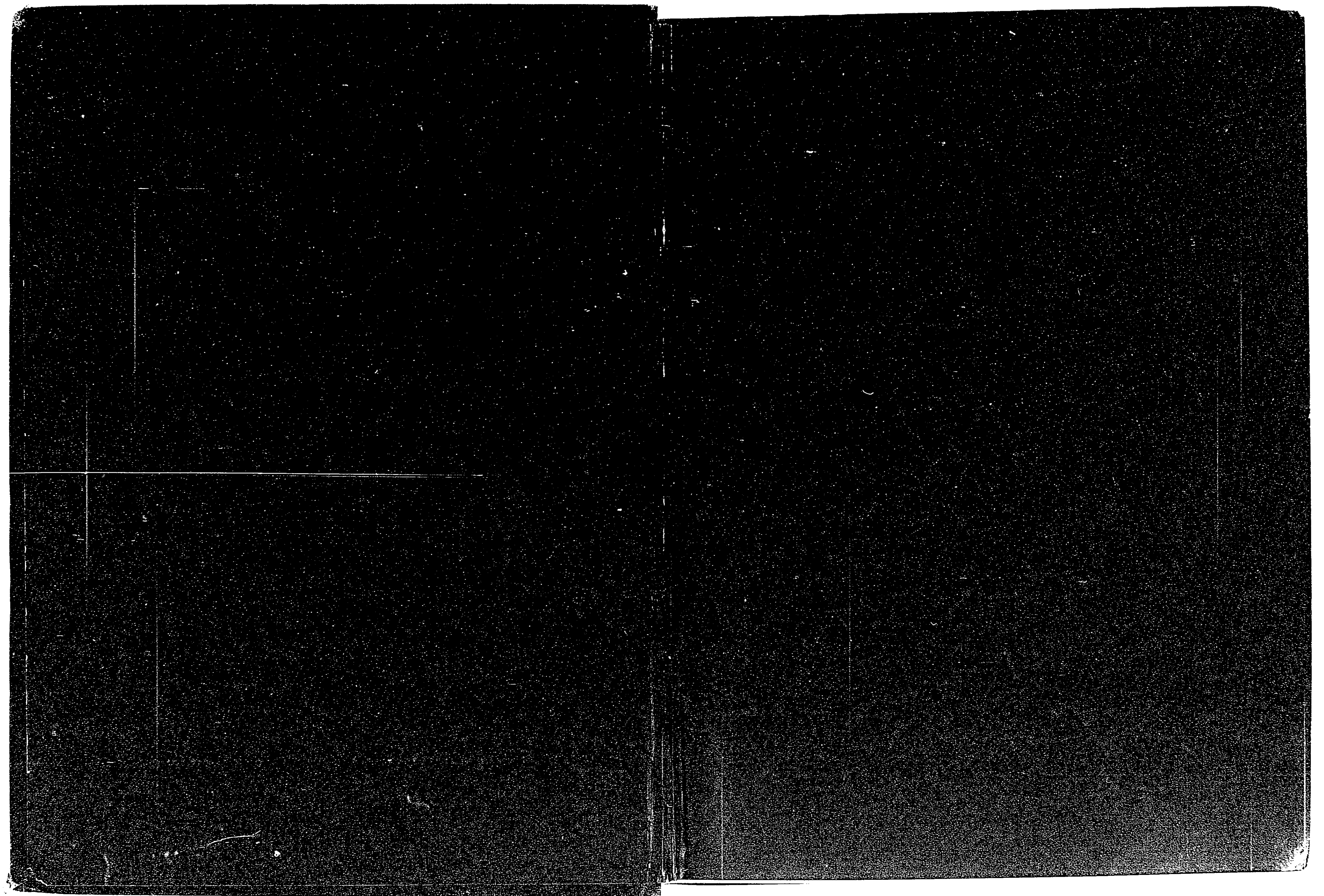
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LIFE OF
DR HEYSHAM

DR LONSDALE



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LIFE INSURANCE -
The Carlisle Bills
of Mortality &c

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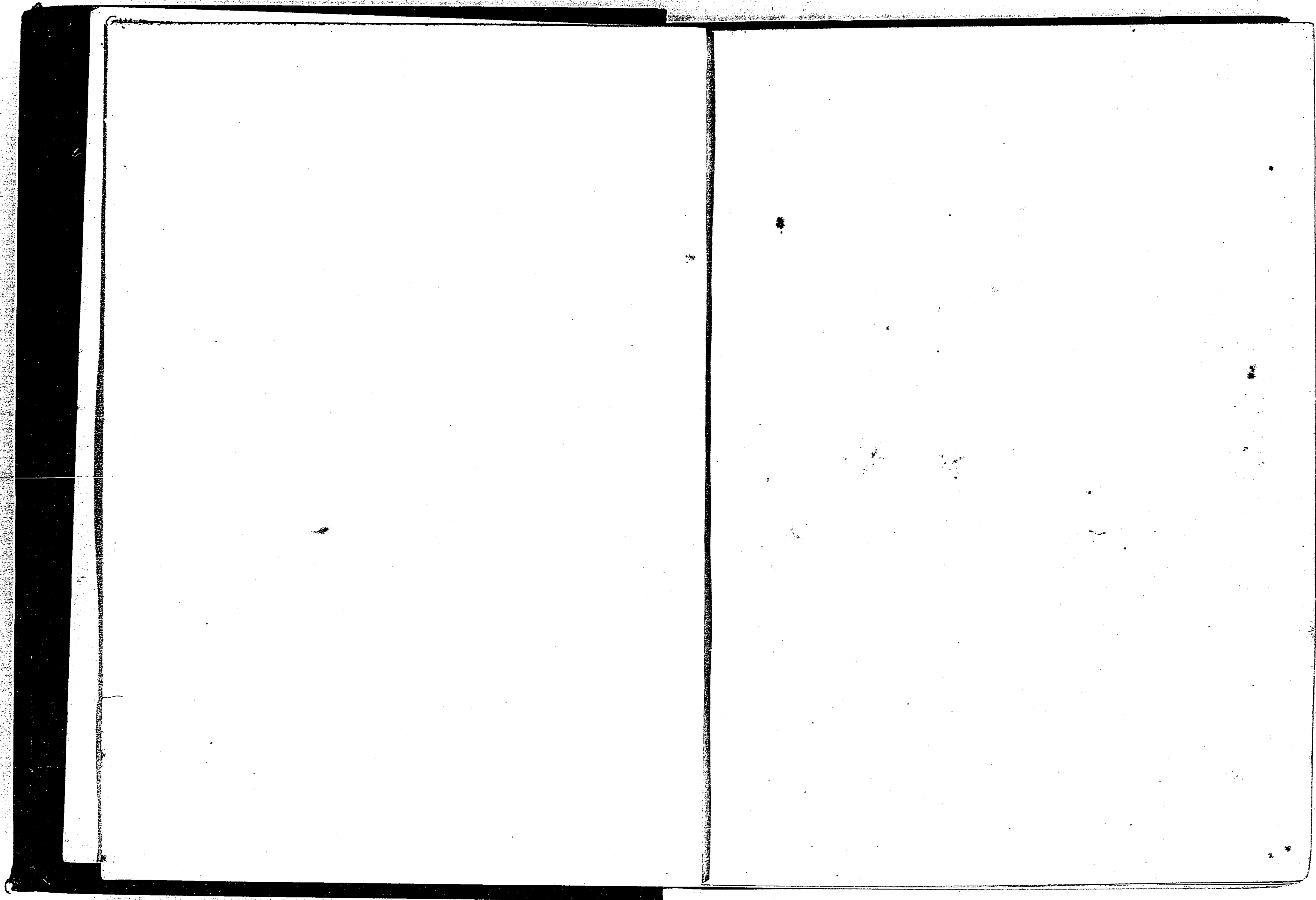
LONDON,
LONGMANS.
1870.

PORTRAIT

James Smith

LIFE OF JOHN HEYSHAM, M.D.

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occasional spot in text but very
GOOD COPY.





John Keyhew

John Keyhew
1817

1817

THE LIFE
OF
JOHN HEYSHAM, M.D.

AND

*HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. JOSHUA MILNE
RELATIVE TO THE CARLISLE BILLS
OF MORTALITY*

EDITED BY

HENRY LONSDALE, M.D.

o. e. μ.

LONDON
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1870

Neglecta reducit, sparsa colligit, utilia selegit, necessaria ostendit, sic utile.

BAGLIVI.

— Non, me ut miratur turba, laboro,
Contentus paucis lectoribus.

JOHN GRAUNT.

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IN GRATEFUL
REMEMBRANCE OF LASTING FRIENDSHIPS

I DEDICATE THIS VOLUME

TO

JAMES ADAMS, M.D., GLASGOW.

ROBERT BROWN, F.R.C.S., CARLISLE.

WILLIAM L. DICKINSON, L.R.C.P., WORKINGTON.

JOHN GRAHAM, M.D., LONDON.

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ROBERT TIFFEN, M.D., WIGTON.

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CHAPTER I.

THE HEYSHAMS OF LANCASTER—JOHN HEYSHAM—MEDICAL APPRENTICE—TRAVELLING TO EDINBURGH—HIS STUDIES AND GRADUATION THERE—SETTLES IN CARLISLE.

THE name and family of Heysham are of ancient date and record in the county of Lancaster. The district bordering on Morecambe Bay, now constituting the manor and parish of Heysham, was at an early period taken possession of by a roving Saxon chieftain named Hessa, from whose occupation of it the name is derived. After the Norman Conquest it appears as “*Hessam*,” part of the possessions which Earl Tosti had held, and was then granted by the Conqueror to some one of his followers, who, according to the fashion of those times, assumed the name “*de Hessam*.” In the reign of Henry III. it was in the holding of Roger de Hesham, by the tenure of serjeanty, or service of *Cornage*; which was to be in attendance on the border of the county with horn and white wand whensoever the King should come, to introduce him with sound of horn into the county, and in like

manner to attend him on his departure. From this conspicuous service of *cornage* it is traditionally said that the Lords of the Manor of Heysham acquired the surname of *Cornet*, eventually transformed into *Gernet*, in which name the manor long remained vested. Yet junior branches of the family retained the ancient name; and in the town of Lancaster there were in the seventeenth century more than one branch bearing it. Thus we are enabled to trace the descent of John Heysham, whose life is to occupy these pages, from a citizen of Lancaster, who flourished there in the early part of that century. This gentleman had two sons, Gyles Heysham and John Heysham. They were merchants and shipowners. Gyles had several children, amongst whom were Robert and William, who both went to London in their youth, and became eminent merchants there; so much so, that Robert, being an alderman of London and president of Christ's Hospital, was in 1698 elected member of Parliament for his native town Lancaster, and sat as such till 1715, when he was elected for the City of London, and held that position till his death in 1722. William also, in 1705, became representative in Parliament of his native town, and enjoyed the honour as long as he lived. He left by will an estate at Greaves, near Lancaster (now of the yearly value of £200 or thereabouts), for the maintenance of eight poor freemen of the borough.

The second son, John, had also several children—no less than nine of whom were sons. Some of these, following the commercial instinct of the family, emigrated to America, and there realised fortune and position. One son, Gyles, maintained the family name at home. As a shipowner, he shared in the prosperity that attended Lancaster in her extensive sugar trade and other commercial relations. He has been described as handsome in person, and a thorough-bred man of business; yet, like other men of bold enterprise, he was not uniformly successful in his commercial undertakings. About the year 1750 he took to wife Anne Cumming, daughter of a well-to-do yeoman or "Statesman," at Holme, in Westmoreland, of which marriage came John Heysham, the subject of the present memoir, born at Lancaster on the 22d November 1753.

John Heysham seems to have inherited a good deal of his father's handsome personality and habits of perseverance, and not a little of his mother's thrift; and both qualifications were serviceable in the path he selected for himself in the world. Young Heysham had the benefit of a good classical and general education at the hands of the Messrs. Jenkinson, members of the "Society of Friends," and schoolmasters of considerable repute at Yealand, a small village near to Burton in Westmoreland. It is worthy of remark that the Quakers were the best schoolmasters of that period in the north of England; for whilst they inculcated self-denial,

industry, and order, they were not less vigilant in training the intellectual powers of their pupils. They unquestionably enjoyed a large share of confidence among the upper middle class. Along Morecambe Bay and the coast further north, in the dales of Westmoreland and Cumberland, wherever George Fox's teaching took root, some worthy disciples of the "Friends"* located themselves as schoolmasters, and did infinite service to the cause of education in these northern counties.

On the completion of his schooling, John Heysham was apprenticed for five years to Mr. Parkinson, a surgeon at Burton. There he had to undergo the usual drudgery of a village medical apprentice, under a master who rigidly exacted the performance of every duty, from the mixing of pills and potions even to the rubbing down of "master's horse." "The doctor's lad"—the term applied to a surgeon's apprentice—had to rise early, and often to sit late, to wait his master's return from distant professional visits. The indentures set forth that he was to learn the "art and mystery" of an apothecary, or the preparation and compounding of drugs; this included the collecting of plants, the making of decoctions, and all the paraphernalia from the working up of crude materials to the neatly-labelled draught for the

* John Dalton, the great chemist, and his brother, at Kendal; the Fletchers of Broughton and Brigham, near Cockermouth, in the last century; Joseph Saul of Greenrow, Holm Cultram, in Cumberland, are cited off-hand as prominent instances supporting the views expressed above.

rector's spouse or the squire's daughter. Then bleeding, and tooth-drawing, and cupping, came under the art and mystery of surgery. The lad was also expected to keep up his classics, to make his initiative in anatomy and the elements of chemistry, and to have some notions of disease, so as to be able to act in cases of surgical emergency. The system was well calculated to sharpen a lad's wits, and to fit him to rough the world, and a rougher world than country practice was nowhere to be found in his Majesty's dominions; but it was hardly consistent with the acquirement of a learned profession or the dignity of manners that should embellish the Healing Art. Attending to the stable one hour, and to aloes and rhubarb the next, savoured more of Veterinary than of Human Medicine. An endless round of menial as well as medical duties prevailed in these village surgeries, which the first three decades of the eighteenth century did not entirely sweep away.* To-day all things are changed, and young Esculapius now dashes along the road in smart

* The apprenticeship system, with all its faults, had some redeeming virtues: it trained lads up to the work of their lives, it familiarised them with the professional *adjuvantia*, as well as the forms of physiognomical indications of disease. Till very lately, the great majority of English medical practitioners were so educated, and it may be safely advanced that they have shown no inferiority in skill and discriminative judgment to the generation that has sprung up from the modern system of cramming and forced growth. Upon the roll of medical worthies are to be found a host of provincial men, from the days of Jenner, who have promoted the interests of medicine and surgery quite as much as the favoured metropolitan leaders.

clothes, with light cane and kid gloves, deeming himself a suitor for the comeliest of company, even of the lavender sort.

At an early age John Heysham gave indications of a penchant for Natural History. His love of birds was specially manifested, and with the smattering of human anatomy derived in the surgery of his master, his interest for Ornithology became much enlarged. Like all country-educated lads, Heysham coveted field sports; but as firearms were very cautiously placed in the hands of apprentices, he was in some measure driven to the practice of the bow and arrow in the pursuit of his favourite study of birds. In the present day such a mode will appear puerile to a degree; it was not so 110 years ago; nor was the practice of the bow and arrow one whit less successful in aim than the flint and steel musket known as "Old Brown Bess" to English soldiers.

Being furthest removed from the pulsation of new thoughts, the "North Countrie" held long by the customs of the Tudors, be it the wild weapons of war or the enjoyment of the pastimes of peace. Archery might well linger among the descendants of those* whose prowess had been so highly extolled on Flodden Field—

"With him (Lord Dacres) the bows of Kendal stout,
With milke-white coats and crosses red.

"These are the bows of Kendal bold,
Who fierce will fight, and never flee."

* In the Border wars (1584) Cumberland and Westmoreland furnished 8350 men. The 300 Kendal men on Flodden Field proved "*hardy men* that went *noo*

Two centuries, it is true, had passed over since these days of chivalry; but the remembrance of the glory of the past had not been effaced from the north-country dalesman: nay, the practice of archery had come down from sire to son to the Georgian era. Heysham, touched by the rivalry, the more intense that it was bucolic, prevailing among youths of his own age, became an adept at the ancient mode of shooting.

Heysham was far from being an idle apprentice; for, in addition to his gallipot work, and the minor practice of physic and surgery, he studied classics and mathematics under the Rev. Dr. Hutton, vicar of Burton. In the course of time he finished his pupilage, and prepared for Edinburgh, a medical school of high repute, where he might finish his studies and become a licensed practitioner. He had seen enough of country practice to condemn it *in toto*, independently of its fearful drudgery. The regular practitioner had not the social status due to his professional rank, and much less of the confidence of the public than the itinerant quack. At all times he had to compete with the village blacksmith, the barber, and the herbalist, whose "culling of simples"

foote back." They were evidently of the same stamp as the archers of Sir Thomas Curwen of Workington, that were gathered from West Cumberland and by the mountain districts southwards as far as Furness in Lancashire. Both the men and their chief obtained special praise from "Old Bluff Harry," when visiting these parts of his kingdom, and making a clean sweep of the Monastic Abbeys; *ex. gr.* Furness and others in the North.

under lunar and saturnine auspices impressed the vulgar mind with uncommon faith. The only chance left the medical man of counteracting the prevailing quackery, was to prove, and oft to repeat the proof of, his professional skill and sagacity. Even this failed to carry conviction against the prejudice and ignorance besetting other walks than the strictly bucolic life.

To travel from Lancaster to Edinburgh—170 miles—was no easy matter in Heysham's day. There were no coaches or public conveyances—posting being usurped by the grandees of the nation, and seldom adopted even by them—so that walking and riding, like "Hobson's choice," were the only alternatives. In the very year (1774) that Heysham left home for the northern university, the proprietors of the Edinburgh "Fly" announced to the public, what was received as a startling fact, that their new conveyance would make the journey between the English and Scottish metropolis "in ten days, God willing." The "God willing" was a most significant clause in the agreement, for such speed as forty miles a-day with "the Edinburgh Fly," however much wished for, was seldom obtained. Moreover, this stage-coach, "the Fly," came by York over Stainmore, and then proceeded by Carlisle to Glasgow, and consequently was of no service to travellers from Lancaster. Some years elapsed before the Mail was put on the Shap or Kendal road, namely in 1786. Heysham had to undertake his journey on horseback, a mode of travelling

which, amongst some drawbacks, in a pluviose district especially, had at least the advantage of giving the traveller time to survey the country through which he passed. With his love for natural history and mountain scenery, the journey could not fail to be exciting and agreeable; as each hour revealed a varying landscape of hill and dale, so each stage or resting-place showed its quaint hostelry and quainter folk. Special mention is made of his travel to Edinburgh, as it exercised a marked influence on his future plans; moreover, in starting from home he meant to find other quarters, so that he came to look at each town and district with the discrimination of a man in search of a new settlement.

His route lay along the old Roman road, and his halting-places for the night were frequently the *loci in quo* of the camps or stations by which the Northern Borders were held in subjection by the Roman legions. Thus he rode from Lancaster (*Longovicum*) to Kendal (*Concangium*), then to Penrith, and so on to Carlisle (*Luguvallium*). He met with little else on the roads than gangs of pack-horses transferring the merchandise of Kendal to the rest of England, no less than 354 horses being employed in the work. The "Kendal green" and "cottons" had lost part of their reputation in 1770; but knit-yarn and worsted stockings engrossed a vast district around, so that Heysham in his journeying would see here and there, in the hamlets by the fell-sides, and in the valleys—

"The spinsters and the knitters in the sun."

The population of Kendal was equal to Carlisle, and its commercial spirit somewhat higher than the Border City. Camden had characterised the town "*lanificii gloria et industria precellens*," and the arms of the Corporation bore "*Pannus mihi panis*;" yet Heysham could not be tempted to fix his tent under the "three teasels of wool-hooks," however rich they might be in yield of *panis*—the staff of life.

Having crossed the high and barren moorlands of Shap Fells, and reached Hackthorpe, he came in view of the rich and expansive valley of the Eden, and the best features of the Crossfell range of hills, then, descending by the sylvan streams of Lowther and Eamont, he halted at Penrith. Though snugly ensconced under its own Beacon-hill, and in contiguity to the Lake district, and the fine mountains of Saddleback and Helvellyn, this spirited little town did not altogether meet his wishes. Proceeding northwards, and surveying the Vale of the Peterill from the heights of Barrock-fell, or still better from Carlton Hill, having the richly-planted Woodside on his left, and the noted Corby Woods on his right, he got his first glimpse of Carlisle. On reaching Harraby Hill,* an eminence but one mile distant, he obtained the best view of the city, its surrounding walls, the

* Harraby Hill is the *Harrabee* of Sir W. Scott's "Waverley," and locally known as "Gallows Hill," where so many Scotch rebels, the followers of "The Pretender," were hanged for high treason. The heads of the chiefs were spiked on the Scottish gates, with their faces pointed to their native land.

towering citadel, the donjon-keep of its castle, and the stately cathedral. Situated at the confluence of three rivers, and surrounded by a plain of richly-green meadows, traversed by the smaller streams of the Cauda and Peterill, the broader vale of the Eden being bounded by gradually rising uplands terminating in the Scottish hills and East Cumberland "Fells," Carlisle charmed Heysham at first sight, and that charm continued through life. He knew nothing of the inhabitants of the place, and therefore had no local tie to bias his judgment; it was the walled city robbed of its mediæval and warlike frown by rich pastoral surroundings, and a landscape of awakening interest, that allured his fancy, and eventually decided him to make Carlisle his future home.

Heysham studied physic under Monro, Cullen, Black, and others of fame in Edinburgh, for three years, and obtained his doctor's degree in June 1777. His Thesis *De Rabie Canina* was inscribed to Henry, the son of Professor Cullen, a circumstance indicative of his being on very pleasant terms with the family of the great medical teacher. The subject selected by Heysham for his "Inaugural Dissertation" was by no means a happy one, inasmuch as *rabies canina*, or hydrophobia, on account of its rarity, was unsuited for original inquiry. The writer is informed that Heysham never saw a case in his fifty years' practice. His historical examination of the disease afforded no clue to its eluci-

dation or proximate cause ; hundreds of doctors who have followed in his wake have done no better, and hydrophobia is still a problem in medicine, notwithstanding all the aids brought to bear upon its investigation by a new chemistry, and not less improved pathology and therapeutics.

The thesis displays a great amount of reading, and a thorough acquaintance with the whole subject ; its Latinity, said to have been extolled by his medical teachers, may be judged of by the following quotation, taken at random from the 15th page :—
 “De symptomatis in cane rabido occurrentibus. Primo canis suum vigorem amittit, minus vividus fit, et, inter obsequium domino præstandum, solitudinem petit. Non latrat, sed murmurat, aliis minitatur ; auribus et cauda demissis, cibum aversatur, et vultus tristitiæ omnia signa exhibet. Postquam hæc symptomata unum, duos, vel tres dies permanserunt, dein canis cito difficulterque respirat ; linguam ore exerit, atque salivam primo parcius movet.”*

Immediately after graduating in Edinburgh, Heysham sailed from Leith to Rotterdam, and made a tour through Holland, with a view of improving his medical knowledge under the renowned

* Heysham could point to no Arkadian spring, or the Alysson mentioned by Polybius, the water of which was so famed for its cure of the bite of mad dogs as to be the pride of the Kynathians of old ; nor does he in his Thesis note the history of the beautiful Prætides, of the handsome bestowals of their kingly father upon the lucky physician Melampus.

Dutch professors. On his return to England he stayed some time in London, and afterwards visited his family at Lancaster. In 1778 he settled in Carlisle as a physician, bringing with him excellent introductions to the best families in the city. With or without such credentials, however, he would soon have secured friends among the higher educated class, whilst his handsome bearing as a man could not fail to attract the notice of the gentler sex, to whom many a medical man has owed his first and greatest success in practice. He took lodgings in St. Cuthbert's Lane, near the centre of the city ; and such was his partiality for this narrow approach to St. Cuthbert's Church, that he afterwards took a house in it, which he continued to inhabit till his death in 1834.