

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF RICHARD KAY OF BALDINGSTONE, BURY, SURGEON (1737-50)

by

WILLIAM BROCKBANK

AND

MARJORY LILIAN KAY

IN 1895 there was published in Southport a thin octavo lavender-bound book entitled *A Lancashire Doctor's Diary, 1737 to 1750*. Neither the name of the author nor that of the editor was given but the late Dr. Bosdin Leech discovered that the former was Richard Kay of Baldingstone, Bury, and the latter was Robert Henry Kay of Southport.

Dr. Leech also found a manuscript copy of the diary. It was very much longer than the extracts published in the booklet. Being unable to see the original he had the copy typed and bound and presented it with a volume of annotations to the Manchester Central Reference Library. The following extracts were taken from this copy.

It has at last been possible to compare the copy with the original. The former comprises 217 pages of 360 words. The latter consists of 432 foolscap pages closely written but easily legible. Each page contains approximately 450 words.

It is clear therefore that the copy is far from complete. But detailed comparison shows that the copy is accurate so far as it goes. During the process of checking the extracts we found additional information of medical interest and this has been added to our script.

One of the best ways of learning about general practice in times gone by is to read contemporary diaries. Often these are written by clergymen. It is extremely rare to find one written by a general practitioner describing his daily life, the patients he visits and their ailments. One of these—the diary of John Symcotts—has already been published under the editorship of F. N. L. Poynter and W. J. Bishop.¹

The diary of Richard Kay well merits the title of unique.

Dr. Richard Kay was born on 20 March 1715/16 the son of a Bury doctor. As a youth he helped his father in his practice acting as an apprentice, this being the only way to learn the trade without going to the hospitals in London or Edinburgh. On his twenty-first birthday he began to keep a diary and continued with almost daily notes until within a year of his death in 1751.

The early entries come from the years of his apprenticeship and show that he was a deeply religious youth and apparently anxious to go into the Ministry. But in 1743 he finally decided to train as a doctor and for that purpose spent a year in London at Guy's Hospital.

Extracts from the Diary of Richard Kay of Baldingstone, Bury, Surgeon (1737-50)

On his return he settled down as a general practitioner surgeon. His practice extended far afield, his visits being made on horseback. The diary is full of medical details and the difficulties of travel that have never previously been published. He goes coursing, fishing and shooting rooks and hares. His favourite beverage seems to have been tea and he delighted to drink tea with his friends, many of them parsons. There is in addition a lively section describing the events in the area during the 1745 rebellion.²

He never lost his interest in religious matters. He regularly went to hear sermons and lectures. At the close of most of the entries he writes a prayer, often in terms characteristic of puritan feeling, beseeching Divine assistance in his work and sometimes in matters of trifling importance. At the same time he expresses a deep sense of humility and abasement. It is probably fair to say that more than half the diary is concerned with religion.

The last pages are very much concerned with an epidemic of spotted fever—probably typhus—that raged for a long time in the district. His father died from it in 1750 and a year later—on 2 October—the diarist himself succumbed to its ravages at the age of thirty-five. Three other members of the family had been carried off in the intervening period.

The diary, a treasured possession of the Kay family, centres round his home Baldingstone which lies some two miles north of the centre of Bury on the Haslingden Road. Chesham the other family house mentioned is not far away. Both are still in existence. Frequent mention is also made of Richard's cousin, Samuel Kay, who was in practice in Manchester and was the first physician appointed to the Publick Infirmary there when it opened its doors in 1752.

The Diary of Richard Kay of Baldingstone, Bury, Surgeon (1737-50)

1737 November 12 This day father being abroad, I've been employed in his business and have had different sorts of patients, with different kinds of disorders, both with wounds, bruises and broken bones. But tho' in my fathers absence I do supply in his stead, and many times undertake in different and difficult parts of Chirurgery, yet am not determined within myself what vocation of life to follow.

1738 April 10 Father has been abroad this afternoon visiting some patients; was in danger of being hurt by meeting some horses yoked together in a narrow road, but though he was pull'd off from his horse and his own and another horse went over him, yet (blessed be God) he received no hurt. I'd a fall from a horse myself today, but was not hurt.

1741 April 28 In the afternoon I visited a young man in Bradshaw having his hip out of joynt. Lord, teach me the knowledge of Anatomy, which is not only honourable and pleasant, but profitable and highly useful.

August 1 I waited on father to Thomas Topping's in Bircle about a mile from hence to assist him in setting a young man's thigh, one of Thomas's son's broke by an accident to-day.

August 6 Father being abroad this afternoon I visited Thomas Topping's son in Bircle whose thigh was broke last Saturday. I hope will do well.

August 8 In the afternoon I visited John Hargreaves at Ousnam Hall having broke his arm by a fall.

September 1 This day father being abroad I've been attending on business at

William Brockbank and Marjory Lilian Kay

home. Have been called out to visit a young man at Heywood having had his elbow bruised in a Fuller's mill today; found his elbow much bruised but no bones broke.

1743 [On April 29 he decides to go to Guy's Hospital for further training.]

June 27 This day in the morning I waited on Father in the shop. We had a patient with his gluteus medius or the muscle which extends the thigh cut from the patella or knee pan by a fall. We had a scrophulous tumour in the shoulder with a caries of the bone. In the afternoon went to Manchester, heard a lecture concerning Mechanicks. Father order'd me as I went to Manchester to visit a patient, one Martha Peake near Blackfordbridge not much out of my road. Father hath visited her this long time once a week or oftener. I understand since my return her sister who lives with her hath been here upon my account of being there. I'm afraid I've either said or done something amiss. As we have to deal with different persons under different and difficult disorders, so how difficult must it be to know how to behave and speak as to give suitable and proper satisfaction.

June 29 Father and I talk'd Martha Peake's case over this morning. It happen'd I'd discourag'd her in saying something about amputation. Lord, may my advices and opinions always be solid and sound.

August 1 This day in the morning after breakfast and prayer both in the family and in my closet, I set out upon my journey for London where I am entered pupil to Mr. Steade, Apothecary to Guy's Hospital for a year. Call'd at Coz Kay's of Chesham where I met Edward Sparrow a young Apothecary in London whose company I expect upon the journey.

August 6 In the morning Mr. Sparrow waited on me to the hospital gates. The porter conducted me to Mr. Steade's apartment. Mr. Steade received me in a very friendly manner and provided me lodgings.

August 8 Mr. Steade being out of town, I have not been at hospital today.

August 9 This day I've been in the hospital with Mr. Steade and amongst the patients.

August 10 This day I've been attending business in Guy's and St. Thos. Hospital: was present at the amputation of a thigh and saw some other curious operations. Heard Mr. Sharp's anatomical lecture.

August 12 Mr. Sparrow and I took a walk in the afternoon through the galleries at Bedlam.

August 16 There have been two legs cut off and a girl cut for hare-lip.

August 17 Mr. Girle gave an anatomical lecture.

August 25 I saw the execution today at Kennington common a little out of town. There were 5 men hanged and a woman.

August 26 This day I attended the hospitals. I mention but little of the operations and business done there tho' seldom a day but something remarkable happens. Mr. Sharp surgeon to Guy's Hospital hath cut 2 boys for stone today. I believe being here is being at the fountain head for improvement.

September 14 Mr. Girle one of the surgeons to St. Thos. lectured to us from a slink calf, a calf taken out of the cow when killed.

September 24 This day in the morning I went as usual to St. Thos. were present there while Mr. Baker one of the surgeons amputated an old man's leg. Then went to Guy's.

September 29 Mr. Steade, he with whom I am pupil, sent for me towards evening to go with him to the Play-House in Drury Lane.

October 13 I'm here I think every day seeing something very remarkable in one

Extracts from the Diary of Richard Kay of Baldingstone, Bury, Surgeon (1737–50)

or both of these hospitals, but think it best not to mention the particulars only my attendance here, because it will swell my diary too much.

October 19 Heard a play at Covent Garden Playhouse. Seeing little in these hospitals but affliction and death I find it necessary for me now and then to seek out some diversion.

[He often visits the theatre two or three times a month and attends several sermons and religious lectures each week.]

1743/4 January 10 Spent the evening with Mr. Hunt a pupil in the hospital at his lodging with some other of the young men. Lord, let my moderation and sobriety be known unto all men.

February 18 Mr. Girle lectured to us upon a dead body. I heard likewise two different lectures in the afternoon at Surgeon's Hall upon another dead body. Yesterday was execution day of the malefactors at Tyburn.

March 4 Mr. Belchin one of the surgeons to Guy's cut for the stone and some other considerable operations.

1744 May 7 In the afternoon enter'd upon a course of Midwifery with Mr. Smelley the man-midwife in Gerrard Street, near Leicester Fields.

August 13 I box'd one of the pupils in the hospital and in the theatre before Mr. Girle. He gave sufficient and repeated provocation to do so: he was the first person as I remember that I ever struck in my life. He charged me publicly tho' in jest with debauchery etc. of which I was innocent.

August 25 Mr. Sharp surgeon at Guy's signed my certificate today as I am now in a little time to leave this hospital.

August 28 The surgeons signed my certificate today.

August 29 About hospital time went with Mr. Steade to see my new chirurgic instruments before they were sent home.

August 30 This day Mr. Sharp lectured to us upon the parts belonging to the eye. It was the last lecture I shall hear amongst them.

August 31 Sent some medicines and instruments home by the carrier.

September 4 In the morning about 11 o'clock after taking leave of Mr. Steade and some other friends I left London and set out on my journey home [where he arrived on September 12 finishing the journey to Baldingstone with his mother and sisters] 'together on horseback. Let me be welcome home and let all be well'.

1745 July 18 Early this morning (I had only been in bed a few minutes) I was sent for to visit a man in Rossendale who the last evening as he was digging sand out of a sand-hole to mix with mortar for a house he was building for himself, had the misfortune to be took and covered over with a fall of sand where he lay twenty minutes or half an hour before he cou'd be digged out. His head was bended down towards his thighs where we may suppose the sand not being well closed there was a little room left to breathe in. It is the wonder of all who saw him digged out that he had any life remaining. By the accident he hath his back broke, several of the vertebrae being dislocated near the diaphragm, and most of his ribs broke. Went to bed a few hours at Mr. Jas. Lord's in Rossendale: I visited again in the forenoon, in the afternoon returned home.

August 3 My riding today upon account of visiting [patients] has been near 30 miles. Lord bless me and the beast I ride upon.

September 3 It is now betwixt ten and eleven o'clock this evening. Father is returned from visiting a patient who is now we hope near well; he took his bill of charge along with him this afternoon according to order; we computed today that his

William Brockbank and Marjory Lilian Kay

journey he has had one time with another in visiting her wou'd amount to upwards of fifteen or sixteen hundred miles; a very remarkable patient, her disorder was first begun by a slight hurt that she received upon her shin.

1746 May 16 This day I visited in Holcome; tapp'd my patient, and drew from her near two gallons of water, in presence of the Revd. Mr. Mather and others.

September 17 In the morning father and I visited Lawrence Lord at Greens near Bacop who on Monday evening in his return from Rochdale market fell from his horse and fractured his skull in the forehead; we trepanned him; he is in a manner void of sense or pain.

September 24 Visited Lawrence Lord (mentioned this day sev'night), he is alive but continues in a deep sleep.

October 18 Visited in Rossendale and at Bacop: our patient mentioned September 17th recovers very well.

1746/7 February 5 Being sent for in haste in the morning to visit a person who was seized bad this last night and died about 5 o'th'clock this evening, when I had mounted my horse and riding a little from our house he fell with me on account of his being stiff with so much riding. My dear mother was much frightened she happened to be looking at me through a window; but blessed be God there was little harm done. Lord preserve me from falls and broken bones.

March 5 In the afternoon I attended the funeral of James Ashworth near Rossendale (a person mentioned with his back broke July 18 1745 who has lain in a lingering condition void of sense or motion in his lower parts ever since).

March 20 I am this day aged thirty one years. I have spent the day mostly in visiting. In the morning I visited a young woman near Bury under a pleurisy fever; visited Mr. George Hargreaves in Redivals who is recovering of a fever; visited several patients in Ratcliff; visited a young woman near Prestwich Church who is much afflicted with lameness; visited a girle of Mr. Nathaniel Robinsons' of Whitesmithy at Mr. Saml. Robinson's in Manchester on account of a bad burn upon her hand not healing; drank tea with Mrs. Mary Robinson, sat a while with Coz Doctor Kay at Coz John Kay's in the Back Square, returned home in the evening.

1747 April 2 This day I spent mostly in visiting. Lord, direct me in difficult dangerous cases; own and prosper me whether I be employed as surgeon or physician.

April 11 This day after attending a while upon patients at home I visited several sick patients abroad; which is my general method of spending every day.

November 27 This day I spent mostly in visiting; Mr. Saml. Holker of Top-heap being bad of a fever I lodge there tonight.

[The diarist visited at Top-heap several days in succession staying overnight with the patient.]

1748 April 27 My horse had the misfortune to fall with me as we went in the morning, but thank God I received very little hurt.

September 13 I visited in the afternoon a man in Whitworth who this morning was seized with violent pain in the head and continues so very bad that I do not return home but lodge with the Revd. Mr. Burges of Whitworth.

October 17 I visited in the afternoon till late. I had a dark rough ride. My dear mother said she had been uneasy for me to come home. About eleven o'th'clock in the night a messenger came for me to go into Musberry much the same road again, about four miles ride, to visit a person who was very bad of a quinsy, which I accordingly did. I found the young woman very bad, but left her in the morning as soon as it appeared light much easier and asleep. It is heavy rain and snow.

Extracts from the Diary of Richard Kay of Baldingstone, Bury, Surgeon (1737–50)

October 18 In the morning I attended upon some patients, then lay down upon the bed an hour or two; I dined, then attended upon some patients, afterwards visited a young man at Holcome under a fever, but found him dying.

December 22 After attending upon some domestick affairs in the morning father and I went to Mr. Jeffery Driver's at Crowshaw-Booth according to appointment, and with the assistance of father I took off Mrs. Driver's right breast that was cancerous; the cancer weighed near 3 pound weight. The Revd. Mr. Pickup of Bacop and the Revd. Mr. Thos. Ashworth of Clough-fold were present. Mr. Pickup went to prayer before and after the operation; all friends seemed to behave in a Christian manner, and to be in a serious good frame. I lodge at Mr. Driver's for fear of any blood vessel bleeding in company with Mr. Ashworth.

December 23 This day I spent at Crowshaw Booth and lodge there again.

December 24 In the morning Mr. Ashworth and I returned from Crowshaw Booth; we left Mrs. Driver in good order. On my return I made several visits. Late in the evening Coz Edward Kay of Brookbottom came here for us to attend his wife who has been in labour some days. A few hours after we came to Brookbottom I delivered her of two dead boys. The births were praeternatural and much out of order. Lord bless childbearing women, support under the severe pain and extream peril of childbearing.

December 25 I left Coz Kay of Brookbottom under very discouraging symptoms. In the afternoon I visited Mrs. Driver at Crowshaw Booth.

December 27 In the morning I attended upon domestick affairs till 12 o'th'clock then I dined. I left father serving patients at home, and after dinner went to visit Mrs. Driver at Crowshaw Booth. I met a messenger that was sent to meet me in the road who I was to accompany to visit a person under a fever, which detained me full an hour. In the evening and being very dark coming from Mr. Jeffery Driver's in company with Mr. Jas. Lord of New-Church Rossendale as we were riding over a stone bridge the next that we come over in our road from Crowshaw Booth, my horse following Mr. Lord's, I said, It is very dark; he answered, So dark, it is all I can do to see the bridge. He had no sooner said so but my horse in the highest part of the bridge went over the battlement; I light flat upon my hands and knees in the water with my face down the stream, and my horse in the fall turned so much that he lay upon his feet on my right side with his head up the water. I immediately got up upon my feet. Mr. Lord called out, How are you, Doctor? I answered, All is well, God be thanked for it. He said, How is your horse? I felt on the side of me at his tail and buttocks, and said, I believe my poor horse is killed; but feeling towards his head (I was in great darkness and confusion) he began to stir; upon that I found my right foot to be still in the stirrup and the stirrup leather to be twisted. When I had quitted my foot from the stirrup I called upon the horse, and he got up; after bringing him into the road, I mounted, and rode home neither man nor horse having received any visible harm. A wonderful preservation.

December 29 In the afternoon I visited Mrs. Driver at Crowshaw Booth in company with Brother Robert. The height of the bridge to the water where I and my horse fell last night but one we measured it to be near six yards that allowing for the height of my horse and myself I must fall about eight yards. Had we not been preserved by a special hand of Providence we cou'd not have escaped being very much bruised or taken up dead. In the afternoon I attended the funeral of Coz Kay at Brookbottom who died last night but one.

1748/9 February 8 In the afternoon father and I visited Richd. Snape at Cynderhill

William Brockbank and Marjory Lilian Kay

near Ringley and took off his right arm having been bad a long while of what we call a spina ventosa in the elbow [probably a bony tumour]; he would not consent to the operation till he is now in a very weak condition. Father returned home; I lodge at Mr. Jas. Seddon's near Cynderhill.

February 17 The man whose arm we took off mentioned last week died today.

March 20 This day I spent mostly in visiting. I first visited our neighbour old Margaret Kay who is bad of a fever, my mother accompanied me to see her. I visited a child of James Kay's at Cobbas under a fever from breeding teeth; I opened it's gums with my fleam which I expect will give the child ease; I visited Mr. Saml. Cleg at the Height near Rochdale, he is beginning a bad fever (his father died of a fever a few weeks ago; Mr. Joseph Holden apothecary in Rochdale and father and I were concerned for him); I staid some time in Rochdale, saw some patients, delivered some bills; I returned through Bury, called at Brother Baron's to see my niece Sally Baron who has been bad of a worm fever but is better; I visited Mr. Edward Smalley's little daughter of Fearn's she having got a bad scald in her neck: I visited a child of Mr. Peter Baron's at the Height near Cockey, it's face was much swelled with the tooth-ach occasioned by breeding teeth, I opened the gums with my fleam, and left it a gentle dose of working physick. My diary wou'd be too prolix were I thus every day to enumerate the particulars of my proceedings, tho' I meet with a great many occurrences in life which are remarkable, and in the course of my business have frequently to deal with persons where their disorders are attended with favourable and many times with unhappy circumstances. I am not an idle spectator, an unconcerned visitor when I see the afflictions and distresses of my neighbours and fellow-creatures.

1749 June 7 In the afternoon I visited Mrs. Driver at Crowshaw Booth the person whose cancerous breast I took off twenty second day of last December; the wound cured, and she has been hearty some months. Last Saturday she came here to Baldingstone to shew us a knot she had discovered that morning about an inch and half below the old wound upon the forepart of her ribs, which growing so fast upon the Sunday, Monday &c. Mr. Driver came here for us she being determined to undergo a second amputation. Upon dissecting the knot I soon found I had more work to do than was expected as there appeared other kernells closely joyned together which lay down to the abdomen and the compass of six or seven inches square; in some parts I took off the skin, in others dissected them from under the skin, so that from below where her breast formerly was down her ribs I dissected from her at a moderate computation five hundred different distinct schirrous knots or young cancers. She was sick and very poorly after the operation.

June 12 Visited in the afternoon. I bled the Revd. Mr. Blakey in Ashworth, he not being very well, and sat some hours with him.

June 20 This day I spent at Fearnhurst, only in the afternoon I visited young Mrs. Bailey at Coalpits who is very bad with several of the family at Fearnhurst. We called at Mr. Thos. Sanderson's at Ewood in our return; I lodge at Mr. Bailey's.

June 21 In the morning I returned from Fearnhurst. I visited after my return till late. My bay stallion had the misfortune today to fall with me betwixt Bury and Rochdale, but blessed be God, I received no harm.

July 2 This Sabbath day at noon was sent for to Cockey on account of old Arthur Bromerly near Harwood-Lee having got a bad hurt upon his leg this morning in a gate as he was riding to Cockey Chapple.

July 8 In the afternoon I visited Mrs. Driver at Crowshaw Booth and dissected a

Extracts from the Diary of Richard Kay of Baldingstone, Bury, Surgeon (1737–50)

great number of small cancers which have only appeared a few days from near her neck to her armpit. She underwent the operation better than could be thought considering her weak afflicted state. The wound we made June 7 does well.

July 9 This Sabbath day in the morning I was sent for to visit Mr. Benjamin Heap at Lum-Hall on account of his being much hurt this morning by his bull.

August 2 In the morning I attended upon some domestick affairs; I afterwards visited old Arthur Bromerley near Harwood Lee, the person mentioned July 2nd. In crossing the river at Gooseford which is much swelled by the late rains my horse stumbled in the deep stream and tho' he was mostly covered with water yet, blessed be God, I got out safe; I drew my boots at the next house and exchanged my wet stockings for a pair of dry ones that I borrowed.

August 4 This day in the morning I attended upon business at home. In the afternoon I visited Coz Richard Kay of Chesham; I fear he is begun of a bad fever; he has very poor hopes of his recovery. He expresseth himself to me thus: Cousin, tho' some of my friends think my disorder and the complaints I have been making for some time to be only hypochondriac and a good deal imaginary, yet says he, I have such inward weight and weakness upon me that unless I can have some help I must die.

August 6 I called at Chesham at noon and in the evening; Coz Richard Kay sweats much, has a deal of milliary eruption all over him, does not complain of much pain; we cannot tell how it will please God to issue his disorder.

August 7 I called at Chesham; Coz Richard Kay is restless tonight.

August 8 This day in the morning I visited Coz Richard Kay at Chesham, from thence visited old Arthur Bromerley at Harwood Lee; called at Chesham in my return, did not stay long there as I had after my return to visit at Horncliff and at Crowshawbooth. Coz Richard Kay's fever runs very high, he is very bad and restless, sweats little, his eruptions disappear; I fear he will die, but cannot reconcile myself to such a thought.

August 9 This day in the morning friends from Chesham sent us word they hoped Coz Richard Kay had been something better last night; I attended upon patients in the shop till noon, then I set out for Chesham, but before I came there I met a messenger bringing us word that Cousin expired a little past 12 o'clock. I went forward to Chesham, where I staid a while, then went to Blackley not far from Manchester being expected to visit in several places in that neighbourhood this afternoon, I returned in the evening.

August 11 Coz Richard Kay died in the forty-third year of his age.

August 14 In the afternoon father and I visited Mrs. Driver at Crowshawbooth and dissected a great number of cancers from her arm-pit to her shoulder blade.

September 25 In the afternoon I visited, in company with Mr. Braddock, Mrs. Driver at Crowshawbooth, and took from her right side 3 different cancers about the size each of a hen's egg.

September 30 After attending upon some domestick concerns in the morning, I visited Mrs. Driver at Crowshawbooth and took from the wound that was made last Monday 5 or 6 young cancers that were grown to admiration; from thence I visited at Lum in Wolfenden, it was very wet and dark in my return.

October 11 In the afternoon I attended the funeral of old Arthur Bromerley at Hawood Lee, the person first mentioned July 2nd; he had got the large wound upon his leg in good order, and died of a mortification in his other leg; he was in the 81st year of his age.

William Brockbank and Marjory Lilian Kay

November 7 This day I've spent in visiting till late in the evening. It has been very wet and the roads very dirty.

December 6 This day I spent at home being not well from catching cold.

December 7 This day I sweat in bed till noon, but was obliged to visit about 8 miles ride which I did in the afternoon.

December 31 This Sabbath day in the morning I was detained at home upon account of patients, and was obliged in the afternoon to visit Benj. Holme at Mr. Joseph Bailey's in Ratcliff a young man who is dangerously bad of a milliary fever attended with much convulsion.

1749/50 January 1 This day I attended upon domestick affairs in the morning and visited Benj. Holme in the afternoon but found him dying. Mr. Joseph Bailey and a man servant have lately recovered the disorder above mentioned; Mrs. Bailey who was a good wife, an agreeable person and about 30 years of age dyed of the disorder last week; it is a bad fever, and at present common amongst us.

January 24 Visited in the afternoon. A little after my return home in the evening I was sent for to visit Rodger Percivall at Eaves, not far from Holcome; he has been bad of a fever. I only saw him yester-evening, and tonight he died whilst I was in the room with him. He was about 44 years of age.

February 14 This day in the morning, as yester-evening and last week likewise, I visited the Revd. Mr. Owen in Rochdale who is bad of a fever; I afterwards visited several persons under fevers in Whitworth, Mr. Nicholls accompanied me; we returned to Baldingstone towards evening; after drinking tea in company with Mrs. Parr from Bury, Miss Nelly Braddock, Mr. Braddock's niece, and our family. I visited in the evening Cousin Jane Percivall at her father's Cousin Thomas Kay at Summerseat, who has been very bad full a week of the disorder her husband Roger Percival died of 24th of last month.

February 16 Visited in the afternoon and evening. I had a fall from my horse on account of his accidentally getting in a bog in the dark. Lord, deliver me from all evil.

February 17 In the morning I was sent for to Summerseat to visit Coz Jane Percivall who I left late yester-evening very sensible yet under great discouragement that her disorder wou'd prove too heavy for her. When I came a little short of the house I met a person to tell me she was dead; I asked the family how they did &c; her father told me he had been married 35 years and this was the first breach that had been made in his family; the different changes that Cousin has gone through for less than two months past have been very extraordinary. From thence I visited elsewhere where this fever with small eruptions (or, as with a great many persons, small red freckles or the patechia) is bad.

February 20 In the afternoon I attended the funeral of Mrs. Driver at Crowshaw-booth; she was buried in Goodshaw Church.

February 23 Visited in the afternoon. The person who officiated about the corps of Cousin Jane Percival when dead and laying her in the coffin, was soon after struck violently with the same disorder; I saw her yesterday and today, she has eruptions, but I expect she will recover. I saw a young man this evening full of milliary eruption and the violence of the disorder has thrown him into a very high degree of madness.

March 12 Visited in the afternoon and till late in the evening. My bay stallion fell with me this afternoon through the carelessness of both horse and rider. I broke a fine cupping glass which I had in my pocket into a great many pieces.

1750 April 12 Attended upon business at home in the morning and visited in the

Extracts from the Diary of Richard Kay of Baldingstone, Bury, Surgeon (1737-50)

afternoon. The Revd. Mr. Owen from Rochdale lodges here tonight; he has preached the lecture at Bury Chappel today. Mr. Owen has recovered his fever mentioned February 14th; I gave my opinion from the symptoms that attended his disorder it was the fever with eruptions, tho' during the time of his disorder he had only a small appearance of them; as his disorder fixed chiefly upon his legs and thighs his apothecary in Rochdale wou'd have it an irregular fit of the gout; he was blistered upon one leg which gave ease and cured it; the other leg he excised to get a discharge of the fever matter, has had a continued pain, I saw him last week, he was lame of that leg and knee, but now tonight he tells me his pain is abated, since which time he has had an appearance of eruptions and tonight as he expressed it said he wou'd show me a hundred thousand spots upon his leg. Coz Meddy Hamer is recovered his disorder, his brother Rodger and their housekeeper are now surprisngly full of small spots all over their body attended with a high fever, I saw them this afternoon; from Bucksden I went to Heyhouse not far from Holcome to visit Robert Holt who is under the disorder mentioned; he was seized last week, when he sent for us to visit him, being engaged another road I sent him something to take till the morning after; an apothecary in that neighbourhood in the meanwhile went to see him, and told him he thought he cou'd manage his disorder and be of service to him, upon which we received back word, the apothecary bled him largely, he being a day or two after no better, he bled him again as before; perceiving the eruption last Tuesday we were sent for again, but with the loss of so much blood and of so little sweat, the eruption disregarded, and no fermentation of the disorder encouraged, the patient must die.

April 14 In the afternoon I returned from Fearnhurst; I visited at Bucksden and found them better; Robert Holt died last Thursday night.

May 31 This day I've spent mostly at home, and have had great difficulty in reducing a dislocated shoulder.

June 7 Visited in the afternoon and returned home betwixt 12 and 1 o'th'clock; have been detained on account of reducing a shoulder that has been dislocated a month.

June 14 Brother Baron is bad of a pain in his right leg and belly; he was seized yesterday morning, has had of late several bad fits of the like disorder, we call it the gravel; he has had of late also several symptoms of a gouty disorder; the children, Alice, Sarah and Joseph are at present visited with the small-pox; they are an afflicted family.

June 15 Brother Baron is much out of order.

June 16 This day I've spent in visiting; there are several patients more who I shou'd have seen today but Brother Baron's illness he having made no water for some days past has prevented me.

June 17 This Sabbath day in the morning I visited Brother Baron and found him much better. He has made plenty of water.

June 19 Brother Baron does not complain of much pain, yet is low-spirited and seems to be something feverish.

June 23 This day I've spent in visiting towards Bolton; in my return through Bury this afternoon about 4 o'th'clock I called to see Brother Joseph Baron, and found him much as before, sometimes sitting in his easy chair with his gown on, and sometimes walking about in the room. He eat and drank what was thought proper and was pretty chearfull, till near 7 o'th'clock this evening when he spoke the following words, 'That tomorrow wou'd be Midsummer Day, that James Hardman in Rochdale (Brother's relation) died on that day, and so must I': hearing this, I answered with some surprise,

William Brockbank and Marjory Lilian Kay

'I hope not'; says he, 'Brother, I am done, I am inwardly done.' I left him betwixt 8 and 9 this evening when I returned home without having any hope of his recovery seeing that his body is now turned into a mortifying state. Our man-servant brings word he had a sick fit not long after I had left him. He died next day.

July 5 I visited Mr. Joseph Pilkington in Bolton in company with Doctor Kay from Manchester; he is very weak and dangerously bad of the jaundice.

July 7 In the afternoon father and I visited John Mills at Marcroft Yate and took off his left leg above the knee that has been bad of a strumous disorder for several years; he is very much reduced by his disorder, is about 38 years of age.

July 16 This last night about midnight a messenger came with a letter upon the receipt whereof I was immediately to come to Manchester to visit Mr. Willm. Blythe. When I got on horseback it was fair but cloudy, soon after it began to rain, and in riding the space of 3 or 4 miles towards Manchester it was extream rain with extream lightning and thunder. I found Mr. Blythe very dangerously bad of a milliary fever; his brother who is an apothecary and Mr. Hall have attended him; I breakfasted with Cousin Joshua Taylor; went to see Mr. Blythe again. At noon I returned from Manchester.

REFERENCES

1. POYNTER, F. N. L., and BISHOP, W. J., *A Seventeenth-Century Doctor and His Patients. John Symcoits, 1592?–1662*, Streatley, Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 1951, xxxi.
2. *A Lancashire Doctor's Diary, 1737 to 1750*, Southport, J. W. Hudson, 1895.