

Charles Lendrick

Born: c.1792
President: 1828-1829
Died: 1841

Charles Richard Alexander Lendrick was born circa 1792 in County Antrim. After being educated privately by a tutor he entered Trinity College at age 17 in July 1809. He obtained his BA in 1816 and MB in 1818. He was admitted to the College of Physicians of Ireland in March 1818 and after becoming a Fellow in January 1822 he became Registrar in the same year. He obtained his MD in 1828 and was elected President of the College in the same year.

An appeal by Lendrick against the election of Richard Grattan to the professorship of the Practice of Medicine in 1828 resulted in the election being declared void. Following this, Lendrick was accused of offering compensation to induce John James Leahy (qv) not to seek the vacant post and transfer his support to Lendrick; it was alleged that Lendrick had proposed to the Vice Provost of Trinity College that he would use his influence to produce pupils for Leahy and that payment of money was proposed to Leahy if he would withdraw. Despite this, Leahy was appointed to the professorship in 1829.

The disputes resulted in Grattan petitioning for a Visitation of the College of Physicians; this was held in the King's Bench Chambers on 13 February 1830. The 'Visitors' were the Lord Chancellor, the Chief Justice and Lord Plunkett. The court decided that the visitorial power could only be exercised by way of an appeal to a decision of the College and Lord Plunkett stated, 'I regret, that proceedings should have been adopted, which certainly are only calculated to depreciate the College in the estimation of the public, there can be no doubt that the welfare of the medical profession can never be promoted by such proceedings. I would strongly advise the parties here to consider well what they are about; they are in the hands of the very best professional advisers and, they ought, and I trust they will be guided by them.'¹

¹ The Law Recorder Containing Reports of Cases and Proceedings in the Courts of Law and Equity... at Dublin and elsewhere, from Michaelmas Term 1929 to Trinity Term 1830. Volume 3, 178-179.



However, Lendrick, following the death of Leahy in 1832, became King's Professor of the Practice of Medicine at Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital. To take up this post he had to resign his Fellowship, and was made an Honorary Fellow of the College in 1833.

Lendrick had a major dispute with James Macartney who had been appointed Professor of Anatomy and Chirurgery in Trinity College in 1813 and who saw himself, with some justification, as pivotal to the success of the School of Physic in Trinity College Dublin. Macartney, who was not easy to deal with, had arranged a course of surgical lectures in Trinity which clashed with the lectures of Charles Lendrick. The board of Trinity College requested that Macartney should deliver his lectures at another time, but he refused. The other professors supported Lendrick and the Board in the dispute because they knew that whenever Macartney lectured virtually all the students attended his lectures rather than any other lectures scheduled at the same time. Macartney would not lecture in the evening as he pointed out that 'the only entrance permitted to the Anatomy House is through a lane where there is a gambling pothouse, in which several of the students have been scandalously demoralized even during the day'. The students supported Macartney and the dispute eventually led to Macartney's resignation in 1837.

Lendrick published the first part of a proposed 500-page textbook, *Elements of the Practice of Medicine* in 1840, price 3 shillings; this was very well received as a 'calm exposition of those principles of medicine which experience has shown to be true, given in a dignified and condensed style.' He published several articles in the *Dublin Journal of Medical and Chemical Sciences* including "Practical Remarks on Delirium Tremens" and "Observations on the Use and Abuse of Mercury in the treatment of venereal disease."

Lendrick seems to have had a strong religious belief. An address to students in the School of Physic at the commencement of the medical session in November 1833 on *Observations on Demoniacal Possession* noted that 'the practice of our profession thus informs us, that it is neither the intention of Providence that suffering shall be altogether extinguished in this life nor yet that it shall exceed a certain amount.' He concludes 'the time has indeed gone by when profanity and vulgarity were considered as essential constituents in the medical character. The lecturer no longer considers a scoff at religion as a passport to the approbation of his class: while the pupil has proved that professional attainments much beyond those of his predecessors are neither incompatible with the polish of civilized society, nor with attention to his higher and more important duties.'²

² Lendrick, Charles, *Observations on Demoniacal Possession* (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1833)



LIVES OF THE PRESIDENTS



He died suddenly at Ashford in County Wicklow in June 1841.

TC



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