

METROPOLITAN MEDICINE AND THE MAN-MIDWIFE: THE EARLY LIFE AND LETTERS OF CHARLES LOCOCK

by

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INTRODUCTION

Charles Locock and his times

CHARLES – later Sir Charles – Locock (1799–1875), the son of a Northampton physician, aspired early to his father's profession. His wish, however, was soon to combine this conventional aspiration with the incipient specialist's role that, in bare outline, was taking shape in the 1820s and 1830s.¹ Buttressing this view of Locock, and spanning more than two decades of his early manhood, twenty of his letters to a Welsh friend have recently come to light.² They provide an intriguing view of late Georgian English medicine as it was practised in the metropolis, and as it was perceived by a member of the small, cohesive community of medical students bound for the élite. Locock and most of his fellow students, though apparently not Richard Jones, his faithful correspondent, would become the consultants and medical opinion leaders of early Victorian London.³ Locock himself, after an apprenticeship in medicine at St. George's Hospital, followed many of his compatriots to Edinburgh. In 1821, on receiving the Edinburgh M.D., he returned to London in pursuit of the enlarged advantage it afforded those possessed of wit and manners. Endowed with a measure of both, he rose rapidly in the medical hierarchy in the years between 1825 and 1835.

By the late 1830s, Charles Locock was physician-accoucheur to the queen. A

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¹ The rudimentary facts of Locock's life and career may be gleaned from standard sources including the *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 34, pp. 55–56, and William Munk's *Roll of the Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians of England*, London, Royal College of Physicians, 1878; see also obituaries in *Lancet*, 1875, ii: 184–185; *Br. med. J.*, 1875, ii: 151; and *Obstet. Trans.*, 1876, 18: 57. There have been no biographies, full-scale or otherwise, and only occasional mentions of him in anecdotal notes; see, e.g., Saul Jarcho, 'An early mention of the stethoscope', *Bull. N.Y. Acad. Med.*, 1965, 41: 374–377.

² I am grateful to the Archives Department, Marylebone Branch, Westminster City Libraries, for their assistance with this MS collection. All letters cited below are in the collection D/Misc 89/1–20.

³ See W. F. Bynum, 'Health, disease and medical care', in Roy Porter and G. S. Rousseau (editors), *The ferment of knowledge*, Cambridge University Press, 1980, pp. 211–254.

moderate reformer, he was no innovator, and certainly no scholar of medical science.⁴ Nor was he, as many of his contemporaries among London's medical élite were to be, productive as a memoirist.⁵ This paucity of literary output may account in part for his neglect by twentieth-century historians of medicine. In his own time, however, he became recognized not for his writing but for his practice as the leading obstetrical physician in mid-nineteenth-century Britain.⁶

Considerable attention has been paid of late to the social and economic characteristics and circumstances of the growing professional middle class, of which Locock was a part, in early nineteenth-century England.⁷ To this class has been ascribed a central role in reweaving the fabric of a rapidly changing society.⁸ Professional men, especially in the cities, and most of all in London, found themselves in circumstances that were altering rapidly; nowhere was this truer than in the medical career. As they expanded outward into new institutions and downward into the lower orders, medical men in particular saw their technical expertise and the demand for their services become mutually reinforcing and grow vigorously. Clamouring for patients, sniffing out opportunity, aspiring in many cases to the consultancy, the early nineteenth-century medical man represented an apotheosis of the new professional mentality.⁹

Professional status and norms of expertise were largely determined in English medicine by the three examining bodies that traditionally certified physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries.¹⁰ The pecking order of the three groups, a hierarchical and hardy survival of an earlier period, continued to insure that career choice would have social as well as intellectual-cum-technical implications.¹¹ But even once the aspiring candidate arrived in the metropolis bearing his Edinburgh M.D., or the credentials signifying his two years' duty as a naval surgeon, success still depended upon more than the choice of a licentiate. Sitting this or that examination, appending oneself to this or that certifying body, had important consequences surely enough. Even more

⁴ His few writings included a scientific piece on 'Puerperal fever' in Alexander Tweedie (editor), *A system of practical medicine* (London, 1840), in which Locock cited experimental work on the subject conducted on the Continent by Magendie, Cruveilhier, and Gaspard, and concluded by attributing the disease to "miasmata from foul sources". It is unlikely that his published thesis, *Dissertatio medica inauguralis de cordis palpitazione* (Edinburgh, 1821), achieved a widespread readership or influence; see Jarcho, op. cit., note 1 above.

⁵ Of the many contemporaries who did provide such memoirs, usually keyhole views of the early nineteenth-century medical setting and almost always *parti pris* in one direction or another, some of the more notable figures included B. C. Brodie, J. F. Clarke, Henry Holland, C. J. B. Williams, and A. B. Granville.

⁶ The *Br. med. J.* obituary (op. cit., note 1 above) noted that Locock "did not make himself in any way prominent in medical politics [nor] contribute much to medical literature," yet rose to prominence nonetheless on the strength of "personal qualities which . . . converted his patients into partisans."

⁷ See, e.g., Harold Perkin, *The origins of modern English society, 1780–1880*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969, pp. 252–270.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 325–339.

⁹ M. Jeanne Peterson, *The medical profession in mid-Victorian London*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1978, pp. 136–193.

¹⁰ Cf. S. W. F. Holloway, 'The apothecaries' act, 1815: a reinterpretation', *Med. Hist.*, 1966, **10**: 107–129, 221–236, and R. C. Maulitz, *Morbid appearances: pathological anatomy in France and England in the early nineteenth century* (forthcoming), ch. 5.

¹¹ Peterson, op. cit., note 9 above, pp. 194–243.

consequential, though, was the quest for and bestowal of patronage. The aspirant to a status higher than that of surgeon-apothecary (the prototypic general practitioner) knew full well that advancement depended upon a favoured position within London's medical plutocracy. The search for favour in the medical metropolis pointed aspiring young surgeons and physicians like Locock to the upper reaches of a nepotistic hospital leadership, an élite that included both medical and lay figures.¹²

The position of the aspiring man-midwife was drawn into this hierarchical process of seeking advantage as soon as medical men began to reveal their designs on the traditional preserve of the female midwife.¹³ The accoucheur thus became part of a system of skill acquisition and professional advancement that, while still evolving, had become routinized: it hinged on the traditional examining bodies and on the benevolence of the powerful hospital élites that dominated them. Charles Locock entered into this system and skilfully manipulated it. He did so in the first instance mainly through the powerful offices of Benjamin Collins Brodie (1783–1862), surgeon to St. George's Hospital and attending surgeon to the royal family.

Brodie was the very model of an influential physician in Georgian England.¹⁴ Student to Everard Home and hence heir to the Hunterian tradition, Brodie came naturally to his role as tireless and prolific author, practitioner, and staunch defender of British scientific and medical institutions. His signal claim to fame, though, was perhaps the role he shared with Astley Cooper and a small handful of others in the professional mandarinat: dispenser of patronage, examiner of neophytes, and maker of careers. Not an accoucheur himself, Brodie clearly set his sights early on Locock as a promising young practitioner – one who could skilfully devise means for medicalizing the field of midwifery.

In other respects, however, the accoucheur was an anomalous figure whose career was surrounded by, but far from prefigured by, the system. This state of affairs resulted from the surgical and medical examining bodies' inadequacy in accommodating to their obstetrical licentiates' new-found expertise. It was also a function of both Colleges' *resistance* toward the notion of incorporating such marginal and abuse-prone practitioners into their regulatory purview. The physicians were steadfast in their opposition to having accoucheurs in their midst, at least as Fellows of the College. The surgeons were almost as recalcitrant toward man-midwives, though they flirted fitfully with the idea of extending the College of Surgeons' domain to include regulation of the accoucheurs' practice.¹⁵ In the mid-1820s, an Obstetrical Society, in which Locock was to become a leading light, was convened by the protean physician, journalist, and science popularizer Augustus Granville.¹⁶ The Society applied pressure for regulation of the practice of midwifery. Only after 1850 did its efforts culminate in the basic acceptance of the obstetrician, as evidenced in steps (taken largely in sur-

¹² J. F. Clarke, *Autobiographical recollections of the medical profession*, London, Churchill, 1874, pp. 34–35.

¹³ Jean Donnison, *Midwives and medical men: a history of inter-professional rivalries and women's rights*, London, Heinemann, 1977, pp. 42–61; cf. also Peterson, *op. cit.*, note 9 above, pp. 99–100.

¹⁴ On Brodie see his *Autobiography*, London, Longmans, 1865; Sir Henry Acland, *Biographical sketch of Sir Benjamin Brodie*, London, Longmans, 1864; *DNB*, vol. 2, pp. 1286–1288.

¹⁵ Donnison, *op. cit.*, note 13 above, pp. 46–47.

¹⁶ A. B. Granville, *Autobiography*, London, Henry S. King, 1874, vol. 2, p. 213.

gical circles) toward regulation of his practice. The “consulting midwife” had thus finally given way to the surgeon-accoucheur after mid-century.¹⁷

In the second, third, and fourth decades of the century, however, man-midwives faced a regulatory vacuum.¹⁸ The resulting fluidity of movement allowed charlatany to persist, much to the surgeon’s chagrin. But the fluidity of the situation equally made it possible for individuals like Locock to aspire to a considerably higher station than that which fixed and rigid regulations might have imposed. Hence we find Locock remonstrating with his companion about the dangers of aiming too low in one’s career. The physicians, despite their continued strictures on man-midwives, were to Locock nonetheless the only appropriate body with whom the élite obstetrician should enter into alliance.

Thus, Charles Locock thrust himself into a career of his own devising, based on just such a notion of linking medicine and obstetrics. An early proponent of the stethoscope, he went on to publish a consideration of the medical aspects of puerperal fever.¹⁹ It is unclear to what extent others were able to wedge into similar niches. That Locock, and those travelling with him among and around London’s medical élite, shared a common outlook, seems much clearer. Locock’s early letters provide us with many glimpses of this outlook, and an easy, casual snapshot of the medical student’s life in the late 1810s. The vignette effect of the snapshot is made all the more pronounced by our ignorance of his correspondent, whose letters are lacking. Richard Jones, “dear Dicky”, was simply a Welshman who returned to Denbighshire along a path, away from the metropolis, not taken by Locock.

Editorial Approach

Of the twenty letters, I have selected nine for publication *in extenso*. The balance are summarized in the intercalated text that I have supplied as a means of providing continuity and reconstructing to the extent possible the early part of Locock’s career. All letters containing material that may be of interest to social or intellectual historians of nineteenth-century English medicine are presented in full. Many individual figures mentioned in the letters remain unidentifiable in any of the standard biographical sources, including regional (e.g. Welsh) biographical dictionaries. The original spelling has been preserved throughout the letters.

In the accompanying footnotes I have provided data, so far as is possible, on all figures, major and minor, who by his own admission in the letters shared the stage with Locock. To this end, the following sources, with abbreviations used in the notes, were in all cases consulted: the *Directory of National Biography (DNB)*; William Munk, *Roll of the Royal College of Physicians of London* (Munk); August Hirsch, *Biographisches Lexikon der hervorragenden Aerzte*, Vienna and Leipzig, Urban & Schwarzenberg, 1884–88 (Hirsch); Victor Plarr, *Lives of the Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons of England*, Bristol, John Wright, 1930 (Plarr); the *Medical*

¹⁷ Donnison, *op. cit.*, note 13 above, pp. 51–52.

¹⁸ Augustus Granville dubbed this situation the “disgraceful anomaly in the English law;” see *op. cit.*, note 16 above, vol. 2, pp. 212–213.

¹⁹ See Locock, *op. cit.*, note 4 above.

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Directory (Med. Dir.); and the 1828 *Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Anatomy (SCR)*. I have denoted other sources where they were consulted for particular biographical data.

THE LETTERS

24 Sackville Street – Picadilly
July 12, 1818. Sunday night
“Now is the very witching time of night
“When churchyards yawn etc.”

Dearly Beloved. –

“Idleness is the root of all evil.” So say the wise man, – and I shall be the last to contradict such a sentence, since it has been proved in the case of my breaking my promise of writing to you within a week after your never-to-be-too much-regretted departure. However my want of honesty towards you is nothing in comparison to my evil deeds in other places, for you must know that I have not written home since my return, and I have two or three letters from the old gentleman (not the Devil, but my father) wishing to know whether I am ill. I *intend* writing to him tonight to let him know I have been vastly busy etc etc and in truth, what with dressing at St. George’s, attending midwifery cases, writing cases for Brodie, and escorting two sisters to see sights, I really have sufficient excuses to satisfy him and my conscience, and I hope the same satisfaction will be extended to yourself, since I know “your heart is made of penetrable stuff.” Apropos – how goes on love? I have been very busy lately in that line[.] Goodwin and I found out a pretty french servant girl in Golden Square, but since Goodwin has resigned his pretensis I hope to succeed in taking possession of the Town, and I believe as far as I can see, that no breach has yet been made in the walls. There has been very little going on at St. George’s since your absence. I am hard at work there every day, as dresser. – I hope you have been enjoying your visit to Wrexham this very fine weather. Pray remember if you take another town, to keep notes of each days transactions as formerly. You have not I dare say forgotten our *dear old* long *friend* Bowles. If you have not, you will not be much surprised to hear of any new folly, but I confess I was, when I heard that he was *married*. The facts are these. “He saw a girl at the theatre, with whom he fell (as he thought) desperately in love. She was (as the ladies say) a lass of light fame – alias a “*Juice*” for the Saloon, – she was no fool, tho’ he was. She pretended to him, that she was a *widow* (a *maid* was out of the question). That she had, or was to have soon a large fortune, I suppose in “*terra incognita*”, and as Bowles thought that was somewhere in *Yorkshire*, he was satisfied. However not to be outdone, he told her, that he was an only son, and his father was very old, and he was to have 6000£ a year at his demise. So he took her (nothing lost) down to Epsom races; they returned to Town in a post chaise, took a hackney coach, drove to her lodgings in Tottenham Court Road, and were married the next morning. He then sent the certificate to his father, who only traced him out, by finding out the postillion who drove the chaise. However he seems tired of his fair partner, for he has been getting up at 8 o clock lately to Brooke’s lectures every morning.²⁰ I hear the father intends to set the marriage aside, as Bowles is not of age yet. If he should not, still I have no doubt they could easily maintain themselves in *gentility* – he by swindling – which *you* know he is well *up to*, and she by her old trade of fornicating *which half the Town knows* she is well *down to*. I have so good an opinion of Bowles’ *charity* and *peaceable* disposition that I do not think he would either be deeply offended with her, or would challenge her inamorato, even if he was to find them in bed together. He would

²⁰ Joshua Brookes (1761–1833) was a William Hunter student who, after attending for a time in Antoine Portal’s clinic at the Paris Hôtel-Dieu, began lecturing privately and quite successfully in the Anatomy Theatre at Blenheim Street. See *DNB*, vol. 2, pp. 1343–1344, and Brookes’s testimony before the 1828 Select Committee on Anatomy.

perhaps, merely say, as some other did before him. "My dear Sir I beg your pardon for interrupting you in *honouring* my wife, but why did not you bolt the door." – by the bye – the lover would not be "*honouring*" (*on or in*) but "*on and in*". Excuse such a miserable pun. I intend making a copy of verses on the wedding, as a kind of epithalamium, but I reserve those 'till our meeting. Pray how goes on poetry? – my attempts at the heavenly art have been very [illegible] and not worth preserving. I have [illegible] [comp]osed two or three b-w-y songs which have met [with] applause, but it would be sullyng this paper to mention their titles, so I shall keep them 'till some other such jovial party calls for them, as we had on a certain memorable day, when the best fellow in the world came to years of discretion. I was *fool* enough (that's nothing new you will say) the other day to buy and give an extravagant price for a bullfinch under the idea that he could sing numbers of tunes, – I purchased him a fine cage and waited and waited for his songs, thinking at first it was only bashfulness that prevented him, but alas! I have had him three weeks, and his superfluous modesty has not yet disappeared. Mrs. Brodie has a little boy for her second accouchement, and is going on very well. Brodie has again gone to bed to her. What then? Why – God help their efforts! To fill up my letter, I will tell you, that the other day, as Brodie and I were together in the carriage, he very ungentilly let a f--t. I smiled, but presently burst out into a laugh. He asked me why, in a joking way. I told him I was just thinking that he should act the king in Hamlet and repeat that speech – "oh my offence is *rank* it *smells* to heaven". He laughed heartily, and I am nearly sure told Mrs B. Owen is very well and desires his best remembrance. So does Goodwin who is not very well just now, having a fever and cold, but not anything very severe. Hoping that you will write me a long letter soon, and you can only be excused by illness. I conclude this stupid epistle with best wishes for your happiness, and believe me my dear friend, yours

very sincerely

Charles Locock.²¹

Under Brodie's influence Locock was to direct his aim away from becoming a consultant surgeon, and toward the practice of midwifery. Immediately ahead of him in 1819, however, lay formative travels to Paris and Edinburgh. In a letter written in late August, Locock proposed that Jones meet him and his family on the Continent during a forthcoming journey.²² A year later, he wrote to Jones of having received the latter's most recent missive while still in Paris. Evident also was Locock's keen anticipation of the 1820–21 Edinburgh academic year.

London – August 21st 1820.

My dear Dicky. –

Many people have told me I am deuced impudent, and faith, to say the truth, I begin to think so a little myself, otherwise I should scarcely venture to put pen to paper, and write a letter of moderate length, full six weeks after I had received one from you not only of *quantity* but of *intensity*, as Brande would say, sufficient if I had any *spark* of gratitude in me, to have produced one of the quickest shocks ever heard of, and elicit a letter full of electrifying matter. – I *have* gratitude however my dear friend, although (to keep up the metaphor) the various *nonconducting* substances of inceptant bustle and occupation have interposed to prevent *communication*. Your kind, interesting, and most welcome letter reached me at Paris, on the 19th of last month, and happy indeed did it make me. I always feel upon reading your letters, that every new comer excels the last, this might perhaps be laid on the account of novelty, but that explanation would fail, when I reflect, that every succeed-

²¹ Locock to Jones, D/Misc 89/2.

²² Locock to Jones, D/Misc 89/3.

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ing time I read your letter, I find each reading improves it, and whilst new beauties keep gradually bursting upon my sight, I doubly enjoy all the sweets of that friendship which your affectionate language assures me of. To begin the subject nearest my heart, I will tell you at once, that I expect, indeed I fondly calculate, to be about to pay you a visit in Wales, by the first week in October, leaving Northampton for Chester about the 22 or 30 of the month, and being with you on the next day, staying with you a fortnight and then setting off, *with you*, if possible, to Edinburgh. Now, once for all, my dear Jones, I earnestly beg, that if my visit is in the least inconvenient either in regard to time, or length of stay, you will at once write me word, and I will alter my arrangements, and hope to see you in Edinburgh. I am only sorry I cannot offer you to come and pay me a visit at this time, but unfortunately my father has let his house, and at present we are quartered on our friends. However as my father and sister intend residing with me in Edinburgh next winter, we can have many opportunities of seeing each other and the following year, after I am *dubbed M.D.* I hope to see you in Town, where my father intends living with me for the first year or two in order to set me a going. Therefore I must request you to write me as early as possible an answer directed to me at Northampton, stating whether I *may* come and then how I *can* come, – as what would be my best way. The Chester mail goes through Northampton at 6 in the morning and reaches Chester I suppose in the middle of the same night, and perhaps I could take a chaise from thence to Talwyn Cottage, unless some better way presents itself. I long ardently to see you, I have many very important (to me) subjects to converse upon, and I long to hear all you have thought and done during my absence. I heard from Kerr about the same time your letter reached me. I write to him today – he has changed his lodgings and is now at Laycock's of Union Street. Baker we shall lose next year in Edinburgh, as he intends staying all the time at Northampton, except just going up in April for his first examination.²³ I found things going on here much as usual – Shaw has taken Johnson's House in the Albany and Johnson is gone to Spring Gardens.²⁴ Wilson I hear is to give up lecturing after next Session – his son Jemmy is to give a few lectures in the Spring.²⁵ Windmill Street was very well attended last winter, many more entering than formerly. I was uncommonly active and attentive in the dissecting room, so at the end, all the pupils subscribed $\frac{1}{2}$ a guinea each to buy him a piece of plate. All very proper, if they had given him a silver vase or cup or salver with an inscription – but the choice of the article being referred to a Committee of three, at the head of which was Cutler, they selected the vulgar articles of a teapot and cream jug!!²⁶ Oh tempora! Oh mores! – or oh taste! I should say. I am going to call on Goodwins father today, and shall then hear some tidings about him. Chevalier is house surgeon at St. Georges, and Elmolie at the Lock. – Griffiths (at Gatcombes) was house Surgeon there, but had a desperate row with McGregor, who wanted to domineer over him too much and resigned.²⁷ Kitching is married, and his wife

²³ Baker is possibly William Baker (c. 1790–1821), who was born in Middlesex and graduated M.D. Edinburgh in the same year as Locock, 1821. See Munk, vol. 3, p. 279. I have been unable to identify Kerr.

²⁴ Shaw was probably John Shaw (1792–1827), surgeon and anatomist, some-time superintendent of the Great Windmill Street dissecting room, and apologist (after a sojourn in Paris c. 1821) for Charles Bell's theories of nervous function. Cf. *DNB*, vol. 12, p. 1378.

²⁵ James Arthur Wilson (1795–1882), was the physician son of James W. Wilson, surgeon and anatomist in Great Windmill Street. The younger Wilson was to become a major reformer of the Royal College of Physicians in the 1830s. Cf. *DNB*, vol. 21, p. 574.

²⁶ If the dates (1796–1874) usually given for Edward Cutler, who was educated at Great Windmill Street and St. George's Hospital, are entirely correct, then the "Cutler" mentioned here is probably a different figure. The identification is otherwise tempting: Edward Cutler assisted Benjamin Brodie in private practice and continued at St. George's until 1861, with a large practice centred on venereal diseases.

²⁷ Thomas Chevalier (1767–1824) studied anatomy with Matthew Baillie and became a surgical lecturer as well as surgeon to the Westminster Dispensary (*DNB*, vol. 4, p. 214). Walter Griffith (1798–1875) was some-time surgeon-accoucheur to the Royal Maternity and Great Queen Street Lying-In Charities, but may not be the "Griffiths" to whom Locock refers here. Elmolie could not be identified. McGregor may be the James McGrigor (1771–1858) whose name the *DNB* (vol. 12, pp. 547–549) notes was "at first spelt in the army list MacGregor," and who founded the Museum of Natural History and Pathological Anatomy, and the Library, at Fort Pitt, Chatham.

having some fortu[ne], he is getting on very well. Rose is also married, and so is Neville.²⁸ Brodie is very well and they say making 6000 a year – he says business is much increased. His new pupil, Goode, is too yo[ung] to be of any use to him yet, so Cutler goes to dress patients for him. I saw Owen in the street yesterday, he was looking quite a dandy, but I had not time to stop him.²⁹ Ward is married old George told me, and is doing very well down in Cornwall.³⁰ Davenport has an excellent appointment, and is gone off to the East Indies, – his place was procured him by Mrs. Coutts.³¹ Stone and Clifton are getting on famously. Mrs. Brodie is at Hampstead for the summer – I saw her one Sunday, and telling her I was about to write to you, she desired her best remembrances. I go down to Northampton on Friday next, where the next day will meet me, my new married sister Mrs. Cave, who desired me to say, when I wrote, she was muc[h] obliged to you for your kind congratulations, and hopes if ever you are near Cleve Hill, Bristol, that you will remember she shall alwa[ys] be happy to see you. I was much pleased to find your birthday was on the 15th of April, as I had taken into my head it was later in the month. I remembered dining with you to celebrate it, but tho' that was on the 20th, I remember your saying that your birthday was before. You see my dear Jones, I have been writing you a very plain humdrum letter, but I am in such a continual bustle, so many to see, so much to hear, such numerous and continued engagements quite unavoidable, that I am unable to calm myself enough to compose much of a letter – not that I take much time in general to write you my nonsense, but our thoughts depend too much on external objects – where I had romantic scenery to feast my eyes upon, enthusiastic friendship was easily at least much more easily expressed but where I have nothing but smoke, noise, and everyday occurrences, I feel un moulded for anything of a different nature, and only long more and more ardently for the time to fly to the country to quiet seclusion and the sweets of your society. Hoping to hear from you very very shortly, I subscribe myself your truly affectionate friend, Charles Locock.

Pray do not retaliate upon my negligence, or judge of my friendship too much from appearances, but write quickly.³²

Locock's travels just before the autumn 1820 term were detailed in the next two letters. He reported (23 September 1820) on his further travels in Europe and then provided an account of his progress toward Edinburgh via Greenock and Glasgow.³³ His epistolary voice was then silent until after his successful completion of the Edinburgh M.D. The Edinburgh professor Andrew Duncan had become Brodie's successor as Locock's mentor.³⁴ It is no surprise to find Locock's thesis on cardiac palpitation not only dedicated to Duncan, but replete with the use of the stethoscope. This was an echo of those refrains, heard from across the Channel, of physical diagnosis and pathology, to which chorus Duncan eagerly added his voice.³⁵

Locock's letter reveals him to be the owner of a fledgling midwifery practice near Oxford Street. He cast an envious eye at the thriving practices of Robert Gooch (1784–1830) and Gooch's friend Sir William Knighton (1776–1836), both of whom became the young Locock's early sources of referrals. Gooch was physician to the

²⁸ Rose and Kitching are possibly the general practitioners George K. Kitching and Joseph F. Rose, listed in *Med. Dir.* 1846. Both had practised as surgeons, Rose at the Middlesex. Neville remains unidentified.

²⁹ Both Owen and Goode remain unidentified.

³⁰ Possibly William Ward (1800–1873), M.R.C.S. 1823, who studied at Guy's and St. Thomas's (Plarr, vol. 2, p. 483).

³¹ Neither of these figures has been conclusively identified.

³² Locock to Jones, D/Misc 89/4.

³³ Locock to Jones, D/Misc 89/5.

³⁴ Locock to Jones, D/Misc 89/7.

³⁵ See Jarcho, op. cit., note 1 above.

Westminster Lying-In Hospital, while Knighton had lately been appointed to a royal post. Locock noted that he was preparing his essay on puerperal fever.³⁶ He entreated his Welsh friend to find and buy a surgeon-apothecary's practice "in or near London," the sort that Locock hears about "now and then," and admonished him: "Do not lose your valuable time in complete idleness – practice among the poor as I do."³⁷

Two months later Charles Locock wrote of the further expansion of his practice, owing much to the referrals and generosity of Gooch. He again besought his schoolmate to move back to the enlarging medical metropolis, suggesting a practice in St. Albans: "You might shew yourself active by attending the poor gratis, and perhaps establishing a dispensary there."³⁸

By mid-1823, Locock was making his mark. He recounts to Jones his rise in the professional hierarchy of metropolitan hospital medicine.

A Soliloquy

Said I to myself, in bed, last night, "What will that funny little Chap Dicky Jones say, if I am much longer writing to him – he will suppose I am sick, or dead, or at least very negligent – Well, the best way to convince him I am not dead, is to write to him – that I am not sick – by showing him the vigor of my intellectual faculties in the brilliancy of my periods and the flashes of my rhetoric – that I am not negligent – by beginning the said letter *instantly*, as we say in the Classics, and telling him a few tolerably bouncing lies about my manifold occupations, numerous patients – and other important avocations." – So to begin –

2 Berners Street
June 18, 1823. –

My dear Jones. –

How have you been this long time, how are you now, how are you going on and everything about you? – Pray remember in your next letter to answer fully and particularly each and everyone (as the Lawyers have it) of these said questions. As for myself, I do not know whether you chanced to see an advertisement in the papers about ten days ago, which announced me as a Candidate to succeed Dr. Gooch as Physician Accoucheur to the Westminster Lying in Hospital, which he has resigned in my favour – The *same* hospital where this time last year I was a house pupil – The election takes place July 10th, and as I have the support of all the Medical Officers, of the Committee, and of the late physician, and as besides I have *no opponent*, I think I may reckon myself decently sure of success – so I take no trouble about it – I have sent round some printed circulars to each of the governors, to let them be aware there is such a chap in the world as myself. I have advertised once in the Newspapers, to let the world know that there is a candidate, else some might otherwise be tempted to put in their noses, and finding how coolly I took to, might be inclined to give me some trouble – Perhaps you may have seen an advertisement by a Dr. Lee for the same purpose, but he has already withdrawn, and only did it to let people know he intended to practice midwifery.³⁹ Dr. Granville sent me a very handsome letter to say that he had

³⁶ Locock to Jones, 30 September 1822, D/Misc 89/6. On Robert Gooch (1784–1830) see *DNB*, vol. 22, pp. 108–109; and Munk, vol. 2, p. 100. On Knighton, see *DNB*, vol. 11, pp. 270–272; Munk, vol. 3, p. 39.

³⁷ Locock, *op. cit.*, note 4 above.

³⁸ Locock to Jones, 25 November 1822, D/Misc 89/16.

³⁹ Lee was probably the obstetrical physician Robert Lee (1793–1877) whose career presaged Locock's own, but who, unlike Locock, had actually studied in winter 1821–22 in the Paris School, under Breschet. Cf. *DNB*, vol. 11, pp. 813–814. Lee published extensively in the *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal* as well as Sir John Forbes's *Cyclopedia of practical medicine* (London, 1832–1835). A protégé of A. B.

intended to have started, but finding that I had come forward, he not only would not oppose me, but would support me to the extent of his power against any other Candidate.⁴⁰ – The average profit to each of the Physicians, from the pupils, is about 50 guineas a year – but where it is full all the year round, as last year, it brings in 70. – I have been busy lately rather more with Dr. Gooch's patients, than my own, consequently have had to do more with Ladyships and Right Honorables – than with cobblers wives and bakers daughters. – These serve as famous introductions to families, and Gooch has often sent me, where there has been little or no occasion for it, merely as a medium for getting me known. – Very often, of course, I get nothing but thanks, as it is just rather in the light of going for Dr. Gooch's satisfaction than theirs. – But however now and then I get a few lumpers, – Though I believe I have refused full as many fees (in number) as I have taken, though not in magnitude. – I am gradually going on with compiling a course of Lectures on Midwifery, as it may happen that I might have an opportunity of joining some one in Lecturing, and then there would be an immense deal of time saved as well as labour, and the chance of doing things badly, by doing them in a hurry. I would not start by myself, nor would I join any but old established lecturers – should however any thing offer worth having it is much pleasanter to be prepared – and even should nothing offer, there is no harm done, but a good deal of good, by making me read on the subjects, and digest what I read. – Our old friend Baker was in Town about three weeks ago – he says his wife is not in the family way yet that he knows of – but perhaps that is only a hum, – he staid such a very short time, that I only saw him for a couple of hours.⁴¹ – When are we to see your rosy face in this part of the United Kingdom – pray let me know when you have an idea of coming, for I should be very very sorry to be out of the way at the time, and I have some idea of going down to Maidstone for a day or two in August, and would fix my time accordingly. Considering I have never stirred out of Town since last July, and then only for 4 days, I think I may be allowed the indulgence of a little excursion. As the duties of the Westminster are taken by the two Physicians alternate months, I shall not be so completely tied down. – You will be sorry to hear my sister continues with all the bad symptoms more confirmed, and indeed I think now there is no chance of her living many months – she has not been much weaker lately, but the purulent expectoration is increased considerably, and the hectic fever is more distressing. – My father, I am happy to say is very much better, – he is just now in the Country, but I expect him back in a few days. – By some passages in your last letter, I have some shrewd suspicion that you are inclined to turn Benedict and have found out the fair damsel for the purpose. I have equally a strong inclination, but I have not yet found the lady – I confess that about 2 months ago I thought I had done, but farther acquaintance did not give me such a favorable opinion of the girl; I fancied her much too inclined to make advances to me, than I to her, and that soon disgusted me, though she was pretty, accomplished, young, and tolerably well off in cash – and a capital connection. – But as she appeared rather too forward and loving, I turned to the right about, and have taken care never to go in her way since. – I always look with a cursedly jealous eye upon that very *coming* disposition, in young ladies – and besides here there was so much contrivance always to sit by me, walk with me, etc. etc. as if accidentally, that I am very happy I cut the matter short, – though at first I felt inclined to be devilishly in love, which was

Granville (see note 40 below), Lee was in 1834 named Regius Professor of Midwifery at Glasgow, and in 1835–36 lectured on the subject at St. George's.

⁴⁰ Augustus B. Granville (1783–1872) was clearly one of Locock's mentors, and had a similar career as a promoter of the idea of the physician-accoucheur. But he was, unlike Locock, a prolific writer and popularizer of science, through his activities in the Royal Society and his editorships of the *Medical Intelligencer* and the *Medical and Physical Journal*. Italian by birth, he studied midwifery under Capuron and Deveux in Paris before settling in London, where he practised at the Westminster General Dispensary for sixteen years and at the Lying-In Benevolent Institution. See *DNB*, vol. 8, p. 413, and Munk, vol. 3, pp. 174–177.

⁴¹ Possibly William Baker, who graduated M.D. Edinburgh in the same year (1821) as Locock, and later practised in London, then Derby. See note 23 above.

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increased upon seeing she was not averse to me apparently – but as soon as she began to be so very decided in her favours. D.I.O. – (or Damn I'm Off). – I hope you may be more fortunate in your case, and I hope it may not be long before I congratulate you. – You might make a trip to London your wedding excursion. – I could give you I hope a bed, big enough for two – but as my father occupies it when he is in Town, I must have proper warning. Now, my dear Dicky – one word more – you must promise to write quickly and lengthily. – Adieu – yours ever most affectionately

Charles Locock⁴²

In 1823, Locock became a Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians. A rather chatty and vapid letter dated 1 September of that year was followed by another from Oxford Street, written in the following August. In it Locock upbraided his friend for succumbing to the lure of the metropolis.

69 Berners Street
August 9. 1824 –

My dear Dicky Jones. –

Not having been at home when the post arrived on Saturday, I did not receive your letter till it was too late to answer it on that day, or I should have done so, as I want to lose not a moment in giving you a severe lecture and a thorough rowing. – I much confess I deserve one from you, for not writing long before this, but that is a mere peccadillo to the crime you *meditate*, for thank heaven! it is not yet too late. I allude to your wildgoose scheme of coming to London for two or three months to dissect and visit hospitals!!! Are you mad? friend Dicky – are you down right daft? – Come up in God's name, and no one shall be more welcome than you, for a *week*, but I will be one of the first to kick you back again, if you attempt to stay beyond – all out of pure friendship. – Now listen to a few reasons – for blustering *and all that sort of thing* I know will have no effect with you, except I convince your understanding. – Oh, how I wish that you had a lovely clog to your heels in the shape of a wife who would tie you down and *force* you to persevere and be steady. – In the first place what do you want at all in the way of dissecting or attending the hospitals? – Your knowledge in both subjects is much better than all your surrounding brethren – and even if it were not, a little book reading would soon make it so – for I conclude you are not likely to be called upon to operate at any time – and if dissecting were such a paramount object to you – you might (in the winter season) have a quarter of a subject at a time sent to you by old George from London and dissect at your leisure. – In regard to the hospitals, I am satisfied you will get very nearly as much, if not quite as much information from your private and Dispensary practice, aided by a little reading, talking, and writing on the subject, as you possibly could by attending Hospitals as a pupil. – But the grand objection, is your leaving Denbigh for so long a period – your private patients will be offended, the Governors of the Dispensary will either be offended, or will discover that the Dispensary can take care of itself without a Physician – the medical men in the neighbourhood will see they cannot depend upon your being at hand to assist them in any difficulties, and they will either send for another Physician, or encourage and give their support to some one, who will inevitably go and settle in Denbigh, as soon as they find the only Physician in the place is running off for three months at a time. – You are to recollect the number who are on the anxious look out for any opening – many men of much older standing in the profession than you are, – only reflect – there were 109 graduates on the last graduation day at Auld Reekie. – You have started fairly and prosperously at Denbigh – your prospects there are most flattering – and much better than nine-tenths of those who were our associates in Windmill Street and Edinburgh –

⁴² Locock to Jones, D/Misc 89/8.

do not then blast those prospects, do not destroy the hopes of all your sincere friends to gratify a mere whim, a mere wish for change, or to put the best construction to it, a mere want of sufficient confidence in yourself. – I speak, my dear friend, strongly perhaps, but I do so, because I am your very sincere friend – one whose first wish is to see you happy and prosperous in this world. – I feel assured that under similar circumstances you would feel it your duty to write to me, as I have written to you. – Think this then over very seriously, and let me hear from you in the course of a day or two on the subject. – If it will be any satisfaction to you to know that Brodie is of my opinion, I will tell you, that I dined with him yesterday and stated the whole circumstances to him – He said that it would be madness and ruin to think of such a thing. – Poor Braine has been very ill with inflammation of the liver – he is now recovering – he told me to tell you, if you like to come up for a week, he should be happy to see you and could give you a bed – but not a bit longer should you stay.⁴³ I can give you a bed too – if you will come within 6 weeks, as I am sleeping every night at Dr. Gooch's. – Brodie is not a member of the [Linnaean] Society, but I know three or four that are – and I have no doubt I can get your certificate signed. – I saw Gaulter's brother six weeks ago, who said that Henry G. had passed all the examinations and was to graduate on the first of August – so I suppose he has done so – after the graduation his intention was to take a tour in the Highlands and North of England – and then settle in this overgrown place. – Filkin is going to settle also here – near Russel Square – Burne is in the heart of the City – ditto Cobb – Baker is with his wife in Conduit Street – so we have quite a constellation of our fellow students. – Poor Kerr has been very ill, I heard yesterday – I am going to write to him, but am waiting to hear where he is – as I was told he was going off to Clifton to see his mother and for change of air. – Our friend Mawdesly is getting on well and is just going to start his carriage – this I know as a great secret – so do not mention it, for fear it might reach another's ears, even at your distance from Town.⁴⁴ What is all off again with your young lady? – Braine told me he heard all about it from somebody in your neighbourhood, who told him, that it was not thought a very good match for you – and though there was no objection to the young lady – that the Papa was a very queer fellow and not liked. – I have got so far and have said nothing of myself – I have in fact nothing to say – I am going on well in practice – and in health, but I must not yet venture to think of love – without some hard cash. – That was an interesting case of ruptured uterus – I should like to have all the particulars – are you sure the child's head was *felt* presenting – or was it not a case of extrauterine conception. – If a real rupture of uterus, it was very wretched practice not to have turned and brought away the child at the time – I had a case of it three weeks ago – I was called to it by an apothecary near.⁴⁵

Your dearly beloved

CLocock⁴⁶

⁴³ James W. Braine (1796–1870) was a well-known Mayfair practitioner who received the M.R.C.S. in 1816; cf. Plarr, vol. 1, p. 136, and *Med. Dir.*, 1845, p. 18.

⁴⁴ Filkin was undoubtedly Thomas Filkin, who graduated with Locock, M.D. Edinburgh in 1821, and died in 1828 at the age of 29 (MR, vol. 3, p. 283). Gaulter has not been identified. Cobb was probably Frederic Cobb, who took the Edinburgh M.D. in 1822 and became demonstrator of anatomy at the London Hospital (cf. *Med. Dir.*, 1845, p. 32; Plarr, vol. 3, p. 265). Burne was probably also an Edinburgh classmate, John Burne, who took the L.R.C.P. in 1823 (MR, vol. 3, 278–279). Mawdesly was most likely John Mawdesly (1795–1869), who took the M.R.C.S. in 1817 (Plarr, vol. 2, 41).

⁴⁵ At the end of the letter Locock gives a tantalizing glimpse of a case of an obstetrical catastrophe involving probable foetal wastage. Cases of this sort, often involving the use of forceps, appeared commonly in obstetrical texts of the period; see, e.g., Robert Lee (see note 39 above), *Researches on the pathology and treatment of some of the most important diseases of women*, London, 1833; and *idem*, *Clinical midwifery*, London, 1842, esp. pp. 101–137. In the latter text (p. 101) Lee noted that “laceration and inflammation of the uterus are, therefore, the consequences to be dreaded after turning. Four of these [such] ruptures occurred in the practice of other accoucheurs, and three in patients under my own care, and where no great difficulty was experienced, or force employed in turning.”

⁴⁶ Locock to Jones, D/Misc 89/10.

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Two months later, Locock wrote Jones that he had just succeeded in getting his faithful Welsh correspondent elected to the Linnaean Society, for a five-guinea admission fee and annual dues of two guineas.⁴⁷ Five months more elapsed; Locock related news of his increased teaching as well as of his own several ailments.⁴⁸ Five more months passed. He wrote Jones of his lectureship at St. Thomas's, and more of his personal life.

10 Berners Street
August 24. 1825

My dear Friend Dicky.

Do not suppose that I have forgotten you – far, very far am I, or shall I ever be from such a piece of heterodoxy – but I have had so much to do, so much to engage my thoughts, as well as time, that I really hope you will freely forgive my long silence, when you hear the particulars which I shall now relate, fully – even at the risk of being considered an egotist. – I have been appointed to lecture on Midwifery at St. Thomas's Hospital, – my lectures begin on the 3d of October, and I am occupied every spare moment in composing, reading, and writing for the grand occasion. – The two (formerly united) Hospitals Guy's and St. Thomas's are now starting to rival each other, and as they wanted a lecturer on Midwifery at St. Thomas's, Travers and Green recommended me, and I have been elected, in opposition to some of the old Borough pupils who are candidates.⁴⁹ – On this account I anticipate many difficulties at first, as besides the usual obstacles of a new school, I have, no doubt, obtained a share of jealousy and ill will from those who did not get the appointment. – However I keep up a good heart, and having purchased all the splendid Midwifery preparations from Dr. Hooper's Museum, I shall go well prepared.⁵⁰ – My lectures will be every day, at *eight* in the morning – I might have altered the hour to the evening, but preferred the one they had been used to, and also, though I shall be obliged to bundle out of bed rather early in a cold winter's morning, yet I can be home to breakfast by half after nine, and it will not interfere with the rest of the day. – Pray, when you have an opportunity, recommend me any pupils you can, that intend to go to the Borough School. I will send you a prospectus of my lectures, when it is printed. I have now told you one cause of my delay – now for another – and here my Dear friend Dicky, I know I shall meet with your fullest sympathy, and every little tender feeling of your warm and susceptible heart, will be mustered up to comfort me under my misfortunes. – *I am in love*, my old crony, *desperately in for it*, and *engaged to be married* – but there are obstacles – and I cannot explain them without giving you the whole particulars, – it will relieve me much to make you the depositary of my sentiments, as I know I shall have in you a kind attention and kind advice or support. – I told you some months ago of a young lady I had some idea of, if she turned out to my liking on further acquaintance – she was a Miss Smith, a daughter of a very old friend of my father. – I used to go and talk to Mrs Brodie about her, and particularly last winter and spring, was at Saville Row nearly every day. – A young lady, Miss Amelia Lewis, was staying with Mrs Brodie for three or four months, and I was thrown so much with her that we became like brother and sister – she supposing I was absolutely *engaged* to Miss Smith. – This Mrs Brodie led her to believe, in order to prevent

⁴⁷ Locock to Jones, D/Misc 89/11 (7 October 1824).

⁴⁸ Locock to Jones, D/Misc 89/12 (11 March 1825).

⁴⁹ On Benjamin Travers (1783–1858), an important satellite in Astley Cooper's orbit, see *DNB*, vol. 19, pp. 1085–1086, and Maulitz, op. cit., note 10 above, ch. 6. Joseph Henry Green (1791–1863) was demonstrator of anatomy at St. Thomas's (1813), surgeon to that institution (1820), succeeding his cousin Henry Cline the younger, and professor of anatomy at the Royal College of Surgeons (1824); cf. *DNB*, vol. 8, p. 492. Lauded by Richard Owen, his approach was natural-historical and based on comparative anatomy.

⁵⁰ Locock here almost assuredly refers to Robert Hooper (1773–1835), an apothecary who drew together one of the largest pathological specimen collections then available (*DNB*, vol. 9, pp. 1200–1201).

her thinking of my attentions being any thing more than friendly – Amelia is pretty, about my own age, very clever, particularly well informed, sings, plays on the harp and piano, draws, and is in short what the world calls accomplished – but being so very much with her and seeing her so free from constraints as she thought me already engaged, I was soon able to discover much better qualities – I found her deeply religious, good tempered, open hearted, and good principled – and that her sentiments and conduct were such as I could admire. But still I thought not of her as a wife – I still thought of Miss Smith. – It appears however, that she poor girl, thought rather too much of me – she confessed it to Mrs Brodie, who taxed her with it, and the consequence was Amelia was sent into the country and fell ill – I had told Mrs B. that I would then decide, whether she would do. – Mrs. Brodie was very anxious not to influence me, and told me nothing of poor Amelia's condition. – We all soon discovered that Miss Smith would not do – she was pretty, good tempered, and good intentioned, but after having seen so much of Amelia, I found Miss Smith very deficient in mind, accomplishments, manners, and sense. – On the 2d day that Miss S. was there, Amelia came to spend a few days – and the contract was marked. – I told Mrs. Brodie my feelings, and after a good deal of conversation, I told her that I really thought if Amelia would have me, I should like to have her – but should not like a refusal. Mrs. B asked me solemnly, whether that was my full feeling. On my reply in the affirmative, she burst into tears, and told me what joy it gave her – that it was the first wish of her heart – and she had such a regard for both of us, – that she could never have freely consented to either of us marrying any one else – She then told me what Amelia had confessed to her two months before – when I heard this, I was struck with admiration at Amelia's conduct towards Miss Smith, her rival, – it was so kind so every thing that was noble. – After this you may conclude I did not let myself stop long – but the next day, I dined in Saville Row and after dinner they gave me an opportunity of being alone with her, and we soon understood each other and I was as happy as possible – my father, sisters, Brodie etc being all delighted. Now comes the rest. – Her mother and brother and sister are all equally ready – but her father says no. – His objections are ostensibly his daughter's health and my health – his real objection no doubt is, unwillingness to part with his money – he gave his son twenty thousand pounds on his marriage, and could give his daughter the same. – Brodie and Mrs Brodie have been arguing with him, by the hour, that my prospects are so good, that it is in fact a good match for his daughter, but as yet he is inexorable. – I told him I did not want his money, that as soon as I can afford it, I am ready to marry without. – He took her off to Brighton a week after, and there they will be till November – but we correspond every week and he knows of it – he is the kindest of the kind to her – indulges her every wish, but this, – he sees on her hand constantly a ring which he knows I gave her – and I am in hopes, that when in a month or two, he sees that it is not a mere floating fancy, that we are decided and unshaken, that he will alter his determination. – He says he will not prevent her from going to stay in Savile Row, on her return, and yet he knows that I must meet her there. Mrs Brodie is now gone down to stay with the Lewis's at Brighton, for a few days, and old Lewis is so fond of her, and she is determined to pester and tax him so much on the subject, that I anticipate some change or other for the better, from her influence. – I have thus told you all my present difficulties, and I hope you will write *very quickly* and tell me what you think of them. – Also tell me all about your own proceedings, and how you are in health, spirits, and prosperity. – I find my practice increasing well – I am driving a cabriolet – finding it quite necessary. – Dr. Gooch is going to move from Berners Street, and to live somewhere near Hanover Square – When he has settled, I shall move near him, and have let by own house on that account. – My brother, who has lived with me these two years, is going to be married shortly to a cousin. – An old great uncle died lately, who left her father 3000£ a year, and left my brother, sisters and self 1500£ a piece. – Goodbye, my dear friend, God bless and prosper you. – and believe me

ever yours

CLocock. –

How I wish you could come and chat it all over with me – could not you come and hear my

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first lecture in October? –

Pray do. –⁵¹

At the end of 1825 Locock wrote further of his budding fortunes; at the age of twenty-six he had taken pains to see himself fixed for life.

69 Berners Street
Dec. 4. 1825

My dear Dicky. –

When you and I are two old and reverend signiors I suppose we must drop such familiar apostrophes, as Dicky and Charly, – till that time arrives, however, we are to be, I trust, unchanged and unchanging, and even *then*, it may perhaps be an allowable pleasure to renew the gay scenes of our youthful days, at least in imagination; and I trust the cares and anxieties of the world will never so far deaden our feelings, as to make us unsusceptible of the delight which such retrospections will produce. – Thank you very much for your last kind letter, it contained the over-flowings of a warm and affectionate heart, which with me is the one thing needful in friendly intercourse, – We have known one another now, my dear fellow, for about 7 years, and during a great part of that time, particularly of late, our communications have been those of the soul only, – but an occasional kind letter, written in the full freedom of congeniality of sentiment and consciousness of sincere mutual esteem and regard, will do nearly as much in keeping up our interests in each other, as if we were in the daily habits of associating together. – Long may this last and as we grow in years, wisdom, and happiness, we shall always feel that happiness increased, by its being participated. If we are married and happy as married men and fathers of families, which I do not doubt being the case, although we may devote our more immediate affections to the wives of our bosom and the children of our hopes, yet we shall never be easy without now and then writing to each other to express how happy and peaceful our lives flow – like the philosopher who said, that solitude is delightful, but that it is always necessary to have some one to whom we may say that solitude is delightful.⁵² – I long much to hear how your love affair proceeds – confound these parsons, who always seem destined to be your rivals – they are always poking their noses into holes and corners, and getting slyly into the good graces of the girls. – Cannot you contrive to prove yourself the best man of the two? – no one could suspect your round, rubicund, jolly visage to be much burthened with modesty but, some how or other, that same diffidence of yourself is one of your greatest faults, and often stands decidedly in your way. – There is a vast difference between bashfulness and impudence – a happy medium is what I should recommend to you, and then you will carry the damsel out and out. – In your two last letters, you mentioned that you had sent me a letter by a young man who had been house Surgeon to your dispensary, but you do not mention his name. – Is it Hughes? – if it be him, I have, no doubt had the letter safely – for a gentleman of that name called on me with your introduction about three months ago – he is now house Surgeon to the Marylebone Infirmary – but I do not exactly recollect whether he brought a written or a verbal introduction. – If it be not Hughes, I have seen no other chap from your part of the world. –

Nothing particular has occurred in my own love affair since I wrote last, except that I am more and more deeply impressed with the value of the dear little creature that is the object of it. – Although we can only communicate by letter, yet we write so frequently, so fully, and so unreservedly, that I doubt whether closer intercourse could have more completely developed our knowledge of each other's character. – As no blushes are to be seen on a letter, ladies are not quite so backward in acknowledging their genuine feelings by such a medium, and I feel

⁵¹ Locock to Jones, D/Misc 89/13.

⁵² Here he probably paraphrases the poet William Cowper, who was widely read in the late Georgian period.

quite happy in the consciousness of possessing my dear Amelia's love and esteem, in as high a degree as I could possibly wish. – The worst of it all is, that the more fondly I love her, the more impatient I become for the time when she is to be fully mine. – That time, I really begin to feel confident, need not be delayed beyond next July or August, even should her father not relent. – Unless that should be the case, we are resolved to wait till the time I have mentioned, in order to give him full time to consider of it, and that it may not be said that we were too precipitate, and that it was our own fault that he did not come round. But after having given him a full year, to prove to him that our affection is not a mere romantic fancy, but a solid and well wearing feeling, we shall consider that we have paid quite sufficient respect to his opinion, and as it will be useless to contend with obstinacy and dogged insensibility to his daughter's happiness, we shall proceed our own way, and leave him to chew the cud of resentment or repentance, as he chooses. – My own opinion is, that when he finds the day fixed, and every preparation made for our union (and we intend that he shall be made fully and freely acquainted with it) that he will either come round, or will do so directly afterwards. – If he should not, he may go to the devil his own way, for I will never make the slightest attempt to conciliate him afterwards. – My practice is increasing most wonderfully – I am now making new connections every day, and all amongst the better class of society, where they give good fees and kind words – whereas in the second rate sort of practice, they usually give either one or the other, but never both. – Since August I have cleared at the rate of 650£ a year, and since Gooch returned to Town in the middle of October, the rate is much increased – so that by July, I shall pretty nearly certainly be clearing full 800£ a year, with the prospect of speedy increase – and on this I think, with the most perfect prudence, I may well venture on the expenses of a married life, – so that if the old beast of a father, should still continue a beast, I need not care a farthing. Besides which I have the comfort of my dear kind father's assurance, that should I die before he does, that my wife and children shall always have an asylum with him, and at his death, that share of his property which he had intended for me. – I have decidedly refused any assistance from him during his life – the interest of what he has accumulated by many years of toil and anxiety, is sufficient to keep him and my unmarried sister in comfort, and I would not for the world diminish one of his smallest comforts by taking any money from him now, – though he would have me do so and I firmly believe would make any sacrifice on his own part to contribute to make me happy. – There is however no occasion for it, and even if there were, I would prefer waiting patiently or submitting to any privation, rather than trespass on his kindness. – Baker has returned from Worthing and is busied in looking for a house, but has not yet been successful. I do not know how he has found Worthing to answer, but I should be afraid he did not do much, as he has not said any thing about it. – Kerr's mother has been very dangerously ill, and he has been down to Bristol to see her, but has now returned to Southampton, having left her better. – Now, dear Dicky, I wish you most affectionately a good night, and believe me, ever your most sincere friend.

CLocock

Pray write to me soon. – if you are unhappy it will comfort you – if happy, it will comfort me.³³

In the autumn of 1826, Locock wrote to his distant Welsh confidant, lingering over the details of his personal life.

69 Berners Street
October 27, 1826. –

Optime Dicky. –

Have you forgotten my hand writing, old Lad? because, if not, you may cast your peepers over the lines following, and muster up a double supply of the milk of human kindness, which

³³ Locock to Jones, D/Misc 89/14.

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flows so richly through your veins, and accord me your forgiveness for my long silence. – I shall not, this time sham being dead, which was nearly the death of you on a former occasion, for I am now doubly alive, having a wife to stir me up and keep me in order, who besides has been pestering me every day for the last six weeks, to write to the Welsh Doctor, and not neglect one of my oldest, dearest friends, merely because I have the honor to be a married man, and he is still nothing but a bachelor. – Let me see! – I have been now a Benedict, something about three months, and a merry sort of time I have had altogether, and now from the experience which I have had, I can safely recommend you to follow my example. – I know that it has been asserted that married men become like the foxes in the fable, who having lost their tails in a trap, tried to persuade all the other foxes to have their tails curtailed, and follow so excellent a fashion. – But I hope you do not think that I would try to entrap such a staunch old fellow as you are, but would not hesitate honestly to confess the real state of the case. – Of course you would not believe me, if I were to send you a history of our manifold quarrels and fighting, so I shall leave all that to your imagination. – In fact, we are tolerably – pshaw! we are *very* happy together, and I do not find that matrimony by bringing us more intimately acquainted with each other has been the means of any thing except increasing our affection for each other. – God grant that we may be able to say the same ten years hence. – At present the trial is hardly sufficient to speak with certainty, but I think everything seems to bid fair to be permanent. – Before I married I used to write very frequently and very lengthily to my damsel in Brighton, – but now that is no longer required, I have been so much out of the habit of writing anything but prescriptions, that it is quite an effort to sit down and write a regular letter, even to such an old and valued friend as yourself. – When I come home from my morning drives, or from my lecture, instead of taking up the pen and paper, it delights me rather to take a lounge on my sofa, and have my little wife come and talk to me – sometimes, you know, from talking we get on to kissing, which is a very fascinating sort of occupation and is very apt to drive all other things out of one's head. – The evenings now draw in so rapidly, that we much enjoy drawing our chairs snugly round the fire, in the good old style of Darby and Joan, and having a chat over our domestic affairs, or upon former times – or of old friends – and then I entertain the dear Lassie with some anecdote of former days – of how I went to drink *cwrw* along with a Welshman, and ride about the heaths and the mountains on ponies, as wild as two March hares – of how the said Welshman used to tumble off the said pony from the said potent *cwrw* getting into his noddle etc. etc.³⁴ Oh! those were glorious times, were they not? Dicky? – Do you not remember the old Harper at Llangollen, and how we made him play “Of a noble race was Shenkin”? and then our merry evenings at the Cottage at Tachwyn – and the dancing, singing, and your little study with the minerals. – As soon as I can spare a week or two in the summertime of the year, and my funds will allow of it, I must pay a visit to Denbigh, and see how you get on – it will gladden my heart to see you again. – But this must partly depend upon the way in which family affairs go on, for if I have many squalling brats about me, they may form serious impediments to locomotion, besides being strong pulls upon one's purse. – I think it must be a very long time since you have left Denbigh – I am sure it is a very long time since you showed your sweet phiz in this great metropolis, therefore I think there could be no possible harm in your leaving your patients for a few days to themselves, and giving then a *chance* of recovery, and setting off to pay me a visit. – You do not know how much it would add to my happiness, and I can assure you a cordial welcome from my other half, who already has a certain affection for you, as she knows how much I hold you to my heart. – She has always been much interested about you, and hopes you will ever believe that her husband's friends are to consider themselves as hers. – But now Dicky boy! you must positively attend to what I say – you *must* come and see me – I have no spare bed, but I can give you every other accommodation, and there is an excellent hotel just opposite, where you can have a bed room, and in every respect be my guest. – And now, Dicky, a word about your love affair – how does it go on –? is there any prospect of a happy termination, and if so, will it be a speedy one? You might

³⁴ The libation in question, “*cwrw*”, was a rather potent malt beverage that enjoyed some popularity.

make your wedding tour to this grand City, and then we should be able mutually to introduce our wives to one another. – Pray take courage; and speak out boldly, and do not give the lady time to be distant or to refuse you. – This is the best advice that a man of my experience can give you. – I had not heard any thing of that unpleasant affair at the assizes, before I received your letter, but Baker and one or two others mentioned it to me afterwards. – However distressing it must have been to your private feelings, there can but be one opinion as to the course which you were called upon to adopt, and you deserve the thanks of the community at large for your conduct. – I can very well enter into your feelings on the subject, for it must indeed be harrowing to the soul to find one whom you had regarded and esteemed as a friend, so polluted and so disgustingly depraved. – I can only credit such propensities on the supposition that there is a degree of insanity connected with them. – The man himself must be amply punished, although he may have obtained an acquittal at the bar of justice, by the torments of his own conscience, and the scorn and indignation of the world. – I must now conclude my letter. – My wife desires her friendly regards – she is rather squeemish and qualmish, which makes one suspect she is in the family way again. – I say “*again*” for she had the ill luck to miscarry a short time ago, owing to her ignorance and inexperience of the necessity of keeping quiet. – If God pleases to bless me with children, I shall indeed be grateful – but if not, his holy will be done. – God bless you, my friend – your affectionate

CL

My lectures succeed rather better this year than last, and I only lecture 3 times a week and at a later hour – but I think I must give them up next year or the year after, for they interfere with my private practice and are a great fatigue, with not much profit. –⁵⁵

Five years passed. Whether Jones and Locock remained in touch is unclear. At least “many months” had passed incommunicado until now, in 1831, the two were jogged out of their silence by two events. Again personal and professional fortunes were mingled inextricably. Jones was finally to marry. And the royal family had, on the advice of another of the cosmopolitan “new men”, James Clark, named Charles Locock to the post of personal physician-accoucheur to the Queen.⁵⁶

9 Hanover Square
March 4. 1831

My dear old friend. –

On the very night of the morning of which I received your most interesting letter, I have sat myself down to answer it, – I should say that my readiness in replying ought to shame you for your long and inexplicable silence, did I not feel that your present situation is too painful and anxious a one to be harassed by my complainings. – But I have felt often exceedingly anxious to hear from you, and much have I wondered at the many months which have been allowed to elapse since I last heard from you, either directly or indirectly. – I thought to have received congratulations on my appointment as Physician Extraordinary to her Majesty – but they came not. – I dispatched a barrel of oysters on the direction to which I announced my removal to a new abode in Hanover Square – but you were as silent as the oysters – and so at last I gave you up as incorrigible, or thought you might have hung or drowned yourself, or gone out of your mind. – Your letter of this morning has relieved all these painful surmises, and I should indeed, my dear Friend, be profuse in my warmest congratulations, were I not checked by the possibility of the cup of happiness being dashed from your lips untasted, even before this letter reaches you. – This frightful possibility damps all my sympathy, for were I to dilate on the joyous prospects before you, how do I know but my very expressions when

⁵⁵ Locock to Jones, D/Misc 89/15.

⁵⁶ On Clark and some of the other important popularizers of French medicine in England, see Maulitz, *op. cit.*, note 10 above, chs. 7–8.

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read, may be aggravations to your grief. – But I will hope and trust for the best. – I will be sanguine and will suppose that your apprehensions have been too easily excited – that you have been over susceptible, from the magnitude of the prize which you see so nearly within your grasp; that with your usual modesty you think it is a good too great for you to expect, – and indeed, between you and me, you have been so long shilly-shallying, that I had quite given up your marrying at all, and should have thought that at last you would have taken up with your housekeeper, and that not 'till you were either bald or grey headed. – My wife is a very sincere friend of yours, and desires me to say how much she wishes you every happiness in your new state, which she is sure you will become in every respect, for she has no doubt of your making an excellent husband. – For myself, my old friend Dicky, we have known each other now for upward of thirteen years, and during that time I have had various opportunities of finding out your good and your bad qualities, and I must say, that you have a heart which would cover a multitude of sins, even if they existed, and if you are not happy as a married man, I shall be much, very much surprised. – It is quite clear to me, by the terms of your letter, that you are deeply and devotedly attracted to this lady, but still let me caution you not to expect too much *regular* happiness the first few months of your marriage life. – Do not be at all disappointed if upon a more intimate union you find little inequalities of disposition, little faults of character where your love-stricken fancy had supposed all to be perfection and angelic. – Learn to believe *now*, that no one is perfect, and no woman an angel before she has put on her wings – and then you will not get distressed or disappointed when the discovery will gradually be forced on you, and fancy, as many have done, that you have been deceived and ill used. – Wait patiently, and time, which at first reveals the little points of character which jar with your own, and which trouble the smooth surface of the waters, time will also rectify them, by rendering it easy to accommodate yourselves to each other, to bear and forbear, and above all to keep always in mind, that your own character may be the one in fault, and which requires correction. – In one respect you will have a decided advantage, that your intended wife, having already passed through the difficulties of a married life (and that not in company with one much beloved) will not be so likely to fall into the common fault of young damsels who think that the ardent and devoted lover is very much *wronging them* when he becomes the sober, staid, *quietly* happy husband, – this puts the young miss in the pouts, and a fracas ensues. – My belief is, that the really happy period of married life is that, when time has amalgamated the characters of both parties, when the first burst of romance is over, and when peace, mutual affection, and mutual confidence in each other form the principal and the best features of the daily routine of domestic enjoyment. – But to have done with my homily on the duties of the wedded state, let me come to that part of your letter which relates to the offer you have had of becoming an assistant to a Physician accoucheur in London. – If I knew to what party it referred, I could tell you at once whether it would answer your purpose, or rather the expectations held out to you, independent of your liking to leave Wales or not. – I very much doubt the respectability of the offer, because you say that you are required to be a member of the London College of Surgeons – which is odd – why not the Coll. of Physicians?⁵⁷ – *None* of the really respectable ones, which *alone* would be worth your attention, would have to apply for any such assistant, hundreds would be but too glad to offer themselves, and I very much suspect it is some one who has only a low midwifery connection, not worth the immense trouble it produces – but if you could find out names, I could tell you at once, and would promise secrecy. – I must now leave off. – Write to me very shortly to relieve the anxiety I at present feel about the Lady you so warmly describe – I hope you will make London as part of your wedding excursion. When I shall be delighted to see you both, for be assured, my dear Dicky, no one more earnestly and sincerely prays for your welfare and constant happiness, than your affectionate

CLocock.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Not until mid-century did the two colleges begin to reverse their habit of turning a blind eye toward men-midwives. Thus, in the early 1830s the sort of politics *in vacuo* revealed here were probably common; cf. Donnison, *op. cit.*, note 13 above.

⁵⁸ Locock to Jones, D/Misc 89/17.

Twenty-two months later Charles wrote the Welshman of journeys planned and recalled. His fond remembrance of Wales focused on hill-climbing and a regular supply of mutton. Next year he would return to Paris:

9 Hanover Square
January 19. 1833

My dear friend, Doctor Bach. –

I hope you safely received a long letter from me about two months ago. – I imagine you will prick up the ears of your recollection at this, and begin to wonder whether you have been dreaming; but as I fully *intended* to write to you at that time, I have no doubt but that you will remember receiving the letter, though I must confess my memory is not accurate enough to remember writing it. – I have not forgotten you, however, my old boy, and I sent the barrel of oysters to prove it, – nor have I forgotten the delicious flavour of the Welsh mutton, and if I had done so, you have taken capital care that my palate should be refreshed, by your bountiful supply of that celebrated article, which arrived safely yesterday, and for which we, (i.e. wife and I) thank you most heartily. – Our Welsh journey is as fresh in our minds as if we had only just returned, and scarcely a day passes in which we do not allude to it. – It is one of the bright spots in life, upon which we love to look back, and which we shall perhaps never enjoy with such thorough delight again; as although we may visit other beautiful scenery, and even again wander over the same paths and feast upon the same beautiful objects, yet our own late excursion came upon us with the charms of novelty, and the rarity of having a holiday, and such a holiday, after so many years of labour, confinements, and drugery. – How often we have agreed since, that we enjoyed it doubly, from having such a companion, so friendly, so willing to please and to be pleased, and so full of fun and frolic. – After you left us, my dear Dicky, we went on, as we proposed, to Dolgelly, Barmouth, Aberystwith, Hafad, and so through Builth to Hereford.⁵⁹ – then on to Malvern, Worcester, Cheltenham, and Oxford – and then, instead of getting back to London on the Wednesday night, as originally planned, we turned off to Northampton, and paid a flying visit to half a dozen of my relations and to Wm Kerr, and did not reach London till Thursday night. – We spent the Saturday very pleasantly at Aberystwith, and heard an excellent sermon there from Mr. Valpy, who was accidentally at the place. – By the bye, we gave an order to Mr Evans (I think that was the name) the Landlord of the Bellevue Hotel at Aberystwith, to send up to us every month, some Welsh mutton, beginning the first weeks in November, which he faithfully promised to do, indeed made the first proposal himself – and yet he has never sent a piece at all. – I did think of writing to him, but as your Vale of Clewydd mutton seems just as good, we are inclined to request you to send us a supply instead, and we will settle with you for all the damage at the end of the season. – The quantity we should like at a time will be once in three weeks, a whole sheep – except the very inferior parts, – by which I mean the head and scrag part of neck. Will you also, in your next letter, let us know what it is a pound, *in the different joints* and in the whole carcase) as my wife's mother will have a part, and we shall not otherwise know what to charge her. – It may be sent up in flag baskets or in sacking, by the coach, and we will re-imburse you for all the expence, thanking you most heartily for the trouble. This however need not be very great, for I shall only ask you to give the order to your butcher, and let him take all the pains and manage all the arrangements. – After we left Dolgelly, we paid a flying visit to Mr. Richards, who was very much surprised at seeing me, particularly as Mrs. R. had been very unwell, and had been absolutely talking of writing to consult me the very night before. – They wanted us very much to stop and spend the rest of the day, and join a party of them who were going to ascend Cader Idris that very morning, – but we were pressed for time and went on, and the day afterwards turned out a great deal too thick for the mountain. – The Devils Bridge scenery looked small after the Snowdonian, and

⁵⁹ Hafad was, and remains, a contraction of the name of the town, Haverfordwest.

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except Malvern, we did not find much to feast upon after leaving Wales. – Our children have all been very well and indeed look better than usual this winter, if winter it can be called, without any snow and scarcely more than a day or two of frost. – Wife and I are also both well, and every one remarked that we looked stouter and more blooming after our excursion, but work, smoke, and fogs have rather dimmed my roses since. – I am much concerned to find that you still suffer so much from the singing in your ears, and your other uncomfortable sensations – I hope you will be prudent, both in *clothing* and in your general manner of living, and do not let my brother Druid, the Vicar bach seduce you into taking liberties with the Hirlas horn. – Your little Godson gets on very well, his hair is as red, his face as merry, his eyes as blue, and his body as fat as his Godpapa, and if he turns out as good a fellow and as warmhearted a friend, I shall be well pleased. – We have already begun talking about our next years excursion, having once begun to move, it will be difficult to stop, and at present our talk is of the Rhine and Paris. – The Welsh air which we bought at Llangollen, “Merch Megen,” is exceedingly admired, and I am humming it from morning to night – but we can not get that, or any other Welsh *harp* music in London, as Goulding and D’Almaine; the publishers say they are only allowed to be sold in Wales. – Could you therefore, by your friend Roberts’s assistance, send me, along with the mutton occasionally, any pretty Welsh music you or he can recommend – and particularly another copy of “Merch Megen” and also the “Allurements of Love” your old favorite. We have no Welsh music except Ah hyd a nos – and “of a noble race was Shenkin.” – I will settle for these along with the mutton. – Have you ever remembered to procure the Indian rubber waterproof cloak? – My dear wife desires her very best remembrance and kindest wishes, and believe me my dear Jones, yours very affectionately.

CLocock

Have you a pair of the India rubber galoshes? – If not, my wife declares she will send you one and I the other, for each foot – to put you in mind of our walk and wetting at Trotiniog. –⁶⁰

In the autumn of 1834 Locock became the interlocutor in a dispute over the quality and content of the midwifery lectures given in St. Bartholomew’s Hospital Medical School. The controversial John Ashburner, physician-accoucheur, mesmerist, and regular appointee to the midwifery lectureship, had enraged the students with his maverick views on anatomy. One auditor had splenetically declared him “a man who has insulted our understandings by asserting that the ‘vagina is not lined by a mucous membrane; that it is as much and no more a mucous membrane than that which lines the mouth; i.e. it is not a mucous membrane.’ Who has insulted our feelings of common decency by coarse and impertinent references to Scripture too gross to be repeated? Who has insulted our common sense by the daring assertion that certain parts of the body have absolutely no use at all . . . etc., etc.”⁶¹

On 1 November 1834, Ashburner was asked to resign and Locock to carry on. With charity, complicity, or both, Locock recommended Ashburner’s reinstatement. He was apparently successful, for on 3 January Ashburner returned to lecture amid “great confusion and disturbance.”⁶² Locock’s role as mediator and broker is clear

⁶⁰ Locock to Jones, D/Misc 89/18.

⁶¹ Typescript abstract of Minute Book of the Medical Faculty, St. Bartholomew’s Hospital Medical School; entries for 17 September 1834 and 25 October 1834. The speaker is not identified. The original manuscript Minute Book was destroyed in World War II. I thank Miss Janet Foster, Archivist at St. Bartholomew’s Hospital, for access to these materials.

⁶² *Ibid.* Neither the standard biographical sources nor *The Times* for October–December 1834, give further particulars on this bizarre episode. In their recent history of St. Bartholomew’s Hospital, however,

and indicative of his rapidly increasing prestige. His hospital positions and now his royal post secure, he became a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in 1836. Over the ensuing two and one-half decades, he would become a member and often president of many of the important medical and scientific clubs and societies in the metropolis.⁶³

In this correspondence one meets Locock twice more, in late 1838 and in summer 1839. October 1838 finds him travelling in France again, musing on the possibility of retirement in Wales near his comrade from medical school days.⁶⁴ In July 1839, he writes again from London, projecting new travels, this time to the Lake District and Lancaster by rail, hoping again to rendezvous with his old friend.⁶⁵

Around 1855, Sir Charles Locock retired from what was perhaps the most successful obstetrical practice in mid-Victorian London. Although he was active neither in scientific publication nor in institution building, he enjoyed a contemporary fame that would fade rapidly after his death. Yet in many ways his career was more typical of the age than those whose names remain attached indelibly to institutions and eponyms. He forged a few useful links with the new, post-Napoleonic medical science for which many of his fellows, like James Clark, were looking to the European Continent. Not for a moment, however, did he forsake the old networks of position and patronage that had served him, as these letters show, so well.

Victor Medvei and John Thornton record that Ashburner, after briefly resuming his lectures in early 1835, was again so unpopular that in the winter he was once more hounded from the lectern – this time, apparently, permanently. *The Royal Hospital of Saint Bartholomew, 1123–1973*, London, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, 1974, pp. 58–60.

⁶³ Among them were the Medico-Chirurgical Society (1857) and the Obstetrical Society (1863), which later was dissolved. Locock also appears on a number of occasions in the 1830s and thereafter as an active participant in the Guy's Hospital Physical Society, another "local" society that played an important role in the dissemination of continental medical science, especially pathological anatomy, in London. (Minute Books, Guy's Hospital Physical Society, Wills Library, Guy's Hospital Medical School.)

⁶⁴ Locock to Jones, D/Misc 89/19 (16 and 22 October 1838).

⁶⁵ Locock to Jones, D/Misc 89/20 (29 July 1839).