

RES MEDICA

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Continuing Noble Traditions (Editorial)

The Editor

Abstract

Long gone are the days when a map of the British Empire would be brought before a throng of medical students with the proclamation: "Half of this red area contains medical services established by Edinburgh men!" Nowadays Edinburgh students, who still have one of the longest elective periods, can extend their influence to all four corners of the globe, where they can experience medical practice often far different to that carried out back home. For many, this will be the only time they can work abroad without requiring extra qualifications such as the USMLE.

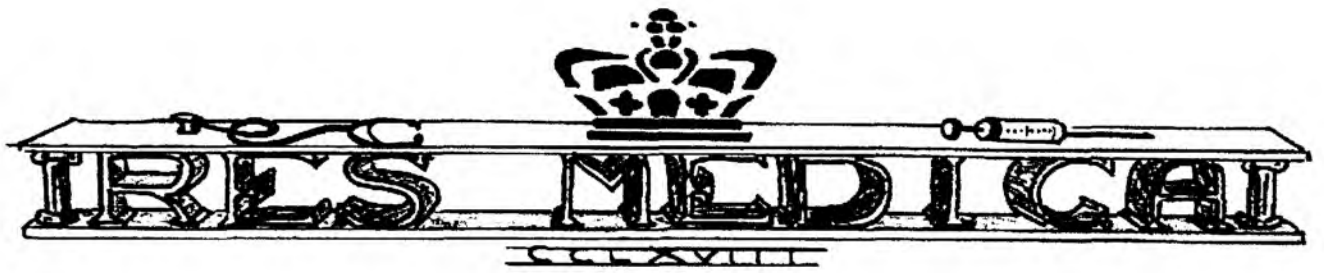
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Of course it is not just medical students who have this opportunity. In this edition Dr David Apps describes the role he has played in developing the medical curriculum in the University of Concepción, Chile. Even today Edinburgh medical teaching still sets global standards. One would not believe it now, but a large amount of the American medical schools can trace themselves back to Edinburgh - as the numerous plaques on the medical school wall testify.

Edinburgh's example has not always been exemplary. According to Professor Matthew Kaufman's illuminating article, the university had produced notable botanists. However, perhaps Dr Jardine paid a little bit too much attention to the *Papaver somniferum L*, the infamous Opium Wars being the result. Thankfully Edinburgh's medical graduates are no longer instrumental in the instigation of major conflicts. As a number of our articles show, today's Edinburgh people are more likely to be involved in helping the local inhabitants combat major worldwide diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

Travel also comes with its own diseases. Dr Phillip Welsby, or "Dr Gloomy" as a national newspaper has branded him,

provides us with a light-hearted but informative description of the many and varied diseases that one can contract when travelling.

Over the last century there has been a huge transformation in travel. Locations that once took weeks or even months to reach are now, with the advent of the jet engine, just a matter of hours away. Never before has the world seemed so small, but still medical students find the remotest places possible for their electives (including Perth), albeit arranged by email.

What will the next one hundred years bring? Will a future Res Medica carry reports of Lunar or Martian medicine? If the last century is anything to go by, one can never rule anything out.

The RMS plays an instrumental role in many student electives. Our Travel & Study Fund provides financial assistance to RMS members, making many an elective possible. This continues the role of the RMS and her members in developing global medicine. Of course one of our most famous members circumnavigated the globe, during which he developed a certain theory of evolution.

As this edition of Res Medica makes its own way around the globe may I as editor thank all those who have taken the time and effort to contribute to this issue. I make no apologies for repeating what many a previous editor has proclaimed: "Res Medica is back." Other issues are already in progress. A "History of Medicine" issue is planned for early next year, so I feel certain in proclaiming:

Floreat Res Medica

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