Professor John Lee, Principal of the University, in referring to the departure of Professor Alison from the Senatus when he delivered his discourse to the students at the opening of the session (as was his custom) while he praised the outgoing, had no word of welcome for the incoming Professor of the Practice of Medicine. On the contrary, he expressed his wish that the doubtful anticipations as to the latter might not be verified, in such a manner as to imply that he feared they would be.

Dr Bennett, in particular, was possessed by what appeared to be an insane spirit of rivalry and opposition, which in the course of the next summer and autumn hardened into a settled plan of antagonism as clinical teacher at the Infirmary. In the meanwhile he was moody, walked along the street muttering to himself and gesticulating as if addressing an imaginary audience and gave other signs of deeply perturbed spirits. Nor was it possible for Dr Laycock to do full justice to his new position. Certain persons thought it right to show him hospitality, others sought his public services at meetings, and thus the time which should have been devoted to his lectures was otherwise occupied. And as he had determined to recast his course, he had to prepare each lecture from day to day, and consequently to labour into the night to the injury of his health and mental powers. In the meanwhile, envy was busy with its slanders and exaggerations and false friends were lending their aid to the envious by damning him with false praise.

Dr Simpson, upon whom Dr Laycock had every reason to rely as a support in practice, failed wholly to call him into consultation in any case after Christmas 1855. At Dr Simpson's death on 6 May 1870 the entire fees received by Dr Laycock from cases in consultation with Dr Simpson could not be estimated at more than fifty guineas. The latter had recommended Dr Laycock to two patients he was not able to visit, viz. one at Cupar in 1858 and Mr J. P. Orde of Kilmany in 1867. And having recommended his old man servant Tom Clarke to Dr Laycock as butler and janitor, he used him as a spy upon all Dr Laycock's family and other proceedings. So that he even informed of so trivial a fact that Dr Laycock and his wife went to early communion on Christmas Day!

The year did not end happily. While at York during the Christmas recess Dr Laycock learnt that his second [child], George Lockwood, had a severe convulsive attack. Dr Simpson attended him, and ordered leeches. Those bled very profusely so as to weaken the child much. The directed effects of this attack continued until George Lockwood went to school at Trinity College, Glenalmond in September 1866. And the following spring was not encouraging in various ways, but the misgivings thus excited were nothing as compared with the force of the violent attack which was impending and being prepared for. In May 1856 Dr Laycock took his turn of clinical duty at the Infirmary and removed to number 4 Rutland Street.

(viii) "Envy, Hatred Malice, and All Uncharitableness"

The Session of 1855–56 passed over without any overt act of hostility, but certain notices of motion given as early as January 1856 by Dr Bennett, indicated that a resolution had already been taken by him to offer the most uncompromising opposition to Dr Laycock both in teaching and practice, and circumstances facilitated Dr Bennett's efforts.

Dr Christison preceded Dr Laycock as clinical teacher in the spring of 1856 and left patients in the clinical wards for Dr Laycock to treat when he succeeded on 1 May. Amongst those was a young man whose disease was marked "phthisis" by Dr Christison

but which Dr Laycock diagnosed at once as a case of cancer of the lungs, in opposition to Dr Christison's diagnosis. This attracted great attention partly because it was the first diagnostic effort of the new professor, involving a very rare and difficult question, partly because a feeling of antagonism was excited between the supporters of the two professors. When, therefore, the body of the patient (who died in fortnight after) was examined publicly a larger audience filled the pathological theatre of the Infirmary than had been seen there for many years. And it could not but be wounding to Dr Christison's exalted sense of self to be informed that the diagnosis of the new professor had been fully confirmed, the more especially as Dr Simpson took care to envenom the wound by busy comments on the case, derogatory in fact to Dr Christison; and as Dr Simpson was believed to be a warm friend of Dr Laycock, these comments were associated in Dr Christison's mind with Dr Laycock.

Be this as it may, it fell to Dr Christison in the order of rotation of clinical duty to open the winter course of clinical medicine for 1856–57, but instead of doing this he delegated the duty to Dr Bennett; Dr Laycock then followed with the spring course a trimester but as to the summer of 1857, Dr Bennett claimed to deliver that course. In the meanwhile Dr Christison had intimated to Dr Bennett that he should resign taking his share of clinical teaching without communicating with Dr Laycock, and at the end of the winter session Dr Bennett commenced to quarrel by appropriating fees which did not belong to him, and finally offered to give up what he had no right to retain on condition that Dr Laycock would concur in an arrangement which would set up two rival clinical teachers with antagonistic and conflicting interest in the University, contrary to the first principles of academic organisation and the practice of the Faculty for one hundred years and more. The scheme was unscrupulously worked out during the autumn of 1857 and finally forced upon Dr Laycock without a shadow of law or justice. Driven to the last resource within the University, Dr Laycock appealed to the Patrons (the then existing City Council) and in accordance with the resolution [of] that body, the Senatus Academicus receded from the step they had taken, and the scheme was finally defeated.[102] The whole history of the various transactions is contained in a pamphlet which Dr Laycock caused to be printed and circulated entitled *Correspondence and Statements regarding the Teaching of Clinical Medicine in the University of Edinburgh 1855–57* with a *Sequel* (1857). More than 750 copies were circulated through the post at the instigation of Dr Simpson, and actually by his manual assistance—he personally helping to fold and stamp with Postage-stamps. And although ostensibly neutral in the Medical Faculty or only helping Dr Laycock so much as to save appearances, he was aiding him until three in the morning in writing the pamphlet and correcting proof sheets. In all this, however, he was only intending to serve his own ends. Comments were excited in the press and sides taken (see documents appended)[103–109] as usual, but although Dr Laycock triumphantly vindicated his reputation

[102] Press cutting, unidentified Edinburgh newspaper, n.d. [*c.* 2nd week of December 1857] {t}.
[103] Press cutting, *Medical Times & Gazette*, 9 January 1858 {t}.
[104] Press cutting, *Daily Scotsman*, 5 December 1857.
[105] Press cutting, *Medical Times & Gazette*, 16 January 1858 {t}.
[106] Press cutting, *Medical Times & Gazette*, n.d. [30 January 1858] {t}.
[107] Press cutting, *Medical Times & Gazette*, n.d., [6 February 1858] {t}.
[108] Letter, R. Christison to F. B. Douglas, 1–4 December 1857 [copy] {t}.
[109] Letter, J. Renton to F. B. Douglas, 17 February 1858 [copy] {t}.

and defeated the schemes of his colleagues, he necessarily suffered loss. For it always happens in such cases that the majority of people do not trouble themselves with the details of the case, and they would only see such men as Christison and Syme with the Medical Faculty at their back and even the Senatus Academicus, on the one side and an individual, but a new man amongst them, a stranger and an interloper on the other. Hence Dr Laycock felt that for the future there was to be for him no brilliant success. Happy if he were not borne down and become a total failure.

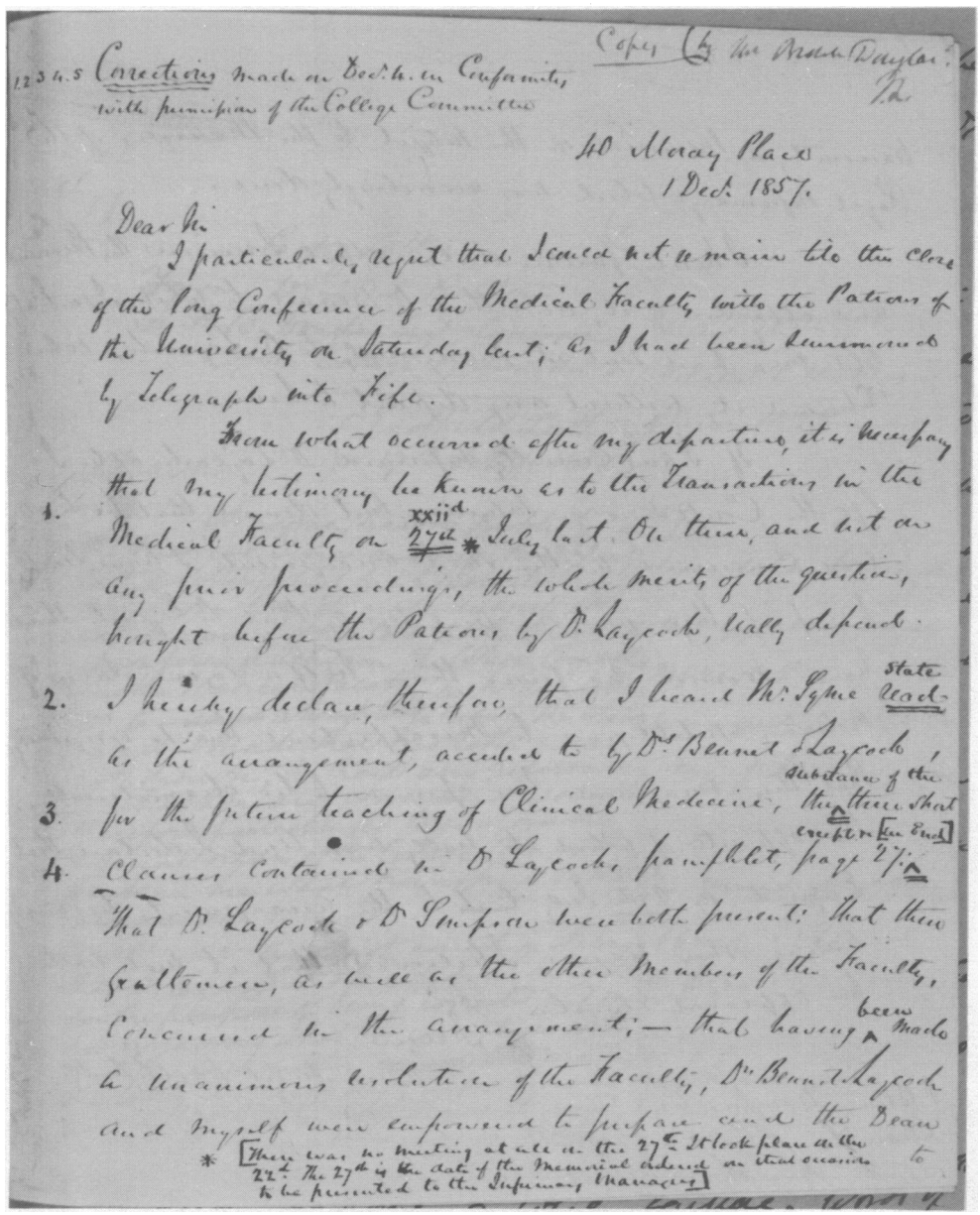
Words of comfort were not wanting altogether, but might triumphed too obviously over right and friends were not only few, but treacherous. Dr Renton, Mr Lizars,[110] Mr Bell proprietor of the *North Briton*,[111] but unfortunately they were men of no social weight or influence, while the students were too timid and too much afraid of the vengeance of Dr Laycock's foes at the examinations, to do more than write "Laycock for ever" on Dr Bennett's door,[112] and caricature his enmity on the College wall where he was represented in his peculiar long coat, with the label from his mack "Down with Laycock." Dr Laycock's health suffered greatly, so that in the spring of 1858 he was unable to lecture for some time and Dr Alexander Wood took his duty at the College for a few lectures. Dr Simpson busily circulated the report that Dr Laycock was dying of consumption, believing it. Dr Simpson and Mr Carmichael attended Dr Laycock professionally in this illness, to whom the latter communicated the opinion of Dr Walshe as to his being consumptive when consulted by him in the summer of 1848, (following his marriage in April preceding). Dr Gairdner subsequently told Dr Laycock that one of these gentlemen—meaning Dr Simpson—had called upon [him] and repeated these and other facts known through his professional attendance on Dr Laycock as reasons why Dr Gairdner should be preparing to secure the reversion of Dr Laycock's chair when vacant (as he thought it soon would be) either by his illness or death.

(a) The conduct of Dr Bennett towards Dr Laycock

The bitter disappointment which Dr Bennett experienced in the election of Dr Laycock to the Chair of the Practice of Medicine led to various results. He sought to avenge himself on the Town Council as well as on Dr Laycock, and he judged he should join both objects in part at least by disparaging and depreciating Dr Laycock and increasing his own reputation. Early, therefore, in the year 1856 (on 22 January) at a meeting of the Medical Faculty at which Dr Trail, Professor Allman, Dr Balfour and himself were present he called attention to the whole system of clinical instruction which he did not consider to be placed on a proper footing. He offered numerous suggestions as to the length of the courses, the permanence of the clinical physicians, the advantage of separate lectures by the professors in separate wards and concluded by giving notice that he meant to bring the matter in a definite shape under the notice of the Medical Faculty at a future meeting.

To secure the success of his scheme for two separate clinical professors (who would have been necessarily himself and Dr Laycock) he procured in the first instance that

[110] Letter, J. Lizars to T. Laycock, 30 December 1857 {t}.
[111] Press cutting, *North Briton*, 20 March 1858 {t}.
[112] Press cutting, *Daily Express*, 24 February 1858.



Copy (by the Prof. Douglas) R.

1 2 3 4 5 Corrections made on Dec. 4. in Conformity with permission of the College Committee

40 Moray Place
1 Dec. 1857.

Dear Sir

I particularly regret that I could not remain till the close of the long Conference of the Medical Faculty with the Patrons of the University on Saturday last; as I had been summoned by Telegraph into Fife.

From what occurred after my departing, it is necessary that my testimony be known as to the transactions in the Medical Faculty on ~~27th~~ xxiid * July last. On these, and not on any prior proceedings, the whole merits of the question, brought before the Patrons by Dr. Laycock, really depend.

1. I hereby declare, therefore, that I heard Mr. Syme state read the arrangement, acceded to by Dr. Bennet & Laycock, for the future teaching of Clinical Medicine, substance of the the terms that exception [in Ind] clauses contained in Dr Laycock's pamphlet, page 27.

2. That Dr. Laycock & Dr Simpson were both present: that these gentlemen, as well as the other Members of the Faculty, concurred in the arrangement; — that having been made a unanimous resolution of the Faculty, Dr. Bennet Laycock and myself were empowered to prepare and the Draw to

* [There was no meeting at all on the 27th. It took place on the 22d. The 27th is the date of the Memorial adopted on that occasion to be presented to the Infirmary Managers]

Figure 13: Letter from Robert Christison to Francis Brown Douglas, 1–4 December 1857.

clinical teaching should extend from twelve to two o'clock instead of from twelve to one, thus securing two distinct hours for the two professors to lecture at; but other changes were necessary, namely in the hours of lectures of anatomy, natural history and clinical surgery, and he therefore commenced proceedings for changing these hours on the pretence that the lectures interfered with the efficiency and usefulness of the medical clinic. It was not until August, however, that he brought forward a distinct plan and subsequently at meetings of the Faculty on 19 September and 26 September, when it was agreed to recommend an alteration in the hours of the lectures in anatomy and natural history, the former two to three; the latter one to two o'clock. On 4 February a fresh discussion was raised since Dr Allman objected to the change, and again on 6 April on a remit from the Senatus on the same subject, which was adjourned to 9 April. At this meeting Dr Christison announced that he had resolved not to lecture again on clinical medicine, and Dr Bennett claimed to conduct the summer clinic as the "senior professor" of Clinical Medicine. The question of division of the fees was also mooted and discussed at subsequent meetings of the Faculty (see manuscript excerpts from Minutes of the Faculty) [not found]. Under pretence of being a substitute for the senior professor, Dr Bennett had already opened the winter course and secured the winter fees. Under the same pretence he now got the summer fees into his possession and proceeded to alter the mode of distribution so as to advantage himself to the amount of a sixth at least, without the slightest ground in custom or equality and most tenaciously persisted in the procedure, justifying his conduct by the grossest misstatements (See *Correspondence and Statements*.)

Dr Bennett's regard for truth and right was always at a low estimate with those who knew him. Many curious stories were told of him which fully justified it, and some, from most authentic sources convinced Dr Laycock that in Dr ~~Laycock~~ Bennett he had the most unscrupulous of men to deal with. Dr George Wilson {b} analyzed for Dr Bennett when they occupied a class-room in common as private lecturers a specimen of cod-liver oil and retained an ounce of it corked up as a specimen of the article analysed. Dr Bennett observing it, charged Dr Wilson with filching his property and insisted upon being paid for it. When he became a professor he sold microscopes to his class, at a profit, and got them passed the custom-house free of duty as being for his own private use. In all his dealings with the University funds he was noted for being uniformly selfish and grasping. Nor was his tone of morals of a higher order. He seemed not only to have no regard for truth but no use for a character for veracity, and could not comprehend that any man would tell the truth and be just to his injury. When Lord Brougham was inaugurated Chancellor in the University, he gave to Sir David Brewster two letters which he had received amongst others, with anonymous signatures of a "supporter", a "well-wisher" and the like in which there was the most slanderous abuse of Professor Simpson and Dr Alexander Wood, but more especially of Dr Wood who had taken an active part in the promotion of Lord Brougham's election in opposition to the Duke of Buccleuch, the conservative candidate, and who was in consequence appointed by Lord Brougham as his Assessor in the University Court. Dr Wood had already brought two actions against Dr Bennett, one for slander uttered at the College of Physicians, the other for the costs of the action; and he also had made him apologise for affirming that Dr Wood who was a deacon in the Free Church had got a girl with child, although his own friends said nothing was more

probable. Hence an intensified animosity to Dr Wood. The letters in question were placed by Sir D. Brewster into the hands of Professor Simpson who recognised the hand-writing at once to be that of Dr Bennett. From thence they passed to Dr Alexander Wood who compared the writing with certain documents in the Archives of the College of Physicians in the hand of Dr Bennett, and found there was the closest correspondence. Dr Laycock saw this comparison made at the College by placing one word in the letter over the same word in a document upon the window-pane and certainly the resemblance was exact. Dr Alexander Wood also placed the letters and documents in the hands of experts (engravers and others) in both London and Edinburgh and they all concurred that the same person had written them all. Dr Alexander Wood loudly declared that Dr Bennett was the writer and challenged the latter to prosecute him in a court of law for the statement, when he would justify it. He also bought the accusation before the Senatus who, however, under the inspiration of Dr Christison, decided that the matter was *ultra vires* of that body. But Dr Wood never withdrew the charge and gave Dr Bennett to understand that if ever he appeared at any meeting of the College of Physicians he should at once bring it forward which Dr Bennett however never ventured to do. And when the Universities' Club was being established Dr Wood again brought the matter forward in opposition to Dr Bennett being elected a member in right of his being a professor, as he was entitled to be. At this occasion Dr Bennett offered to take an oath that he had not written the letters, but no one seemed to think his oath was any better that his word, and that was held to be utterly worthless.

A man so constituted could not be expected to have any scruples in his conduct and feelings towards an antagonist. He therefore not only made the grossest misstatement as to facts, but systematically endeavoured to disparage Dr Laycock's character for integrity and even common honesty,[113] when Dr Laycock found it necessary to appeal to the patrons against the injustice of his enemies.[114] The very boldness of Dr Bennett's assertions had their weight, in spite of his known character, for it is impossible for generous minds to be always entertaining suspicions of untruth even as to the most notorious liars, and in this case Dr Bennett carried with him apparently the opinions of the Medical Faculty if not of the Senatus Academicus itself.

That Dr Bennett intended an unscrupulous uncompromising rivalry with Dr Laycock was plain from many circumstances. When the Medical Faculty proceeded to arrange the division of clinical wards in accordance with the conspiracy, it was contrived that Dr Bennett should have all the male patients, thus placing Dr Laycock at a great disadvantage in clinical teaching, because the class teaching of physical diagnosis is only practicable with male patients inasmuch as it is not decent to explore the person of the female, to the extent that is necessary for good teaching. Further he projected a systematic treatise on the practice of medicine, the title of which originally included the subjects and title of the practice of medicine chairs in the English schools. And it was Dr Laycock himself who called the attention of the publisher, Mr Black, to the anomaly of clinical lectures on the theory of medicine and thus led to an alteration of the title.[115] In the autumn of the

[113] Press cutting, *Daily Scotsman*, 19 November 1857 {t}.

[114] Press cutting, *Caledonian Mercury*, 23 November 1857.

[115] Book advertisements for two works by J. H. Bennett, including 'Clinical lectures on the theory and practice of medicine', subsequently published as *Lectures on clinical medicine* in 1856.

previous year Dr Laycock had published his first work since his election to the chair and the title was advertised in the same prospectus by Messrs Black.[116]

Dr Bennett lost no opportunity of avenging Dr Laycock, but in the spring of 1858 the Universities of Scotland Bill was introduced into Parliament and this afforded Dr Bennett an opportunity of dealing a double blow at both the Town Council and the individual they had protected from injustice. For Dr Bennett got himself appointed one of the deputation to London to watch over the Bill on behalf of the Senatus and there circulated a statement amongst members of both Houses of Parliament, purporting to be on behalf of the University, in which he grossly libelled both the patrons and some of his colleagues. In particular he did not hesitate to intimate that the improper exercise of their patronage had reduced the number of students in the Medical Faculty from 570 in 1854 to 460 in 1858, and that in especial the classes of the practice of medicine and of clinical medicine had been reduced one half or nearly.[117]

Dr Laycock contented himself with writing to the Lord Provost and saying that the numbers in his class had averaged the same as that of his eminent predecessors and that it was wholly untrue that they had fallen off one half. The statement was no doubt the child of the wish, and indeed, it was a reasonable expectation on the part of Dr Laycock's enemies that his class should be diminished after all the abuse heaped upon him, and their constant recommendation to the students to join Dr W. T. Gairdner's or Dr J. W. Begbie's classes in preference to that of Dr Laycock. It was more than probable, also, that the clinical class was diminished in consequence of the conduct of Drs Christison, Bennett and others for it was known that parents and guardians, disgusted with the disgraceful quarrels (for which Edinburgh had long been famous however) amongst the professors, hesitated to send their sons and wards to a place where the first principles of morals were so lightly esteemed.

Dr Laycock's character was defended in the *Medical Times and Gazette* and in the Town Council. The "statement" had moreover the immediate attention of the Senatus Academicus itself, and at a meeting of that body hastily called for Friday? (9 July?) was emphatically repudiated, and Dr Bennett recalled to answer for his conduct.[118–121] At the meeting called to hear his explanations he said he had only circulated two dozen copies amongst members of Parliament (a statement known to be untrue) and that he did not know how a copy had got to Edinburgh. He acknowledged having given a copy to Sir James Clark and to Dr Campbell of Aberdeen. [He] mentioned his own case as one in which the election to a chair by the patrons took place unanimously without the slightest reference to merit or ability. [He] said that he wrote to a colleague for information as to the number of students in Dr Laycock's class, but refused to name the colleague. He read however from a letter in Dr Christison's handwriting. He declared that he thought it quite unnecessary "to show any delicacy" towards the Professor of the Practice of Physic, asserted the truth of his statements as to that Professor, and [said he] w[ould] correct them if untrue.

[116] Advertisement for T. Laycock's *Medical observation*, with brief review extracts from medical journals.
[117] Press cutting, *Scottish Press*, 6 July 1858.
[118] Press cutting, *York Herald*, 17 July 1858 {t}.
[119] Press cutting, *Daily Scotsman*, 13 July 1858.
[120] Press cutting, unidentified Edinburgh newspaper, n.d. [*c.* 7 July 1858].
[121] Press cutting, *Daily Scotsman*, n.d. [*c.* second week in July 1858].

Dr George Wilson's resolutions were agreed to at a meeting of professors held at Dr Simpson's and expressed their indignation in the strongest terms. The attack was made in fact upon the Free Church and party and was a renewal of an old hostility to Professors Fraser and Macdougall, who had both been professors in the Free Church College and whose chairs were suppressed there, after their translation to the University. The Bill passed the two houses but in the following October the battle was renewed in the Town Council just previously to the election of the new councillors. On this occasion, Dr Bennett's conduct to Dr Laycock was dwelt upon amongst other matters.[122–123]

In the entire conflict with Dr Bennett, Dr Laycock stood on the defensive for the most part, although he did not altogether neglect his duty in defending truth and justice when that duty came his way. Nor was it hardly necessary to attack him for he had so happy a way of making enemies that he had all in the way of attack which Dr Laycock could desire, from those who were more competent and more anxious in this respect than he was. When, however, Dr Bennett had to leave for Italy at the commencement of the session 1864–65 and could not return to take his turn of clinical duty, Dr Laycock offered to do the duty for him. This Dr Bennett ungraciously refused, although he was willing that Dr Laycock should change trimesters with him. Nor did he even thank Dr Laycock on his return or pay him the slightest courtesy.[124]

(b) Conduct of Dr Christison to Dr Laycock

Dr Robert Christison, Professor of Materia Medica and Dietetics would have accepted the Chair of the Practice of Medicine in succession to Dr Alison, if it had been offered to him, but he declined to canvass. And this was a suitable and a dignified proceeding, for he had been a professor from an early age (under thirty) in the University, and his father was also a professor. Birth and long residence in Edinburgh gave him an important position which a tall commanding figure and a wise conduct on his part served to increase and establish. Those who knew him well did not attribute to him any great faculty. That he was indicated by the soubriquet of "Crafty Bobby" which had attached to him for some years and this kind of temper rendered him an unsafe and doubtful leader (a part to which he constantly aspired) because when it came to push of pike, it was almost invariably found that he shrank from the conflict for reasons peculiar to himself. In the Senatus Academicus he was great in "Reports" which he was always ready to construct upon any subject. He was drawn insensibly into the clinical quarrel by Dr Bennett whom, however, he supported indirectly even in his attempt at pecuniary appropriation by leaving Dr Laycock unsupported in his just claim and which he knew to be just. Perhaps this was partly due to kinship, as there was some connection by marriage (?) between Mrs Bennett and Mrs Christison. When however the question got envenomed by Mr Syme's interference he took a more active part against Dr Laycock more particularly in the attempt to destroy Dr Laycock's reputation for honour and truthfulness. On 7 November 1857 he bought a "report" on the teaching of clinical medicine before the Medical Faculty ready "cut and

[122] Press cutting, *Daily Scotsman*, 30 October 1858 [with note giving further details].
[123] Press cutting, *Edinburgh Advertiser*, 2 November 1858.
[124] Press cutting, *Daily Scotsman*, 27 September 1875 [J. H. Bennett's obituary].

dried" without notice given in the billet of business of the day, had it adopted by the Faculty and carried it up to the Senatus which met an hour after, where it also was at once adopted and ordered to be entered in the minutes. In that document Dr R. Christison made use of expressions false in fact and highly derogatory of Dr Laycock, and knowing this he intentionally brought it before the Faculty and Senatus without notice and hurried it through both bodies without discussion. Nor was it possible for Dr Laycock to stem the feeling in the Senatus caused by the distinct assertions of Dr Christison and Mr Syme, the two oldest and most influential members of the Faculty. Indeed, when the matter was first brought before the Senatus at a small meeting Dr Laycock was clamoured down by them, for Mr Syme wholly lost his temper and strode up and down the Senate Hall, giving the lie to Dr Laycock and this without check from the Principal or the other members of Senatus. And so soon as Dr Laycock attempted to speak Dr Christison or Mr Syme or Dr Bennett immediately interrupted him in the coarsest and rudest manner. Nay to such an extent was this kind of conduct carried that the Dean of the Medical Faculty having written Dr Laycock an incautious letter seized him by the collar and endeavoured to make him give it by force, using at the same time violent language, as "I'll make you—I insist upon having it back" and the like. And when subsequently Dr Christison wrote a letter to the College Committee in testimony of certain facts the same readiness was manifested to injure Dr Laycock by round assertions which were conclusively shown to be untrue.

Subsequently Dr Christison's behaviour to Dr Laycock was often grossly rude; he neglected the ordinary courtesies of society and on all occasions showed his dislike and enmity. The great fault in his character was his craftiness and unscrupulousness in his assertions. So habitual was the latter fault that he committed it when the discovery of his misstatement was inevitable. And like his friend Mr Syme, he was able at using words of doubtful meaning or sentences which might be read variously, and when detected in misstatements was shifty in his so-called corrections. This is well seen in the letter inserted [in] this volume [n 108] and commented on in the annexed printed sheets.[125] At the conference referred to, the same unscrupulous conduct was pursued, and Dr Bennett who took an active part in speaking looked and acted like a Bill Sykes with a bull-dog at his heels.

(c) Mr Syme, Professor of Clinical Surgery, and his Conduct towards Dr Laycock

In the summer of 1857 Dr Laycock flatly refused to entertain the question of changes in the method of clinical teaching with that of the fees due to him which Dr Bennett retained. It was therefore at last agreed that the question of fees should be referred to arbitration. Dr Bennett named Mr Syme; Dr Laycock asked Dr Simpson but he requested to be excused and recommended Dr Laycock to name Mr Syme also.

Previously to the vacancy for the Chair of the Practice of Medicine, Mr Syme and Dr Bennett had not spoken to each other for several years. But Mr Syme hoped to have his old friend Dr Sharpey placed in the Chair of the Institutes if Dr Bennett was elected to that of the Practice of Medicine, and thus Dr Bennett's candidature for the latter brought them together. Mr Syme, on assuming the office of arbitrator made no scruple about playing

[125] T. Laycock, *Sequel* (1857), pp. 61–70.

into the hands of Dr Bennett. His first step was to call upon Dr Laycock with a written agreement for Dr Laycock to sign which he alleged included the question of clinical teaching and made the award as to the fees dependant upon an agreement with the plan of Dr Bennett. But Dr Laycock declined reading or receiving the document until the arbitration of fees was made. Mr Syme's proceedings were thought highly characteristic, for his character as a liar had been not only established with the public and the profession but in a court of law when he received a severe reprimand and—in the case of Gibson versus Syme for slander—for his untruthful evidence. He was a man of most impulsive temper and ungovernable speech and when excited seemed to hesitate at no trick, quibble, or falsehood to gain his point. He never forgave Mr Inglis, afterwards the Lord Justice Clerk, [for] what happened at that trial and which he lost. He first made a verbal award; then stated he had arbitrated but did not tell the Medical Faculty, how? or when? and finally gave two or three distinct and different awards. These various turns and quirks are traced in the *Correspondence and Statements*.[126–127]

It is difficult to believe that the position of Mr Syme should be so reckless in his assertions and so regardless of public opinion. But he was peculiarly situate. As an only son, he had every indulgence, and had grown up to manhood without experiencing the likes of adversity or contradiction. His wealth was great and he drove a carriage like that of a dowager duchess with hammer-cloth, which however the students termed "Syme's hearse" from its ponderous grandeur. Such a carriage could not be seen elsewhere in Scotland. His vanity was excessive and those who did not praise were held to blame him. His quarrel with Dr Laycock commenced within a few weeks after the latter joined the University, who never knew the ground of it. It was however supposed to be either some mischievous remark of Dr Simpson or the fact that Dr Laycock accepted an invitation to dine with Mr Lizars. When Dr Laycock gave his introductory clinical lecture in May 1856, he found it necessary to take Mr Syme's hour of lecture. So soon as the announcement was made Mr Syme became almost frantic and, after writing the annexed note and receiving the reply attached, endeavoured by every means in his power to prevent Dr Laycock delivering the lecture at that hour.[128–129]

For more than ten years Mr Syme continued his animosity to Dr Laycock; and it was only in May 1867, when he met Dr Laycock in consultation, that he addressed the latter with common courtesy. During that period he attacked Dr Laycock's reputation on all convenient occasions such as recommending students to attend extra-mural courses of the practice of medicine and actually assisting Dr Bennett in vituperation. In particular, at an address he gave on medical education at a conversatzione at the College of Surgeons (Mr Benjamin Bell, President) in December 1863 he raised a laugh against Dr Laycock by saying that he placed in the hands of his students a list of no fewer than eight hundred fevers. When informed of how incorrect this was, he pretended to correct the statement in a footnote to his address printed in the *Edinburgh Medical Journal* for January 1864 by saying that he made the statement on the authority of a student he understood there were only 500! He had his original assertion published in *The Times* of next day under the

[126] T. Laycock, *Correspondence and statements*, pp. 47–53.
[127] T. Laycock, *Sequel*, pp. 54–60.
[128] Letter, J. Syme to T. Laycock, 2 May 1856 {t}.
[129] Letter, T. Laycock to J. Syme, 2 May 1856 {t}.

heading of "British Medicine" and this was copied by his friend Dr Marshbane into the *British Medical Journal* of January 1864 who also took so active a part in the defamation that Dr Laycock compelled him to apologise. He also characterised the statement of the mythical "student" a "gigantic lie", whereupon Mr Syme took the lie to himself, and advocated his denial in the *British Medical Journal*. He also withdrew from the Edinburgh Medico-Chirurgical Society where Dr Laycock had given the student the lie, as well as in the *Lancet* of that spring (1864). Mr Syme died 26 June 1870.[130] Before his death a subscription had been started to raise £2,500 for the purpose of a "Syme Fellowship" in the University.[131]

(d) Treatment of Dr Laycock by Dr Simpson

In the foregoing pages facts are stated to illustrate this point, but not to show how peculiarly treacherous a friend he was. Dr Simpson was a singular compound of reckless generosity and selfishness—so treacherous and so revengeful that it was difficult to say whether he was most dangerous as a friend or as an enemy. While professing secretly to be Dr Laycock's friend in the clinical quarrel he was as secretly endeavouring to move the Town Council to establish a chair of clinical medicine, so that he might be appointed. When taxed with the authorship of the letter opposite,[132] he could not deny it: on the contrary, he declared that Dr Laycock should be made to resign the duties of clinical teaching.

The mention of Dr W. T. Gairdner, while it served to disparage his colleagues, was also a blind to the public in regard to his scheme of personal aggrandizement. In this kind of tact he was preeminent. For example when Dr [James] Begbie {b} was ill and not likely to recover and the Chair of Pathology by resignation of Dr Henderson {b} was vacant, he proposed that Dr W. T. Gairdner should take the chair that he might succeed to Dr Begbie's consulting practice, hoping thereby to set aside Dr J.W. Begbie. Whenever he had a quarrel he never failed to cunningly slander; and loud and bitter were the complaints of the crafty way in which he ousted brother practitioners from patients and families. When it was proposed to give him a public dinner on his being made a Baronet, the scheme fell through, ostensibly because of the death of his son David, but really because of objections to his conduct.[133] In particular, with Earl Russell's letter in his pocket as to the baronetcy, he went about for two days asking persons if they had heard that "Mr Syme was to be made a Baronet", saying it was "reported" so. He had a bitter quarrel with Mr Syme at that time (See *Medical Times and Gazette* and *British Medical Journal* January and February 1866) and he took this means of making the wound of Syme's self-esteem more venomous. He had communicated the announcement of Earl Russell to Professor Playfair as a secret which he was to make known at the meeting of Senatus next day (a Saturday) where Mr Syme would be, that he might have the pleasure of witnessing Syme's discomfiture. In these and many other evil ways never was genius more misapplied. When a candidate for the Principalship Dr Laycock declined to support his claim to the honour,

[130] Engraving of Syme from *Illustrated London News*, 1870.
[131] Epigram on Syme by Mr A. M.[?] Edwards [with annotations] {t}.
[132] Press cutting, *Daily Scotsman*, 8 December 1857 [with notes] {t}.
[133] Printed invitation to friends of J. Y. Simpson, 11 January 1866.

feeling that nothing but disastrous bickerings and animosities would prevail under his reign. His friends charged Dr Laycock with ingratitude, for Dr Simpson had cunningly made the public believe he put Dr Laycock into his chair and had supported him in all his difficulties. The fact was however, otherwise. (See letter to *Scotsman ante*) [n 50]. He confessed in public that he had supported Dr Bennett up to the very eve of the election and Dr Bennett said Dr Simpson had ridiculed Dr Laycock's chances of success. (See letters from *Scotsman ante*) [n 48, 49]. In fact Dr Simpson introduced as few patients to Dr Laycock as he could and secretly opposed him in practice. Dr Laycock had various proofs of this and of the cunning treacherous way in which he proceeded. He absented himself from the University when Dr Laycock gave his introductory address on the pretence that it was necessary to attend a meeting of the College of Physicians held at the same hour in defence of Dr Laycock's interests. He persuaded Dr Laycock to engage his discharged servant, Tom Clarke, to be janitor and house servant from whom he constantly received information as to Dr Laycock doings in practice and even in such facts as going to early sacrament on Xmas day of that year. Dr Priestley, his then assistant, having called Dr Laycock to see a patient (Mr Weems of Kirkannan near Dalbeattie) who had a "stroke", Dr Simpson was angry with him and forbid him to do so in the future; this Dr Priestley told to Dr Laycock. Dr Adam Hunter, a highly respectable [man] and an Episcopalian, had called Dr Laycock into consultation in two cases, so soon almost, as he arrived; Dr Simpson having learnt this, called upon Dr Hunter, assured him that Dr Laycock had no chance of consulting practice, that he, Dr Hunter, ought to come forward as a consulting physician and that he (Dr Simpson) would support him, &c. Dr Laycock was not aware for more than thirteen years why Dr Hunter never called him into another case until Mr Hutchins (dentist) at Dr Laycock's request asked Dr Hunter, who therefore told Mr Hutchins as above. Before long Dr Simpson got Dean Ramsay and other patients from Dr Hunter, but never called him into consultations. Dr Simpson while professing the warmest interest in Dr Laycock's success in practice deliberately damned him with faint praise, or expressed his regrets that Dr Laycock was a failure. He also adopted the mischievous tactic of involving Dr Laycock in quarrels. Thus it was undoubtedly some statement he made to Mr Syme which excited that gentleman's bitter animosity towards Dr Laycock. In like manner, a correction of an erroneous diagnosis made by Dr Christison, on the part of Dr Laycock when he took charge of the clinical wards on 1 May 1856 (Dr Christison having mistaken a case of cancer of the lung for tuberculous phthisis) was trumpeted about by Dr Simpson in such a way as to annoy Dr Christison as much as possible, and lead him to quarrel with Dr Laycock as the originator and abettor of the reports. In these and other quarrels which he raised, Dr Simpson played the part of sympathising friend of Dr Laycock while he was otherwise envenoming them. This tactic of *divide et empera* was sedulously followed out on all occasions whenever he could serve his own interests thereby: he acting the part of the amiable peace-loving gentleman, so that he was the real originator of many of the bitter feuds for which the Edinburgh School and profession of medicine were notorious. He even left a quarrel in the University as a legacy by moving his friends in the Town Council and elsewhere before his death to support his nephew as his successor in the Chair of Midwifery, knowing that thereby he would disappoint the expectations of Dr Matthews Duncan in that respect who had been formerly his assistant and with whom he had for many years had a bitter quarrel. When the election came into

the Curatorial Court in July 1870, it was found that the whole of the representations of the Town Council, headed by Lord Provost Law voted for the nephew, and so being a majority elected him. Law had previously boasted that by his vote the uncle had been elected, and hinted that the nephew would be. In this and other respects Dr Simpson was more dangerous and mischievous to Dr Laycock than any enemy. And undoubtedly he secretly aided and consented to the coalition which was formed by leading men in Edinburgh to exclude Dr Laycock from consulting practice and which was so successful that he never received £300 in one year, neither gave he any assistance to Dr Laycock in struggling to render his chair a success, but the contrary. Knowing all this Dr Laycock firmly resolved to have no open quarrel with Simpson, feeling that thereby he would be enabled to justify his conduct, and he was therefore silent as to Dr Simpson's treacheries. His death was secretly rejoiced in by many, although a large public funeral attested the deep regrets of the public. Still it was noticed that as they walked in the solemn procession to the grave, headed by their Principal, the Senatus Academicus were conspicuous for their jocose levity all along the route, laughing and chatting with one another, unmindful of the solemn occasion. Dr Laycock was not amongst them being unable to walk, but this he heard from various spectators. It ought to be added however, that the Senatus was never conspicuous for its tender reminiscences of departed colleagues.

After being defeated in his contest for the principalship of the University, Sir J. Y. Simpson never entered Dr Laycock's house except to attend Mrs Laycock's funeral on 8 October 1870 [1869]. The history of the contest is interesting. By the death of Sir David Brewster and Professor Macdougall the office of Principal and the Chair of Moral Philosophy became vacant. Professor Fraser and others thought that Sir Alexander Grant Bart, then Chancellor of the University of Bombay with £3,000 a year of salary might be induced to come if he secured both vacancies as thereby his income would be about £1,200. Professor Christison made a movement for the Principalship and thereupon Mr Syme and Sir J. Y. Simpson also came forward. It quickly appeared, however, that long-standing antagonism of Syme and Christison to the Town Council would combine the representatives of that body in the Curatorial Court against them in favour of Simpson, so that they took no steps in the matter further than to support the claims of Sir Alexander Grant as against Simpson. The latter believing that if he prevented Grant's election to the Chair of Moral Philosophy, the salary of the principalship £750 per annum would be too small an inducement to give up £3,000 in India, laboured hard to prevent his election to the chair. By enquiries at Oxford as to his conduct when a student he elicited disparaging letters which he showed about. A friend (unknown) telegraphed to a gentleman in Bombay named Brown, son to a Dr J. C. Brown a Free Church minister in Edinburgh as to Grant's religious sentiments and had for an answer that he was "Broad Church". This telegram Simpson sightly altered and then showed it to the Reverend Dr Candlish and others of his own Church, so as to excite ecclesiastical animosity. One day in the Senate Hall of the University in the presence of Dr Laycock he put his arm round Professor Fraser's neck remarking "What do you think of a man for Moral Philosophy who would do that to a young lady in public?" This referred to an incident which occurred at a public university meeting at St Andrews. Grant was then on the point of being married to Miss Ferrier daughter of Professor Ferrier and sitting near her put his arm round her waist. This incident is a good illustration of his subtle method of slander. Provoked by these and other

unfair means, Fraser and Christison made the mistake of retaliating. Bailie Fyfe, a Dissenter, had written to the Reverend Dr Blaikie, Free Church Professor of Theology, for his opinion of the moral character of the two candidates. In reply Dr Blaikie spoke highly of Grant and his wife, although they were Episcopalians, but remarked that Simpson's moral nature was of a "somewhat loose texture"! This letter fell into the hands of Mrs Fraser accidentally; she took it immediately to her husband who surreptitiously made a copy of it and in conjunction with Dr Christison sent copies of it to the members of the Curatorial Court, one of which Mr Thomas McKie a warm friend of Simpson's showed to Dr Laycock. After the election Simpson called on Dr Laycock with a view to extract such information as might be available in evidence in an action he declared he would raise for £10,000 damages against Blaikie, Fraser and Christison. His expression of countenance on that occasion was not less malevolent than haggard and showed how deeply his disappointment was felt. Dr Laycock advised him not to proceed because if the defendants were to elect to justify, nothing but wretched expense, if past quarrels and their causes (such as Dr Bennett's) could result to the great detriment of the University, and of all the parties concerned. And Dr Laycock declared that the only knowledge he had of the letter was when shown it by Mr McKie.

Simpson had other attacks made upon him in the *Courant* newspaper;[134–135] more especially the letter signed "Lynx"[136] summed up the devious course he had pursued in the course of the canvas.[137] Perhaps a careful consideration of what might be adduced in justification of the "loose texture" phrase in Dr Blaikie's letter induced Simpson's friends to advise him to accept apologies which he did.[138] All the parties suffered seriously in health. Christison got an attack of shingles; Blaikie was laid up at N. Berwick and Mrs Fraser suffered so much that when Dr Laycock referred to it nearly a year afterwards she almost fainted from heart-pang. Simpson himself experienced then that depression which affecting the heart proved fatal, within two years afterwards.

His treatment of Dr Hutchinson Stirling, the Hegelian, was characteristic. Dr Laycock asked Simpson one day when he called during the heat of the canvass what he knew of Dr Stirling and Simpson replied somewhat contemptuously nothing, except that he had him at his home when he brought his wife or sister to consult Simpson. Yet Dr Stirling informed Dr Laycock that this was wholly untrue; that Simpson had promised him all his assistance, and that he had said they two must "stand or fall together". See "Lynx's" letter as to treachery to other candidates [n 136].

Dr Laycock when asked by Simpson to support him assured him that he (Dr Laycock) had no personal objection to him, but that he could not on public grounds as he believed the strong feeling of animosity felt by certain members of the Senatus towards Simpson would make it little better than a hell on earth, if he were elected, and that it was not for his own interests he should occupy the Principal's Chair in these terms. Dr Simpson asked Dr Laycock to what he referred and Dr Laycock mentioned the trick he played Syme and his

[134] Press cutting, *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, n.d. [4 July 1868] {t}.
[135] Press cutting, *Edinburgh Evening Courant*[?], n.d. [*c.* last week of June 1868].
[136] Press cutting, *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, n.d. [4 July 1868].
[137] Press cutting, *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, n.d. [6 July 1868].
[138] Press cutting, *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 7 July 1868 {t}.

friends when Earl Russell had intimated the Queen's pleasure to create him (Simpson) a baronet. He however denied that he had set the report about to which Dr Laycock referred! (See *ante*) [p. 110]. Professor Maclagan asked Dr Laycock to sign the memorial against Simpson's appointment, referred to in the letters and reports of proceedings, but Dr Laycock declined, saying that when the Curators asked his opinion he would give it, as above. Mr McKie most tenaciously pressed Dr Laycock for a letter in Simpson's favour. Simpson's rejection, as to the grounds was a fitting Nemesis.

Dr Logsdail then asked by Simpson to
withdrew been assured him that he (Dr L) had
no personal objection to him, but that he could
not on public grounds as he believed the
strong feeling of animosity felt by certain
members of the Senate towards Simpson
would make it little better than a sale
open enough, if he were elected, and that
it was not for his own interests he said
merely the principle of action these
terms. Dr Simpson asked Dr Logsdail to
what he referred and Dr L. mentioned the
trick he forged figures and his friends when
Earl Russell had intimated the Queen's
pleasure to create him (Simpson) a baronet
He however denied that he had set the
report about to which Dr L referred. (Sensation)
Prof. Macalgan asked Dr L. to state the memorial
against Simpson's appointment, referred
to in the letters & reports of proceedings,
but Dr L. declined, saying that if the Chancellor
asked his opinion he would give it, as
above. Mr McKie most unanimously praised
Dr L. for a letter in Simpson's favour. Simpson's
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Figure 14: Final page of the 'Account'.