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SIR ASTLEY COOPER,

HIS LIFE, CHARACTER, AND WRITINGS.

It is a custom, not less useful than common, whenever a great man has passed from among us, to give some account of his character and labours; to hold up to general admiration and imitation the course by which he has arrived at celebrity and eminence; to encourage the desponding, by setting forth the difficulties he has overcome by energy and perseverance; and to repress the conceited by the conviction that none can be truly great but by the aid of unconquerable industry. This is especially called for when the loss is in one of our own profession; one who has been prompted by similar motives, deceived by similar fallacies, animated by the same ambition, obstructed by the same difficulties, and seduced by the same temptations. To fulfil the true ends of biography, therefore, we should prefer passing over those accounts of Sir Astley Cooper's actions and preferments which may be gathered from the different publications of the day, in order to display the minute details of his daily life, his habits, manners, and behaviour, and thus hand down to posterity an enduring record of virtuous excellence and professional glory. This would be a task pleasing, though mournful, and one we should endeavour to perform to the best of our ability, did we not know that it has fallen into abler and better hands; Mr. Bransby Cooper, the nephew of the deceased baronet, being about to commence a life of his uncle, to be produced with an emended edition of his works. We have therefore merely to give such a sketch of the life and writings of Sir Astley as is expected from public journalists.

Sir Astley Cooper was the fourth son of the Rev. Dr. Samuel Cooper, of Yarmouth, in the county of Norfolk. His mother was the daughter of Mr. James Bransby, of Shottisham, a co-heiress descended from the family of Paston, Earls of Yarmouth, a lady distinguished by high intellectual attainments, and known as the author of a work of fiction called "The Exemplary Mother." Astley Cooper was born at Brooke, in Norfolk, on the 23d of August, 1768, where he remained till the age of fourteen, receiving his rudimental education at the village school, and the higher branches of learning from his father and the Rev. Joseph Harrison, a distinguished classic. His mind was early directed to the study of surgery, and he was, when about fifteen years of age, placed with Mr. Turner, who was at that time a general practitioner at Yarmouth. Here he only remained a few months, when he came to London, and was apprenticed to Mr. William Cooper, his uncle, then one of the surgeons to Guy's Hospital. Shortly afterwards, at his own desire, he was transferred to Mr. Cline, at St. Thomas's Hospital. The early part of his

pupilage was not marked by that unremitting industry which afterwards distinguished him; and it was not until after he had spent a short time in Edinburgh in 1787, and had been appointed demonstrator of anatomy at St. Thomas's Hospital, under Mr. Cline, that his great natural powers were called forth, and matured by the utmost industry in the dissecting-room and the wards of the hospital. In 1791 he began to give a portion of the anatomical course in conjunction with Mr. Cline. At this time no distinct courses of lectures on the principles and practice of surgery were given in London, the maxims of the day being included in the anatomical course; but Mr. Cooper, with the concurrence of the surgeons of Guy's and St. Thomas's, commenced the lectures, since so well known by the publication of repeated editions, and which very soon became the most popular of the day. Towards the close of 1791 he married Miss Cock, of Tottenham, a relative of Mr. Cline. In 1792 he went to Paris, and attended the practice and lectures of Dessault and Chopart. He commenced practice in the same year, residing for six years in Jeffrey's Square, St. Mary's Axe. He then removed to New Broad Street, where he remained until the year 1815, when he removed to the West-end, having been surgeon to Guy's Hospital since 1800. He lived in the house now occupied by Mr. Bransby Cooper, No. 2, New Street, Spring Gardens, and enjoyed an immense practice until 1827, when he retired into the country; but it soon appeared that he was not formed for a life of "inglorious ease," and he shortly afterwards returned to London, and resided until his death in Conduit Street. Here he gave a series of professional *soirées*, which were attended by most of the practitioners in London; but he never regained a tithe of the practice he had formerly had. He was appointed surgeon to George IV., and in 1821 was created a baronet, with remainder, in default of male issue, to Astley Paston, the fourth son of his second brother, the Rev. Dr. Samuel Cooper, rector of Ingoldsthorpe and Barton, Norfolk. He continued his lectures at Guy's Hospital until 1826, in which year he became president of the College of Surgeons; and in 1827 he was appointed serjeant surgeon to George IV. Lady Cooper died in the same year, and in 1828 Sir Astley married the daughter of Mr. Jones, of Derry Ormond, Cardiganshire. He was again elected president of the College of Surgeons in 1837, continuing his practice and pathological labours until his last illness. With the exception of occasional attacks of gout and vertigo, he invariably enjoyed good health, until about six weeks since, when he was walking to church at Strathfieldsaye with his Grace the Duke of Wellington, and was seized with violent and irregular action of the heart, accompanied by considerable difficulty of breathing. He returned to town, and