JAMES PARKINSON
HIS LIFE AND TIMES

HISTORY OF NEUROSCIENCE

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JAMES PARKINSON HIS LIFE AND TIMES

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Preface

Dr. A. D. Morris had a long interest in, and great familiarity with, the life and times of James Parkinson (1755–1824). He was an avid collector of material related to Parkinson, some of which he communicated to medical and historical groups, and which he also incorporated into publications, especially his admirable work, *The Hoxton Madhouses*.

When Dr. Morris died, in 1980, he left behind a large typescript devoted to Parkinson's life. It was single-minded in its dedication to primary texts, quoting liberally from the whole range of Parkinson's writings. This was particularly valuable since so many of Parkinson's publications were tracts, pamphlets, or occasional pieces which are now very scarce. A copy of the entire manuscript has been deposited in the Library of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine in London, where it may be consulted. The length of the manuscript made publication of the whole impossible, especially since it would have had to include the facsimile reproduction of Morris's *The Hoxton Madhouses*.

The process of editing has been far more complicated and taken much longer to achieve than was originally envisaged due to checking and shortening, but much of the flavour of Dr. Morris's manuscript has been preserved. A number of individuals have given freely of their time and expertise. Dr. W. A. Smeaton of University College, London, refashioned the chemical chapter and John Thackray of the Geological Museum showed Parkinson as a palaeontologist while also correcting the manuscript as a whole.

Dr. Janet Brown helped edit several chapters, and Ben Barkow worked throughout in editing, checking quotations, and compiling the bibliography. Several people, including Heather Edwards, have contributed to the typing.

Mrs. Dorothy Morris devotedly helped her husband over many years in his researches and typed many of the earlier versions. She graciously provided financial support while Laurence Pedersen worked for two years on the social, political, and scientific backgrounds of the times of James

Parkinson. We hope that this resulting book will please her and repay, in some measure, her infinite patience. It is also a particular pleasure to thank Dr. W.H. Bynum, for without his persistent work and encouragement, this book would not have been published. All the good editing is due to him and his team at the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine—all the faults are mine.

F. Clifford Rose

A Memoir of A.D. Morris

DR. JOHN THACKRAY

Arthur Daniel Morris was born on the 11th of May, 1889, in the village of Treorchy in the Upper Rhondda Valley, South Wales. His father, Dr. William Morris, was a celebrated nonconformist preacher and bard. Arthur, one of six children, went first to Porth County School, and then to Taunton School as a boarder.

He spent his school holidays with the family of Dr. John Armstrong, from whom he learnt some of the rudiments of general practice, which turned his thoughts toward a career in medicine.

Arthur took the London matriculation examination at the age of 18, and enrolled as a medical student at the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire in Cardiff, where he studied for three years before moving to University College Hospital for his final year. He qualified LRCP and MRCS from the Hospital in October 1915 and was accordingly put on the medical register.

Arthur returned to South Wales for his first job, where he worked with Fergus Armstrong, John's younger brother, for five months. He then returned to London as Assistant Medical Officer at Hammersmith Infirmary. When the hospital was taken over by the War Office in 1916, Arthur joined the Army and continued to serve at Hammersmith as a first lieutenant until July, when he was ordered to Mesopotamia with the Royal Army Medical Corps. His war service as a Captain Surgical Specialist included time in hospitals in Bombay and Calcutta, service on the hospital ship Devonshire, and finally a spell in the Agnes Hunt and Robert Jones Hospital, Oswestry.

He obtained his M.D. from the University of Brussels in 1920 and his M.B. and B.S. from London in 1924, both while he was Assistant Medical Officer at Kensington Infirmary (later St. Mary Abbots Hospital) under Remington Hobbs. This was followed by a second spell at Hammersmith Hospital as Deputy Medical Superintendent from 1926 to 1934 under Sir Thomas Carey Evans.

In 1935, Arthur was appointed Medical Superintendent of St. Leonard's and St. Matthew's hospitals in Shoreditch. Those hospitals presented a

sorry contrast to the splendid facilities enjoyed at the Hammersmith; buildings, equipment, accommodations, and staff morale were all poor, and the first few years were not easy ones. In those days, the Medical Superintendent was responsible for every case in the hospital, although he delegated care and treatment through his deputies. He could be no narrow specialist, as he had charge of medical, surgical, gynaecological, and children's beds, as well as maternity and mental wards. Arthur took a particular interest in orthopaedic work and started a special finger clinic to deal with accidents in the nearby furniture factories. He worked heroically beside his staff and the people of Shoreditch through the war, and his changed attitude to the place is shown by his refusal, in 1941, to move when a better hospital was offered to him.

In 1939, Arthur was President of the Harveian Society, an old and distinguished medical society in London named for William Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood. He read an address in which he described the work of a Medical Superintendent.

Arthur first became interested in James Parkinson in 1952. The fact that this famous medical man had lived in the borough of Shoreditch, and had been parish doctor to the workhouse which stood on the site of St. Leonard's Hospital, fascinated Arthur. He read all he could on Parkinson and on the history of Shoreditch, including the whole of Parkinson's medical and political meetings, and took up the study of geology in order to be able to understand Parkinson's *Organic Remains of a Former World*. The idea of a biography took shape in his mind, and he corresponded widely to follow up the different facets of Parkinson's life. He was lucky to make contact with a number of Parkinson's descendants, including Miss Florence Brown, his great-granddaughter, then aged 95. Arthur was by now an enthusiast for geology books, initially concentrating on those cited by Parkinson.

He retired from St. Leonard's and St. Matthew's Hospitals in 1955, and in that year realized a long-cherished hope when he unveiled a plaque to James Parkinson in the church of St. Leonard's, Shoreditch. In February 1957 he married Dorothy A. Thomson in Vernon Baptist Church, near King's Cross. He and his wife lived in Peterborough until 1960, when they moved to Eastbourne.

His retirement was a long and happy one. His book on Parkinson progressed steadily for a number of years. Many chapters were completed but others remained only drafted, and in the end the task of completion proved too much. His interest in geology led him to study and write about a number of other prominent medical geologists, including Joseph Townsend, Samuel Dale, Gideon Mantell, and Sir John Hill. He did not neglect purely medical topics, and published an account of his medical friends and mentors from Treorchy, the brothers Armstrong, as well as a history of the Medical Superintendents' Society (for doctors who administrated community hospitals). He was always delighted to correspond about old

books and their authors and to share his extraordinary knowledge of the East End of London and its inhabitants.

Arthur Morris died on August 15, 1980, after a long illness, during which he was devotedly nursed by his wife Dorothy.

List of Relevant Historical Papers

(1955). James Parkinson. *The Lancet* 9th April 1955:761–763.

(1957). *Hoxton Square and the Hoxton Academies*. T. Davis, London, p. 12.

(1958). *The Hoxton Madhouses*. Goodwin Bros., Cambridge, p. 25.

(1960). 'Sir' John Hill M.A., M.D. (1706–1775) *apothecary, botanist, playwright, actor, novelist, journalist*. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* 53:55–60.

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