

To mark the occasion of the opening of Thackrah Court, a development of assisted-living flats by McCarthy and Stone off Shadwell Lane, within the former boundary of the parish, Bill Mathie, formerly Secretary to the School of Medicine at The University of Leeds, has contributed this account of the life and legacy of Charles Turner Thackrah for *Shadwell Histories*, the journal of Shadwell Local History Society.

## **Charles Turner Thackrah 1795 – 1833, ‘The Father of Occupational Medicine’**

*‘I hold in my hand a treatise by a medical gentleman of great intelligence, Mr Thackrah of Leeds.’*

Thus did Sir Michael Thomas Sadler, FRS, MP for Aldborough, describe the work for which Charles Turner Thackrah is known. These words were spoken in the debate in Parliament on 16 March 1832 in relation to the regulation of the employment of children, whose conditions were a key concern of Thackrah in relation to the health of workers in the mills and factories of the country, which the 1833 Factory Act was designed to improve.

The treatise referred to is the publication in 1831 of the first edition of his seminal work *The Effects of Arts, Trades and Professions and of Civic States and Habits of Living on Health and Longevity...* This work, reprinted and published in America almost immediately afterwards and followed by a second and definitive edition in 1832, shortly after the parliamentary debate referred to above, was to draw attention to the deleterious consequences on health of numerous working practices, particularly those of the developing industrial employments that characterised the rapid growth of Leeds in the early nineteenth century.

This short account of his life, tragically foreshortened by his death in 1833 from tuberculosis, traces his contribution to medical research and the teaching of medicine, to the reform of employment practice in relation to the health of employees, and reflects to the impact of his life and work. He is held in high regard well beyond the confines of Leeds, where he lived and practised medicine for all but two years of his life. An account of Thackrah’s life by A. Meiklejohn published in 1957 was provided as an introduction to a reprint of the 1832 edition of Thackrah’s work in a single volume, and is a thorough and readable account. A facsimile copy of this, produced by the Society of Occupational Medicine in 1989<sup>1</sup>, is now available in the archive of Shadwell Local History Society. It is from this edition that I have drawn much of the following account of Thackrah’s life and achievements.

This account comprises seven parts;

- Family Background and Birth
- Education
- Town Surgeon in Leeds and the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society
- The Foundation of Academic Medical Training in Leeds
- Researches into Blood
- The Effects of Arts, Trades and Industry and Factory Reform
- Thackrah’s Final Two Years

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<sup>1</sup> Thackrah, Charles Turner, *The effects of arts, trades and professions on health and longevity - with the life and times of Charles Turner Thackrah* by A. Meiklejohn, originally published by Livingston, 1957, Facsimile Edition, Society of Occupational Medicine, Longman, London, 1989. Hereafter referred to as Thackrah with Meiklejohn, 1989

### *Family Background and Birth*

There is no direct evidence that Thackrah was born in Shadwell but his family connections with the village are strong and have been described in the publication *Shadwell and its People* published by Shadwell Village Society in 1978. It was here at the Chapel of Ease in the village that his grand-parents Robert Thackrah (an undertaker) and Rebecca Turner were married in 1761. According to the authors of the above the Turners and Thackrahs were old Shadwell families and this marriage was the only one solemnized in the chapel. George Thackrah, born in 1770, was a son of this marriage, and practised as a chemist and druggist in Leeds. Charles Turner Thackrah was born to George Thackrah and Alice Leader on 22 May 1795 and baptised on 13 July, his middle name being his grandmother's maiden name. This is recorded in the register at St John's Parish Church, Briggate, Leeds, suggesting that he was born at the home of his father whose business as a chemist and druggist was conducted on Briggate. The 1807 Enclosure map shows that George Thackrah owned over 30 acres of land in Shadwell<sup>2</sup> and the Land Tax Returns for 1810, 1811 and 1817 show that he was resident in Shadwell<sup>3</sup>. George died in 1820 and was buried in Thorner, and his wife a few years later in 1828, Thorner being the parish church of the inhabitants of Shadwell village until the building of the present church in 1840.

### *Education*

Charles Turner Thackrah's former pupil and biographer, Henry Yates Whytehead, recounted that Thackrah's parents wished for their son to enter the church and it is recorded that he went to schools under three clergymen, Rev. T. Harrison of Bardsey, Rev. Hammond Roberson of Heald's Hall, Liversedge and Rev. James Knight of Halifax, with whom he read divinity. During his schooling, he also learned Latin and Greek and at the age of 16 in 1811, Charles entered into an apprenticeship for a period of five years with Mr Obadiah Brooke, surgeon and apothecary of Leeds. As part of this apprenticeship he attended The General Infirmary at Leeds throughout 1814.

In 1815 Thackrah completed his apprenticeship in Leeds and was admitted to Guy's Hospital where on 4 October he is recorded as registering as a pupil and dresser<sup>4</sup>. This requirement for further training had been prescribed under the Apothecaries Act of 1815 in order that candidates for the examination for qualification as an apothecary, were able to present the necessary certificates of attendance at lectures and for the practice of medicine on the wards. Amongst Thackrah's teachers at Guy's was Sir Astley Cooper who lectured on anatomy and on physiology, the latter including the subject of the blood. Thackrah distinguished himself in his studies and was awarded the Physical Society prize for an essay on Diabetes.

This was a critical period in the development of medical training, for in March 1816 Parliament introduced a Bill for the Enlarging of the Royal College of Surgeons, which was designed to ensure that all those who wished to practise Surgery or Midwifery had been admitted to the College. The Bill also protected the rights of Apothecaries to prescribe medicines.

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<sup>2</sup> Notes made by Martin Ecclestone following a WEA Tutorial Class in Archaeology in 1978 accompanying this map, indicate that George Thackrah owned 'Minster View' in the late eighteenth century and acquired further land from a bequest by George Turner of Shadwell in 1801. Further parcels of land were exchanged between George Thackrah and the trustees of Lady Elizabeth Hastings at enclosure in 1806. The map is reproduced in *Shadwell and its People* (1978). I am indebted to Robert Dyson for this information.

<sup>3</sup> Information provided by Robert Dyson.

<sup>4</sup> Registered two days earlier was John Keats (b. 1796), the poet, who in the pursuit of his other ambition as a poet was not to practise medicine as a career and whose early death from tuberculosis came just six years later in 1821.

Early in the following year (1816) Thackrah applied to the Society of Apothecaries for admission to their examinations for qualification as an apothecary. His application is recorded as having been rejected on 14 March 1816 on the grounds of being too young, he being just two months under the age of twenty one, the age of eligibility. At much the same time he applied for Membership of the Royal College of Surgeons and in April he was awarded the Diploma. He renewed his application to the Apothecaries and his name appeared amongst the successful candidates recorded on 1 June 1816. From all of this we can see that he was showing all the signs of determination which were to be hallmarks of his career.

#### *Town Surgeon in Leeds and the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society*

After gaining his qualifications as a Surgeon and Apothecary, he returned to Leeds to practise and gained election to the office of 'town surgeon', a rather poorly paid appointment, often offered for tender and awarded to the lowest bidder<sup>5</sup>. However it did provide ample opportunity for the study of disease, especially amongst the poor, with whose working and living conditions he became familiar. His research led to further recognition, firstly by the trustees of the Workhouse Board, for whom he provided a report on the conditions of the poor lodging houses of the town. He also studied the nature and properties of blood during which he came into conflict with the town's most eminent surgeon, William Hey (1736-1819)<sup>6</sup>.

1819 saw the foundation of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society promoted by Benjamin Gott, one of the leading industrialists of Leeds, for the purpose of promoting learning and knowledge, particularly in the sciences and with the needs of industry especially in mind. He laid the foundation stone of the Philosophical Hall that year. Thackrah and another young physician practising in Leeds, Dr Adam Hunter, were appointed inaugural joint secretaries of the Society and served in that capacity until 1822. Thackrah gained the honour of delivering the inaugural lecture on 6 April 1821 which was remarkable in the range of learning that it addressed and also may reveal some of the qualities that made Thackrah a successful physician; "The thirst for improvement gives an exaltation of character, inextinguishable by labour, pain or misfortune. It is the parent of that ambition, which seeks the praise of contemporaries and pants for posthumous renown. Hence, also arises the ardent activity and preserving exertion, which produce the works of Genius and discoveries of Science."<sup>7</sup>

Following this success he had a period of chronic illness and also melancholia, which would now be known as depression. Having become established in practice in Leeds however, he resumed his public activities and during 1822 and 1823 delivered courses of lectures on Physiology and in 1824 on Digestion and Diet. As a surgeon apothecary he also had six apprentices under his supervision.

In 1824 he married Mary Henrietta Scott and they had one child, Mary Henrietta, recorded in the Thorner Parish Register as baptised in Shadwell on 21 August 1825. In 1828 however his wife died, then his daughter and at the end of the year, his mother, Alice Thackrah, whose death on 19 December 1828 and status as the wife of George Thackrah is recorded on the tombstone of her father John Leader at Thorner Parish Church.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Thackrah with Meiklejohn, 1989: 11

<sup>6</sup> Cleeland, J. and Burt, S., *Charles Turner Thackrah: A pioneer in the field of occupational health: Occupational Medicine*, 1995; 45, 6: 285-297,

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Thackrah with Meiklejohn, 1989: 12-13

<sup>8</sup> Recorded as a note in Thackrah with Meiklejohn, 1989:42-43

### *The foundation of academic medical training*

Meanwhile Thackrah had extended his teaching activities and, in 1826, established a private school of anatomy at 9, South Parade, Leeds. The training of surgeons in anatomy was dependent upon the acquisitions of subjects for dissection and at this time they were either the unclaimed bodies of paupers or 'resurrected' from graveyards. It is probably not unreasonable to suppose that Thackrah's position of Town Surgeon gave him opportunities to acquire suitable subjects.

Applications from students, who had studied at his school, for admission to the examination of the Royal College of Surgeons in London were to be rejected however on four occasions between 1826 and 1831. London was trying to prevent the challenge from provincial medical schools to the authority of the London medical schools. There was also antagonism and opposition to Thackrah from colleagues in Leeds as evidenced by a public quarrel which was fought out in the correspondence pages of *The Leeds Mercury*.

During 1827 the senior members of the profession at the Infirmary at Leeds were under attack from the junior members, mainly apothecaries led by Thackrah and his pupils, for their lack of skill and even malpractice. Charges of nepotism were also made. A crisis arose at a clinical session conducted by Samuel Smith, senior surgeon at the Infirmary, when a student of Thackrah's assaulted a member of the Infirmary staff. The pupil was fined £20. Thackrah sought to vindicate his pupil by writing to the Editor of the *Leeds Mercury* asserting that the case was a personal attack upon himself, inspired by jealousy of his attainments. He criticised his oppressors, especially Mr Samuel Smith, with particular vehemence calling them 'Arrogants' and 'Backbiters'. The letter was published on 19 May 1827 and a week later Mr Smith, a popular surgeon, had his response printed in the next edition, not on the letters page but in the first column of the front page thus attracting considerable attention. His criticism of Thackrah was unrestrained. He contrasted Thackrah's few months of training in London with his own superior and lengthier training in Edinburgh and considered Thackrah's character as 'the strongest accidental likeness ..... of Mr Puff', Mr Puff being a comic pompous character of Richard Brinsley Sheridan's 'The Critic' first performed in 1798.

But worse was to follow. This was the accusation in the letter that, through his dishonourable association with one of his patients, being a reference to the birth of an illegitimate son to Rebecca Wailles in 1823, he had brought the reputation of the profession into disrepute and this was why 'the respectable part of the profession in Leeds did not choose to associate with you'.

Thackrah had never denied this liaison, which had been conducted before his marriage, or that the child was his. He was to make provision for his son in his will. In his written response through the pages of *The Mercury*, he declares that his accusers do not know the facts and appeals to the readers; 'my professional character is before the world: my private character I leave to those who know it.'

Despite this, or perhaps because of it, he continued with his teaching and researches throughout 1827 and through 1828, the year of his wife's, his infant daughter's and his mother's deaths. As the 1820s drew to a close his personal fortunes improved and in March 1830 he remarried. His second wife, Grace Greenwood, was the daughter of Abram and Mary Greenwood of Dewsbury Moor House<sup>9</sup> and the ceremony took place at Dewsbury Parish Church, conducted by the Rev Dr Martin Naylor of Wakefield who was headmaster of Wakefield Grammar School, a prominent liberal and freemason and editor of the *Wakefield Star* newspaper<sup>10</sup>. In addition, the respect of the growing

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<sup>9</sup> Abram. Greenwood is listed as Gentry in Pigot's Directory of 1834.

<sup>10</sup> Hardy, G. *Thackrah's Grave*, *Occupational Medicine*, 2003; 53:505-6

circle of surgeons he had trained enhanced his reputation. Relations with the surgeons and physicians also improved. This culminated in the recognition that his skills would be essential to the establishment of a School of Medicine in Leeds.

Thackrah had failed in his attempts to have his own School of Anatomy recognised by the Royal College of Surgeons. There were already schools of medicine in Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Newcastle upon Tyne and Norwich. He visited the Manchester School in 1830 with two surgeons, Thomas Pridgin Teale and William Hey (the second) who had earlier been amongst 'The Arrogants'. In the following year, on 6 June 1831, two physicians and four surgeons, amongst them, Pridgin Teale, William Hey and Samuel Smith resolved 'that a school be established in Leeds for the purpose of giving such courses of lectures on subjects connected with Medicine and Surgery as will qualify for examinations at the College of Surgeons and Apothecaries Hall.'<sup>11</sup>

A few days later Thackrah was invited to join them. Smith and the other early opponents of Thackrah were now reconciled and in October of the same year, 1831, Thackrah informed the public that his School of Anatomy was to close and that those who had been admitted to his lectures would be able to continue their studies in Anatomy under him at the School of Medicine. The Leeds School of Medicine opened at the Public Dispensary on Templar Street, off Vicar Lane, on 25 October 1831. The programme of lectures for that first term includes Thackrah as the lecturer on the Thoracic Viscera and on Hernia and on the Diseases of the Pelvic Viscera. *See illustration.*

His role in the promotion of medical education in the town had begun in 1819 with his appointment as joint secretary to the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society and his public lectures. With the establishment of his School of Anatomy in 1826 and finally the foundation of the School of Medicine in 1831, of which he is recognised as one of the founders, the accolade awarded him as 'the founder of academic training in Leeds' by Professor Shimmin in his history *The University of Leeds – the First Half-Century*,<sup>12</sup> , is fully justified.

#### *Researches into Blood*

In 1818, after his return to Leeds, Thackrah was awarded the prize granted by Astley Cooper, his former teacher at Guy's, for 'the best dissertation on the Blood'. After further research during his appointment as Town Surgeon, to which reference has been made above, in 1819, he published '*An Inquiry into the Nature and Properties of the Blood as existent in Health and in Disease*'<sup>13</sup>. I am indebted to Dr Bryon Roberts, former consultant haematologist of Leeds for drawing attention to the importance of Thackrah's work in the pages of the Leeds Medical School Alumni magazine<sup>14</sup>. In that edition of the magazine, Dr Roberts wrote;

*Virtually all patients attending medical clinics from the time of the ancient Greeks to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were treated by bleeding. After the application of a tourniquet the vein was nicked by a scalpel blade and a jet of blood was collected in a pot. What Thackrah did was to collect blood sequentially into Galley pots and measure the clotting time. The blood was allowed to retract and the*

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<sup>11</sup> Anning, S.T. and Walls, W.K.J., 1982, *A History of the Leeds School of Medicine*, Leeds University Press, Reprinted 1993: 5 et seq.

<sup>12</sup> Shimmin, A.N., 1954, *The University of Leeds – the First Half-Century*, Leeds University Press

<sup>13</sup> Thackrah C. T., *An Inquiry into the Nature and Property of Blood as existent in Health and Disease*. London printed by Cox and Son, London 1819. A copy of this may be found at the University of Leeds in the Special Collections of the Brotherton Library.

<sup>14</sup> Roberts, B., 2009, *Charles Turner Thackrah, Clinical Scientist*, *Medicine Matters*, 28: 16. University of Leeds, School of Medicine University of Leeds, School of Medicine.

*clot, or crassamentum as Thackrah called it, was weighed. Thus Thackrah was able to establish a normal range for what we now know as fibrinogen. That normal range is the one in use today.*

*Among other observations he made were: that different surfaces affect the speed of clotting, that blood clotted slowly in a ligate vein, that tissue accelerated blood clotting and that there was delayed blood clotting in liver failure. Thus Thackrah established himself as a pioneer in the field of blood coagulation and in many ways anticipated the work on fibrinogen-fibrin reaction that Leeds Medical School has been so closely associated with in recent years.*

To demonstrate how unaware Leeds practitioners had been of the importance of Thackrah's work in the study of blood coagulation (haemostasis), Dr Roberts reveals that, having been a medical student in Leeds, and having practised and taught haematology in Leeds for 40 years from the 1950s it was only when preparing a lecture after retirement that he read about it in a book on the history of blood published in America in 1980.<sup>15</sup>

### *The Effects of Arts, Trades and Industry and Factory Reform*

The early nineteenth century was a period of rapid expansion of industrial activity especially in the northern manufacturing towns of Great Britain. Along with industrial growth came the exploitation of the factory workers who endured long hours of work, dreadful working conditions and low wages.

Social reformers such as Robert Owen and Jeremy Bentham showed the way to improvement and Richard Oastler and Michael Sadler pressed for the necessary legislative reforms. Factory Acts were passed in 1802 and 1819 and through the repeal of the Combination Acts, trade unionism was born. The conditions in Leeds were typical of the country. Bean Ing Mills, the world's first woollen mill, opened in 1792 by Benjamin Gott and originally with the name Park Mills, was located on the north bank of River Aire, on the site where, until recently, stood The Yorkshire Post building. It was described as 'the Wonder Factory' of the time and in 1830 employed 1,120 workers, of whom 607 were men, 301 women and 212 children. Thackrah refers several times in his 1831 publication to Bean Ing and the conditions endured by the employees there. The numbers there were just a small proportion of the 'fifty thousand persons, who spend their lives in the manufactories of Leeds and its neighbourhood or in allied or dependent occupations.'<sup>16</sup> Thackrah used statistical reports and the reports of the Poor Law Inspectors as well as his own observations from his medical duties and calculated that 'we may fairly say that at least 450 persons die annually in the borough of Leeds, from the injurious effects of manufactories, the crowded state of population and the consequent bad habits of life!'<sup>17</sup> He stated that his object in writing, what he called his tract, was 'to excite the public attention to the subject.'<sup>18</sup>

In the United Kingdom there had already been a number of publications addressing the diseases of particular groups of workers, for example by Pringle (1752) and Lind (1777) on the diseases of the army and of the health of seamen respectively and of Pott (1775 and 1808) and Bell (1794) on the occurrence of cancer among chimney sweeps and others affected by soot. Not long before Thackrah's treatise a book entitled 'The Moral and Physical Conditions of the Working Classes

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<sup>15</sup> Wintrobe, Maxwell M, 1980, *Blood, pure and eloquent; a story of discovery, of people, and of ideas*. McGraw Hill Inc.

<sup>16</sup> Thackrah with Meiklejohn: 1989:32.

<sup>17</sup> Thackrah, the Effects. ... in Thackrah with Meiklejohn, 1989:5

<sup>18</sup> Thackrah, the Effects..... in Thackrah with Meiklejohn, 1989:6

employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester' by Percival, Ferrier and Kay had been published, the second edition of which was to appear a year after Thackrah's in 1832.

But Thackrah's publication which appeared early in 1831, whose original title in full was *The Effects of the Principal Arts, Trades and Professions and of Civic States and Habits of Living and Longevity: with a particular reference to the Trades and Manufactures of Leeds: and suggestions for the removal of many of the agents, which produce disease, and shorten the duration of life* addressed ill-health and diseases associated with over 100 trades and other activities. He identified the agents (causes) of diseases of all the organs and systems, such as blood, circulatory system, nervous system, respiratory system, eyesight, skin and digestive organs and amongst his suggestions for the removal of these agents considered improving ventilation, reducing the hours spent standing, the removal of lead from the glazing of pottery, the removal of fumes, dust and high temperatures and many other measures from working environments and not least the reduction of hours of work of children. An edition was published in America within twelve months of it first appearing in England, and after new investigations in other industrial cities, a second edition appeared in England in 1832 with a revised text and including an additional 120 employments.

The book was reviewed favourably by the *Lancet* which concluded 'we confidently recommend Mr Thackrah's work to the attention of the profession, among which we trust he will find some successful followers in the benevolent cause he thus invites others to pursue.'<sup>19</sup> Whether or not it immediately found followers in the medical profession, it certainly caught the attention of social reformers, in particular Michael Sadler, who in 1831 had been elected MP for Aldborough in the County of York. Already active in agitating for reform of the working conditions for agricultural labourers, he had taken up Richard Oastler's call for the reform of conditions for the workers in the worsted mills of West Yorkshire.

On 15 December 1831, Sadler introduced a Bill in Parliament for the regulation of the labour of children and young persons in the mills and factories. On 9 January 1832 Thackrah was the principal speaker at a meeting in Leeds called to express support for Sadler's Factory Bill. At the second reading of the Bill on 16 March 1832, Sadler argued that 'the employer and employed do not meet on equal terms in the market of labour,' and described in detail the sufferings endured by children in the factories<sup>20</sup>. It was at this reading that he held Thackrah's publication in his hand and made his declaration to the House that is quoted at the start of this article. The Bill desired the restriction of the working hours of persons under eighteen years of age employed in factories, to a maximum (excluding allowance for meals) of ten hours a day, with the added condition that no child under nine years should be employed.

It did not become law at this point but the subsequent committees of enquiry and public demonstrations against the conditions of workpeople ensured that momentum was not lost. The Factory Act 1833 restricted children aged 9-14 (by stages) to 8 hours actual labour in all textile mills (except lace-manufacture), with 2 hours at school; young persons under 18 to 12 hours; and, four Factory Inspectors were appointed to enforce the legislation<sup>21</sup>.

Thackrah's publication however not only provided the information for the eventual persuasion of Parliament for the reform of the hours of work but also the evidence of the desirability to prevent accidents and ill-health through the improvement of the working conditions of employees.

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<sup>19</sup> Thackrah with Meiklejohn, 1989:32

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.historyhome.co.uk/people/sadlerbg.htm> A web of English History, Dr Marjorie Bloy

<sup>21</sup> <http://richardjohnbr.blogspot.co.uk/2011/01/ten-hour-movement-and-1833-factory-act.html>

Subsequent Factory Acts addressed the conditions endured by employees and improvement of safety of employees. And of course the improvement of the conditions of employees continues to the present day with the various Health and Safety Acts of recent times.

Professor Darren Shickle, Professor of Public Health at the Leeds Institute of Health Sciences, in his address at the opening of the Thackrah Building at the University of Leeds in 2008, reflected on how Thackrah's words resonated today<sup>22</sup> and illustrated this with three examples.

#### On Prevention

Thackrah wrote in 1832 in *The Effects* that 'we had rather attempt a remedy for the greatest of human ills, than take measures to *prevent* them.' Sir Derek Wanless, who chaired independent reviews on future health spending, remarked in 'Securing Good Health for the Whole Population (2004) that, 'The NHS will need to shift its focus from a national sickness service, which treats disease, to a national health service which focuses on preventing it.'

#### On the Use of Lead

Thackrah wrote in 1832, 'The total disuse of lead in glaze is highly desirable. Independent of injury sustained by the workmen, the consumers of the article may suffer from this mineral.' A report on conditions in Mexico in 1995 observed 'a positive correlation between children's blood lead levels and the lead content of glazed ceramic ware ..... Environmental lead could be controlled by adequate public health programs.'

#### On the Employment of Children

Thackrah wrote in 1832 'No man of humanity can reflect without distress on the state of thousands of children, many from six to seven years of age, roused from their beds at an early hour, hurried to the mills and kept there with an interval of only forty minutes till a late hour at night – kept moreover in an atmosphere impure not only as the air of a town, not only as defective in ventilation, but as loaded also with noxious dust.'

Yet in the world in 2008 Professor Shickle noted that

- 128 million children are believed to be engaged in hazardous work
- 218 million children aged 5-17 are engaged in child labour, excluding child domestic labour
- In sub-Saharan Africa around one in three children is engaged in child labour, representing 69 million children.

#### *Thackrah's Final Two Years*

The preparation of the considerably enlarged, second edition of his book in 1832 a year after the first, no doubt added considerable strain on Thackrah. In addition, the Medical School in Leeds had opened its doors to students in October 1831 and Thackrah had his teaching commitments throughout the session. The records of the Council of the School show that he was still active in its affairs at the end of the first session in 1832<sup>23</sup>. There had been a cholera epidemic in Leeds in 1825 and another in 1832. After studying the disease here and in the previous year in Newcastle he published a paper entitled 'Cholera, its Character and Treatment.....'<sup>24</sup> It was also in this year that the

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<sup>22</sup> Shickle D., *Thackrah's Words Resonate Today* in *Medicine Matters*, 27:3 School of Medicine, University of Leeds, 2008.

<sup>23</sup> Anning S.T. and Walls W.K.J., 1982:22

<sup>24</sup> Cleeland J. and Burt S., 1995

Anatomy Act was passed which laid down new requirements on Schools for the securing of bodies for dissection. Thackrah was also negotiating over land in Shadwell. A Memorial of Lease and Release of Land dated 19 and 20 November 1832 records that Thackrah acquired the lease on a number of parcels of land in the village together with 'dwelling house and several outbuildings..... now in the occupation of Charles Turner Thackrah.'<sup>25</sup> His association with Shadwell, where his father and grandfather had their roots, was re-established, if it had ever been broken after the death of his father in 1820.

As noted by Anning and Walls in A History of the Leeds School of Medicine, Thackrah 'had suffered intermittently since the age of twenty-one from a disease of the mucous coat of the intestine'<sup>26</sup>. In early 1833 he began to prepare a new edition of his textbook on the disorders of the blood but became ill with a pulmonary infection<sup>27</sup>, generally regarded as tuberculosis. He died on 23 May 1833 at the age of thirty-eight and the funeral took place on 29 May conducted by Dr Naylor who had officiated at his wedding three years earlier. He was buried at Dewsbury Parish Church and his epitaph reads; 'After a life spent in the active practice of that profession of which he was a distinguished ornament (he) fell a martyr to his exertions'<sup>28</sup>. The word 'ornament' to modern ears sounds rather an understatement of his status. Cleeland and Burt quote his obituary in the Leeds Mercury: 'Distinguished by an ardent and anxious zeal in his profession, to which he devoted his mind with unremitting assiduity, and gifted with a sound judgement to weigh accurately the results of laborious and patient investigation. .... He will long be lamented by numerous individuals, who from his talents were best able to appreciate them.'

### *Conclusion*

The contribution by Thackrah to occupational health in the English-speaking world is immense and he is regarded generally as 'The Father of Occupational Medicine'. From time to time this opinion has been articulated. In 1855, Sir John Simon, the first chief medical officer appointed by the government considered Thackrah's contribution to preventative medicine as comparable to the work of Jenner on smallpox<sup>29</sup>.

In the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of Hunter's Diseases of Occupations published in 2010, the editors stated, in the chapter entitled 'Donald Hunter and the history of occupational health', 'It was Thackrah's celebrated study which broke new ground by seeking systematically to link the incidence of industrial diseases with statistical evidence of life expectancy in different districts. Although he was one of the main commentators on the adverse effects of industrialisation, he most clearly quantified and detailed the health effects. Thackrah shared with other later investigators not only a deep interest in the statistical evidence gathered by census enumerators and civil registrars but a passionate commitment to the cause of industrial and sanitation reform.'<sup>30</sup>

As I hope has been illustrated in this short article he played a major role in the foundation of medical education in Leeds, as a researcher in relation to his studies into the nature of blood, as a clinical investigator into the diseases and ill-health suffered by employees in trades and industries, and as a social reformer. Despite this the name of Charles Turner Thackrah is still not well known

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<sup>25</sup> West Riding Register of Deeds, LH 646948 1832. Robert Dyson has identified the site of the house on part of Whin Moor Field on Whin Moor Field Road, now Whin Moor Lane close to the junction with Gateland Lane.

<sup>26</sup> Anning, S.T. and Walls, W.K.J., 1982:23

<sup>27</sup> Hardy, G., 2003,

<sup>28</sup> Hardy, G., 2003.

<sup>29</sup> Shickle, D., 2008.

<sup>30</sup> Hunter's Diseases of Occupations, Tenth Edition, 2010, Editors; Baxter, P.J. et al. CRC press

today in Leeds, despite some progress during the last thirty years. There is no statue of him, no portrait in a public institution, no recognition of him in The Leeds Story at Leeds City Museum and no mention of him in the guides for visitors to the city. He is recognised by the University of Leeds as one of the founders of the Medical School in Leeds in 1831, and at the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Medical School in 1981 an eponymous lecture to be delivered bi-annually on the theme of occupational medicine was established by the University in collaboration with the Society of Occupational Medicine. The Society produced a reprint of Meiklejohn's publication of 1957, the edition referred to in the introduction, as a Commemorative Bi-centenary Edition of *The Effects* for their Annual Scientific Meeting held in York in 1995. In 2008 the Thackrah Building was opened on the University of Leeds western campus (the former Leeds Grammar School site) which, at the time of writing, is the home of Medical School's Institute of Health Sciences. Here in the foyer are displays which mark Thackrah's achievements.

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It is a pleasure to record that in the last few years short summaries of the life and work of Thackrah have been published in two popular outlets; in 2010 with an entry in *How Leeds Changed the World* by Mike McCann published by Armley Press, in which he was given the accolade, 'Top Lad' and also in *North Leeds Life* of November 2014 which included, an informative article by Eveleigh Bradford on Charles Turner Thackrah in the They Lived in Leeds series. My thanks go to both these authors and their publishers for bringing Thackrah's achievements to greater public notice.

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