

# AN ADDRESS

Delivered in the Medical School of Trinity College at the  
Unveiling of the Medallion of

DANIEL JOHN CUNNINGHAM

BY

JAMES LITTLE,

*Regius Professor of Physic and one of the Honorary Physicians to  
the King in Ireland*

DUBLIN:

JOHN FALCONER, 53 UPPER SACKVILLE STREET  
1912



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## AN ADDRESS

Delivered in the Medical School of Trinity College at the Unveiling  
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WE are assembled here to unveil a Memorial Medallion of DANIEL JOHN CUNNINGHAM, who for twenty years was Professor of Anatomy in this School. When it was known that such a Memorial was in contemplation, old pupils, not only from every part of the British Isles, but from South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, India, Burma, and from distant Siam and China, intimated their anxiety to take part in the commemoration and sent subscriptions to the Memorial. To all such as far as in our power we have sent invitations to be present here to-day, and have forwarded a photograph of the Medallion, and we regret that owing to change of station, we have found it impossible to ascertain the present address of many of the subscribers in the Indian Medical Service and in the Army and Navy.

To those who were Cunningham's colleagues or his pupils no medallion is necessary to keep alive in their minds the recollection of his great abilities and his unequalled services to the School of Physic, but we hope that even when those of us who now live have passed away, the example which he left may continue to exert its influence on the Teachers and on the Students of the School.

I wish I could worthily set before you the traits in Cunningham's character which produced the admiration and the affection with which he was regarded in this place.



In most men who are occupied as teachers, or who undertake public duties, there mingles with their regard for the success of their work the consideration of the manner in which the discharge of their duties will influence their own reputation or tend to their financial advantage. I never knew a man in whom this thought had so slight an influence as it had in him whom to-day we honour. He thought of the effect of his teaching in moulding the character, in stimulating the enthusiasm, and in leading to the future success of those whom he taught. He regarded very lightly what might be its advantage to himself. In the anatomical rooms of this school he worked as if his object were to create anatomists who would outshine himself. And in this connection we must not forget the striking peculiarity of his anatomical teaching. He never failed to show the bearing of the structure of the human body on the practice of medicine and surgery, nor did he forget, as opportunity offered, to draw attention to its relation to science generally.

Cunningham had a singularly well-balanced mind. We are all prone to run the risk of over-estimating the importance of the knowledge we ourselves possess, or of the field we have ourselves cultivated, and to underestimate other kinds of knowledge and other fields of labour. Cunningham was singularly free from this; he always recognised the importance and the value of the work which other men were doing, and of the studies to which they devoted themselves.

In the present day there is also a disposition to regard the duties of life as drudgery, and to seek pleasure and enjoyment in other pursuits. It is rare to meet a man who finds his keenest pleasure in his work, but this was the case with Cunningham. The very reverse of an ascetic, doing all he could to promote in his pupils not only the successful prosecution of their studies, but the thorough enjoyment of life, he took himself, and he tried to lead them to find a genuine pleasure in their studies. It is this more than anything else we seek to keep alive in the



School—an enthusiastic delight in the prosecution of study and research.

In Cunningham's work there appeared to me always an absence of effort; he seemed to be always at his ease, he never seemed in a hurry, and short cuts to knowledge were to him an abomination. He had laid for himself a sure foundation, and he was determined as far as he could to see that all his pupils did the same. Unlike many teachers who do their best to gain credit by working up brilliant men, he directed his care and attention specially to the men who had difficulty in getting hold of the rudiments of knowledge, the men who required encouragement and who needed to be shown the pathway along which they should travel. In this Cunningham resembled his great predecessor, Mr. Goodsir, and after one of his explanations an inspiration seemed to come over the student, he caught on to the idea and was able to follow it out.

More even than his transcendent abilities, his wonderful power of work, his mastery of the most complicated details, his power of fitting these details into a coherent whole, and the care which he bestowed on all his work, we who knew him love to think of the nobility of his character, his gentleness, his unselfishness, his geniality, and his quiet humour. His power of gaining the confidence and the esteem of other men was extraordinary. I knew the late Rev. Dr. Haughton, Senior Fellow of Trinity College, well; he was not one lightly to become attached to anyone, and yet after Cunningham had been but a year in Dublin, Haughton used all his influence with his colleagues on the Board of Trinity College to secure his appointment to fill the vacancy in the Professorship of Anatomy in the School of Physic, and hardly had he been installed in the Chair, and brought into contact with the other members of the Board, when George Salmon, the Provost, himself one of the greatest men of the day, conceived for him the warmest friendship, and came to put the utmost confidence in his judgment



and to value most highly his advice. This confidence was strikingly manifested when Dr. Salmon and the other members of the Board asked him to act as one of the Secretaries of the Tercentenary Celebration, and it was felt that much of the brilliant success of that wonderful Festival was due to his foresight and thoughtfulness.

Cunningham thoroughly identified himself, as every man should, with the Institution with which he was connected. He delighted to look back to the history of the University of Dublin, he was proud of its traditions, he knew the dangers to which it was exposed, and with rare sagacity and foresight he foresaw what was needed in the present day to maintain its usefulness. We must never forget that it was at his instance that the Scottish Universities presented to the Government of the day a powerful and convincing protest against the changes with which the University was at that time threatened, and which Cunningham felt would be fatal to its usefulness and efficiency.

Almost immediately after his settlement in Dublin he joined the Royal Dublin Society, which concerns itself with the rearing of horses and cattle, and generally with agriculture and other sources of material prosperity. Here he was also in his element, and as Mr. Moss, the Secretary of the Society, has well said—"He took a really active part in the Society's work. He was always full of ideas for improvement and development, and entered into every progressive project with an earnestness and zest most stimulating and encouraging to those associated with him."

With the Royal Irish Academy he connected himself early; he took an active part in its proceedings, and published in its Transactions several valuable papers.

Of both of these Societies he was a Vice-President when he left Dublin.

Though the main business of his life was with the structure of man and animals who had ceased to live, he had a genuine love for all living things. The present condition



of the Zoological Society's Gardens, which are a model of what such gardens should be, is mainly to be attributed to Cunningham's interest in the health and welfare of the animals. He was for years the Secretary of the Society, and when he left Dublin was its President.

The Royal Veterinary College owes in great part its establishment and the constitution under which it works to his sagacity and practical tact. And, finally, he was an active and useful member of the Commission appointed to investigate the Inland Fisheries of Ireland.

On his great public services outside Ireland I do not dwell. His services as a Member of the Commission on the South African war, and as a Member of the War Office Committee, which reported on the physical standards of candidates for the Service, and with arrangement for the medical care of the Territorial Forces in Scotland, were all of the greatest value.

We desire to remember him here, not only on account of his splendid abilities and the splendid use he made of them for the good of this School, not only on account of the rare combination which he presented of strong, practical good sense, with that intelligent imagination which, as Sir William Turner has well said, made him such "a capable elucidator of difficult morphological problems," not only on account of his papers—though they are all models of what scientific papers should be, and many of them of inestimable value—but we desire to look back on Daniel John Cunningham as one who, allowing his own work to speak for itself, never was heard to utter an unkind or disparaging word of anyone else; who, whether in the Anatomical Rooms at the meetings of the University Biological Association, or in his own hospitable reception, was the friend of the pupils he taught, guiding the dull, encouraging the diffident, reproving the indolent by his own brilliant example, and leaving to all of us the ideal to which we should aspire.

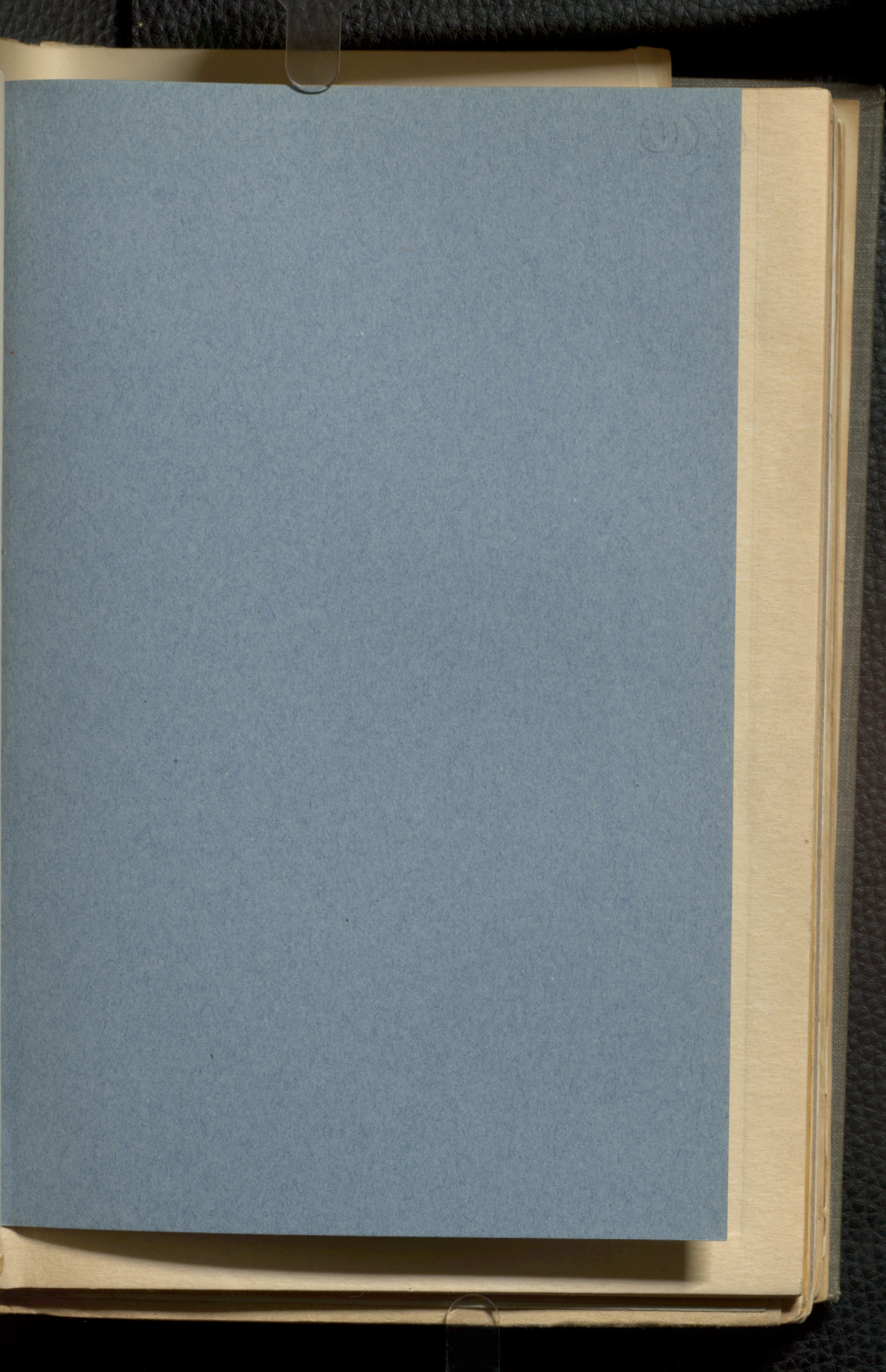
We are deeply indebted to Mr. Oliver Sheppard, the eminent artist, who has caught so successfully the linea-



ments of Cunningham's face, and produced a really speaking Medallion. It is not the first time that Mr. Sheppard has placed his rare abilities at our disposal; it was he who preserved for us the features of Sir John Banks, and in a perfectly wonderful manner those of Edward Halloran Bennett.

To you, Mr. Provost, we commit this beautiful work of art, satisfied that you will reverently care it, and point to it as the likeness of a great and good man.







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