Collective Struggle and Individual Sacrifice:

The Edinburgh Seven and the Creation of Legacy for British Medical Women

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments …………………………………………………………………………… 1

Introduction ……………………………………………………………………………….. 2
A "Gallant Little Band" Descends on Edinburgh

Chapter I ……………………...………………………………………………………………8
The Lady Students Assemble: Victorian Womanhood, The Medical Profession, and The Formation of the Edinburgh Seven

Chapter II ……………………………………………………………………………... 24
Scholarships, Riots, and Expulsion: The Edinburgh Seven Challenges Gender Expectations

Chapter III ……………………………………………………………………………...40
Individual Success after Edinburgh: Creating the Next Generation of Medical Women

Conclusion…………………………………………………………………………………57
"It's Dogged That Does It": Crafting Legacy

Appendix ………………………………………………………………………………… 62

Bibliography……………………………………………………………………………….63

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Introduction: A "Gallant Little Band" Descends on Edinburgh

In 1869, five women were accepted by the University of Edinburgh to become fully matriculated students in order to obtain a medical degree. They were the first women to officially matriculate as undergraduates at a British University. In August 1870, the *Daily Review* commended the women as they continued to prove themselves capable of the intense education:

> We believe that these results prove… that these women who are devoting themselves to obtain, in spite of all difficulties, a thorough knowledge of their profession, are far more thoroughly in earnest than most of the men are, and that their ultimate success is certain in proportion. Nor would we omit the inference that, this being so, those who wantonly throw obstacles in the way of this gallant little band, incur a proportionately heavy responsibility, as wanting not only in the spirit of chivalry, but even in the love of fair play, which we should be sorry to think wanting in any Briton.[1]

At the same time, the *Daily Review* insisted that the women's performance did not prove their superiority over men, very aware that this idea was "a thing that few people would assert." A year after the *Daily Review*'s praise, the *Scotsman*, a daily newspaper located in Edinburgh, featured a small poem called "The Model Woman:"

> (*Recommended to the Lady Students for dutiful imitation.*)
> She never left her sphere;
> But let Flirtation, like a worm i' the bud,
> Feed on her painted cheek. She lived in hope;
> And with a chignon and a dress improver
> She stood with difficult on high heels,
> Smiling at boys.[2]

For this anonymous author, the women were defying expectations, not positively but subversively. The *Scotsman* was a major supporter of the women's education at the University, yet this poem criticizes their efforts. Perhaps the author wanted to mock what the women's

[1] Margaret Todd, *Life of Sophia Jex-Blake* (London: Macmillan, 1918), 263.
[2] "The Model Woman," *Scotsman* (Edinburgh, Scotland), Dec. 21, 1871.

opponents were thinking. Nevertheless, the poem offers a critical opinion that contrasts the *Daily Review*'s excitement about the "gallant little band" who dared to study medicine with the men.

This "little band" of "lady students" would become known as the Edinburgh Seven.[3] This group sought to complete their medical education at the University of Edinburgh in order to join the official medical register in Great Britain, although they would not be the first to do so; Elizabeth Blackwell and Elizabeth Garrett (later Garrett-Anderson) had already accomplished this feat. By the time the Edinburgh Seven began their studies, the medical profession had closed off any loopholes that the women could utilize to join the register. Although women were not explicitly barred from practicing medicine in the United Kingdom, they would have to complete their medical education at a British university, none of which accepted women. Medical education on the European mainland, where many women had already become accomplished doctors, was not acceptable in order to qualify for the British medical register.[4]

This thesis aims to analyze the Edinburgh Seven's experience as a cohesive group and also devote attention to the individuals who made up the group. The formation of the Edinburgh Seven was unplanned, and when the University forced the women to leave in 1872 without degrees, the group dissolved almost immediately as the women's paths diverged. By examining both the collective experience of these women in Edinburgh as well as their individual lives, I hope to consider not only what these women brought to the group but also what they took with them once the group separated. Almost all of the women would go on to have successful medical careers, finding other ways to complete their education. Their time in Edinburgh only

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[3] The five women mentioned above were joined by two others in 1870. The official members of the Edinburgh Seven are: Sophia Jex-Blake, Edith Pechey, Isabel Thorne, Helen Evans, Matilda Chaplin, Mary Anderson, and Emily Bovell. The group's name and membership will be addressed in Chapter I.

[4] Catriona Blake, *Charge of the Parasols: Women's Entry to the Medical Profession* (London: Women's Press Limited, 1990), 20-21.

encompassed a few years of their lives. I argue, however, that their shared experience was a necessary and instructive roadblock for the women that would ultimately benefit the future generations of medical women in Britain. Furthermore, the conflicts that resulted from the group's efforts caught the attention of observers across the country, raising questions surrounding gender roles, women's higher education, and the medical profession.

After leaving the University of Edinburgh, almost all the members joined the medical profession in some capacity. For the three women featured prominently in this thesis, their careers focused more specifically on the care of women or the advancement of women in the medical profession. The Edinburgh Seven came about during a time when the independent, upper-middle class lady could respectfully enter the public sphere and benefit the public good in some capacity. Paradoxically, these women justified their participation in the medical profession based on "natural" female qualities, like their caring, sympathetic characteristics, thus playing into Victorian understandings of gender. They also used specific claims of female delicacy and modesty to demand female doctors replace male doctors for the sake of the patients. In other words, these women often based their arguments for women's advancement in the public sphere on traditional ideas surrounding gender. Indeed, this thesis will reveal the various ways in which these women both challenged and adhered to Victorian ideas of gender during their education and professional careers.

As I mentioned above, I will specifically look at the lives of three of the women: Sophia Jex-Blake, Isabel Thorne, and Edith Pechey. I chose to focus on these three women for a few reasons. At a technical level, more material exists about them compared to the other women in the group, allowing for a more detailed analysis. More importantly, however, their lives fit the

goals of this thesis quite well. They were the members most dedicated to securing medical degrees within Britain, and they also remained in relatively close contact with each other after the events in Edinburgh. Perhaps most important is their significance in the formation of the Edinburgh Seven. Jex-Blake led the group as she was the first to apply and organized all communication and logistics for the group; Thorne and Pechey were the first two to join her. Margaret Todd, a close friend and likely lover of Jex-Blake, said about the three, "Taking the trio together, one simply could not have wished for abler representatives of a struggling cause."[5] Although the abundant material was a matter of convenience, their importance to the group and personal connections to each other provide a strong foundation for the claims in this thesis.

The first chapter of this thesis introduces the women and explains how the Edinburgh Seven came to be. It questions the title "Edinburgh Seven," the groups' creation, and who was included in its membership. Emphasizing the impromptu creation of the group, the chapter also considers the connection between Victorian understandings of women, especially the concept of the "redundant" woman, as analyzed by Martha Vicinus, and the arguments used by the women to justify their inclusion in the medical profession. The second chapter then dives into the group's experience in Edinburgh, focusing on three particular events that raised questions about gender for the women as well as the male students at the University. Chapter II also discusses the ways in which these events publicized the Edinburgh Seven as a united group bullied by an uncompromising institution and its students, thus gaining the group the support of sympathetic observers. The third and final chapter explores the lives of the three women after Edinburgh, describing their work and how this work contributed to the development of the next generation

[5] Todd, 255.

of medical women. Chapter III, along with the Conclusion, also considers the ways in which they crafted a legacy for the next generation to emulate and follow.

I found much of the primary source material in the archival collections of the University of Edinburgh, such as personal correspondence, pamphlets, newspaper articles, and, of course, the University's administrative records and documents. The collections at the British Library and the London School of Economics' Women's Library offered further primary material. The British Library's microfilm collection of the *Magazine of the London School of Medicine for Women* was a rich resource, and I discovered one of Jex-Blake's few surviving letters here as well. I also found a significant amount of my material digitally. Many of the published writings of Jex-Blake, Thorne, and Pechey are digitized and available online, and the extensive digitized archive of the *Scotsman*, available through Columbia University Libraries, was valuable for gathering observers' reactions to the events surrounding the Edinburgh Seven.

The historiography on this subject is paradoxically plentiful and limited at the same time. Unfortunately, a secondary source dedicated exclusively to the experiences of the Edinburgh Seven does not exist. Many sources, like Catriona Blake's *Charge of the Parasols*, feature the Edinburgh Seven but does not focus entirely on its existence. Some sources focus on only one of the women, like Shirley Roberts' and Edythe Lutzker's biographies on Jex-Blake and Pechey, respectively. Others refer to an issue that I include in this thesis but is not my main focus, like Kristin Kondrlik's analysis of the *Magazine of the London School of Medicine for Women*. Admittedly, by following the lives of three distinct women, my thesis brings together a broad range of topics, including gender politics in Britain, the Victorian medical profession, medicine in colonial India, and university history. Such a task requires a historiography that casts a wide

net, and all of the sources mentioned above have been beneficial to my understanding of the Edinburgh Seven, especially Roberts' and Lutzker's biographies.

Understandings of Victorian beliefs surrounding gender come from the works of Ben Griffin, Brian Harrison, and Martha Vicinus. The concepts of these three historians are applied to the complicated ways in which the women of the Edinburgh Seven performed traditional gender practices while also explicitly challenging them by demanding entry into the public sphere. M. Jeanne Peterson provides a detailed explanation of the British medical profession during the Edinburgh Seven's existence that gives context to the professors and male students' animosity towards the women. One final plentiful source is Margaret Todd's biography of Sophia Jex-Blake, written immediately after Jex-Blake's death. An interesting combination of primary and secondary material, Todd fills the biography with personal letters and diary entries, almost all of which are now lost and likely destroyed.[6] Although her portrayal of Jex-Blake reflects clear bias on Todd's part, it provides the reader an opportunity to discover fascinating material of daily correspondence that would otherwise be in an archive.

[6] One of Jex-Blake's final requests was that her personal letters, diaries, and documents be given to Todd, or, if Todd had passed before her death, be "burnt without examination in the presence of my executor or witness." Todd likely burned the material after completing her biography. Shirley Roberts, *Sophia Jex-Blake: A Woman Pioneer in Nineteenth Century Medical Reform* (London; New York: Routledge, 1993), 4-5.

The Lady Students Assemble: Victorian Womanhood, The Medical Profession, and The Formation of the Edinburgh Seven

Sophia Jex-Blake at age twenty-five.[7]

The Edinburgh Seven formed at a time when Victorian ideals were both deeply entrenched in British society and, at the same time, fairly unstable. The objectives of these women challenged the Victorian domestic ideology, but their arguments for their radical demands relied on "natural" female characteristics. Members of the medical profession and other skeptics, however, did not believe these characteristics could justify their inclusion in a male-dominated profession struggling to claim a gentlemanly status. This chapter will discuss these ideologies, arguments, and concerns, providing context for the formation of the Edinburgh Seven. It will then explain how this formation occurred while also introducing the women of this group, specifically Sophia Jex-Blake, Isabel Thorne, and Edith Pechey. Although these three

[7] Portrait by Samuel Laurence. Found in Roberts.

women do not represent all the members of the Edinburgh Seven, they demonstrate a common background and a shared interest in joining the medical profession to help others. By explaining the group's formation, the chapter will raise questions surrounding its name and membership, already beginning to consider how these women crafted a narrative of themselves through the "Edinburgh Seven" title.

The Status of Victorian Women and of the Medical Profession

Victorian Britain remains infamous for its strict separation of male and female spheres, so it is important to give context to the practice that determined all aspects of Victorian daily life. Ben Griffin provides an explanation for the "Victorian domestic ideology" that was the foundation for this society.[8] Through this ideology, men and women were delegated to separate spheres of work: public and private, respectively. Despite the opposing nature of these two duties, this division of labor intended to create and support marital harmony. Griffin explains, "This ideology placed a high premium on household harmony and sought to produce that harmony not through consensual decision-making but through the subjection of women to the will of the male head of household."[9] Thus, harmony was determined by the husband's authority. The ideal wife, meanwhile, accepted her position in order to keep the domestic sphere undisturbed: "The pursuit of one's own desires was seen as unwomanly and selfish, especially in married women, whose thoughts ought to be devoted to the pursuit of their husbands' happiness."[10] Ironically, independent, unmarried women did not have to negotiate this form of surrender. Brian Harrison explains in *Separate Spheres* that the independent woman did not

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[8] Ben Griffin, *The Politics of Gender in Victorian Britain: Masculinity, Political Culture and the Struggle for Women's Rights* (Cambridge UP, 2012), 38.
[9] Griffin, 63.
[10] Griffin, 47.

threaten the authority of the husband or challenge domestic peace, and, therefore, her opinions or actions were not a risk to others.[11] An independent woman, therefore, could act with more freedom than one who was married.

The independent woman was a topic of concern for Victorian social commentators. "Redundant women," single middle class women without any marital prospects, were considered a blight of the newly industrial United Kingdom.[12] Rather than accept a life as a societal failure, these women challenged the boundaries placed on them in the home, took advantage of their resources, and "[pioneered] new occupations, new living conditions, and new public roles."[13] Martha Vicinus argues these redundant women captured "unclaimed areas" that men did not necessarily dominate, like education, nursing, and social work, in order to enter public occupations.[14] By relying on and insisting upon the innate nurturing qualities of a woman, these women justified their intrusion on their ability to care and nurture others in order to take "respectable" positions. While not all the women in the Edinburgh Seven matched the "redundant woman" description perfectly, many of them utilized similar arguments to justify their own entry into the medical profession.

Women were not always excluded from medical practice, and before the Victorian age, women dominated the profession of midwives. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, men had asserted their position as physicians by reworking medical knowledge to make it more exclusive. Catriona Blake, in *Charge of the Parasols*, explains, "By codifying and

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[11] Brian Harrison, *Separate Spheres: The Opposition to Women's Suffrage in Britain* (London: Croom Helm Ltd, 1978), 51-53.
[12] Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 3.
[13] Vicinus, 6.
[14] Vicinus, 15.

extending knowledge, men claim it as their property and seek to exclude others (particularly women) through the process of mystification."[15] By mid-nineteenth century, women were relegated to "a subordinate and ancillary role in medicine" as midwives and nurses with little training and knowledge, socially distinct from the roles of medical men.[16] To justify their return to a strictly exclusive profession, women relied mostly on the benefits of the natural feminine traits as doting, sympathetic creatures while also insisting they were capable of gaining the intricate knowledge required to succeed. Kaarin Leigh Michaelsen describes the "intricate balancing act" medical women had to practice between demonstrating their professional identity and identities as women.[17] Michaelsen argues that these women viewed their actions as the "logical and necessary expansion of the existing category of 'women's concerns' into the new realm of 'the social,' and not an explicit challenge to the ideology of separate spheres."[18] Applying a gendered idea to their own medical practice, these women believed their female traits could provide a different, improved form of medical care that medical men could not offer.[19]

The women of the Edinburgh Seven espoused these views to justify their entrance into the medical profession. Jex-Blake, in her essay "Medicine as a Profession for Women," stated "women are *naturally* inclined and fitted for medical practice."[20] Thorne, in her *Sketch of the foundation and development of the London School of Medicine for Women*, relied on the inherent connection between women and medicine when she insisted, "A medical woman should possess

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[15] Blake, 16.
[16] Blake, 18.
[17] Kaarin Leigh Michaelsen, "Becoming 'Medical Women': British Female Physicians and the Politics of Professionalism, 1860–1933" (Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2003), 8. Michaelsen's work continues far beyond the period of the Edinburgh Seven and analyzes the fruition of the professional identity of the "medical woman" in early twentieth century Britain.
[18] Michaelsen, 22.
[19] Michaelsen, 25.
[20] Sophia Jex-Blake, "Medicine as a Profession for Women" in *Medical Women: Two Essays* (1872), 8.

a combination of all that is best in womanhood."[21] The medical woman had the ability to sympathize with her patients and therefore be earnest in her care for them. She could devote her selfless qualities to her patients, much like she would a husband or children. "Purity of mind and large-heartedness" were as important to the medical woman as her skill in medicine.[22]

This argument worked particularly well to support the idea that medical women could focus on the treatment of women and children. Indeed, strict rules of modesty and morality kept many women from disclosing information to their male physicians. For Jex-Blake, Thorne, and others, female patients would benefit hugely from treatment by medical women with whom they felt comfortable. By offering their services, medical women "could help [other women] to succeed in their most important role — 'becoming better mothers and making society more homelike.'"[23] Thus, theses demands did not in turn demand the destruction of Victorian society, but rather they worked within Victorian notions of gender that gave women the natural, innate skill in caring for others, particularly other women and children. Harrison insists, "It was far more than the mere broadening out of career opportunities which led mid-Victorian feminists to encourage women into the medical profession;" women in medicine offered female patients the opportunity to be open about their health concerns and thus receive proper treatment.[24] Jex-Blake argued it was "only custom and habit" that allowed men to be the physicians of both genders and doubted medical men could cater to the "far more sensitive and delicately organized feelings of

[21] Isabel Thorne, *Sketch of the foundation and development of the London School of Medicine for Women* (London: G. Sharrow, 1905), 45.
[22] Thorne, *Sketch*, 43.
[23] Michaelsen, 29.
[24] Harrison, 67.

his patient," in this case, a woman.[25] The Edinburgh Seven advocated for women's inclusion in the medical profession in a way that followed Victorian ideology rather than fully challenged it.

Despite these modest arguments, however, most medical men opposed the idea of women joining the profession. The medical profession in Victorian Britain was a disorganized group struggling to claim status as a "profession." Hierarchical divisions, low financial status, and a privileging of social status over scientific knowledge prevented the profession as a whole from achieving a unified, gentlemanly reputation, as the majority of medical men were perceived as tradesmen or craftsmen competing with one another rather than as knowledgeable individuals with authority. M. Jeanne Peterson explains, "Medicine's all too recent associations with the occupations of artisan and shopkeeper tied the profession to the world of competition and profit, both of which were antithetical to status as a gentleman."[26] The "near-obsession" of medical men over the importance of high incomes and fees, she insists, "offers further substantiation of the discrepancy between their financial resources and the status they wanted to claim."[27] The Medical Act of 1858, while creating a more regulated form of registration, failed to fully unify the medical profession as the hierarchical distinctions between physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries remained and prevented any significant social improvement.[28] Thus, when the women were applying to the University of Edinburgh, "Victorian society… had limited confidence in the power of medical 'science' and serious reservations about medical men's social authority and prestige."[29] Apprehensive about any challenge to their own status, the

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[25] Jex-Blake, "Medicine as a Profession," 10.
[26] M. Jeanne Peterson, *The Medical Profession in Mid-Victorian London* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), 196.
[27] Peterson, 222-223.
[28] Peterson, 35.
[29] Peterson, 38.

majority of medical men saw the inclusion of women as a threat to their public perception and incomes.

At the University of Edinburgh, the women students had to obtain the approval three institutional groups to matriculate: the medical faculty, the Senatus, composed of professors from all university departments, and the University Court, a newer and larger body consisting of university administrators, professors, and former graduates.[30] While the women found numerous supporters from professors throughout the University, like David Masson, Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature, some of their most staunch opponents were members of the medical faculty. Professors Joseph Lister, William Turner, and Crum Brown were hesitant if not adverse to the idea of the women taking classes and would later vote to remove them.[31] The group's greatest opponent was Professor Robert Christison, who taught materia medica and therapeutics. Christison was a formidable obstacle because of his powerful social standing not only in the university ─ he held positions on every institutional board the women had to face, including the Senatus, the University Court, and the Royal Infirmary Board ─ but also in British society. He was "one of the most widely known and respected men in the public life of [Edinburgh]."[32] Roberts argues Christison's aversion to the women studying at the university was "an expression of loyalty to his profession" as he feared the inclusion of women "would inevitably lower its standards."[33] The other medical professors (though not always all) certainly shared his concerns,

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[30] Robert D. Anderson, Michael Lynch, and Nicholas Phillipson, *The University of Edinburgh: An illustrated history* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 119.
[31] Lister was the professor of surgery, Turner was the professor of anatomy, and Crum Brown was the professor of chemistry. Calendar of the University of Edinburgh, 1872-1873. EUA IN1/PUB/1. Edinburgh University Library Special Collections, Edinburgh, Scotland.
[32] Roberts, 96. Christison was also the Physician-in-ordinary for Queen Victoria in Scotland and President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.
[33] Roberts, 95.

reflecting the unstable position of the medical profession. They saw the women's entrance as a potential threat to the reputation of the university as well as the medical profession as a whole. This initial dislike would only grow into a stronger desire to see them removed as the women began to demand more from the university.

Women Knock on the Door

Before the Edinburgh Seven began their studies, there was only one woman practicing medicine in Great Britain: Elizabeth Garrett-Anderson. Her strategy to join the medical profession embraced individual effort and refined appearances to win the support of others. Michaelsen explains Garrett's strategy as one that "involved deliberately taking a non-confrontational approach, prevailing on the good will and liberal inclinations of individual physicians to give her access to scientific knowledge and clinical training rather than campaigning vociferously and publicly."[34] While training as a nurse at Middlesex Hospital in 1860, Garrett maintained a professional, feminine dress and a polite demeanor in order to win the respect of her male classmates, understanding she was representing all women who wanted to become medical professionals.[35] After her classmates petitioned to remove her from Middlesex Hospital, she applied to multiple schools, including St Andrews and the University of Edinburgh, but all schools refused to admit her.[36] She completed her education through private, individual tutoring with esteemed medical men, mirroring traditional apprenticeships that were beginning to diminish in popularity compared to medical schools.[37] She took and passed the examinations of

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[34] Michaelsen, 48.
[35] Blake, 58.
[36] Blake, 61-62.
[37] Blake, 65. Medical schools will be discussed in more detail in Chapter II.

the Society of Apothecaries, and by 1865 she was officially registered as the first female medical professional in the United Kingdom with an apothecary license.[38]

Garrett-Anderson's dedication to achieving a "quiet success" rather than an "ideological campaign or crusade" proved to be a fruitful strategy.[39] She acted individually, intending for her triumph to be a symbol to persuade observers that women could be medical professionals while still remaining ladies. Blake argues that Garrett-Anderson was "a *pioneer*, carving out a career for herself, rather than a *campaigner*, with the central purpose of opening up the medical profession for women generally."[40] She did not look to directly open the profession for other women through her actions. If anything, she was concerned that if she did not accomplish this feat, someone else might attempt to and fail: "It is a great thing for anyone in my position to be alive to the necessity for exercising tact and showing womanliness of manner and externals, and I fear that if I at all gave up the post, someone less fitted for it… might take it and disgrace the cause."[41] Thus, she protected her image and focused on her own work, recognizing herself as a pioneer that represented the future of medical women.

The women of the Edinburgh Seven shared Garrett-Anderson's perspective on women's natural inclination to medical practice, but their strategy differed. First, the women had to complete their education at a British university. Garrett-Anderson's achieved her goal by completing her education privately. After her success, however, the Society of Apothecaries passed a resolution requiring candidates to be taught at a recognized medical school.[42] This

[38] Blake, 66. Garrett-Anderson's father threatened to take legal action against the Society when it almost refused to let her take the examinations.
[39] Michaelsen, 49-50.
[40] Blake, 129.
[41] Blake, 63.
[42] Blake, 66.

resolution closed off any possibility for the group to join the register like Garrett-Anderson: the Edinburgh Seven had to acquire a degree from a British medical school, none of which accepted women at the time. Furthermore, while Garrett-Anderson acted individually, the Edinburgh Seven would attempt to enter the profession as a group. Its creation was not planned, however. It was a group composed of individual women, each with her own personal interests but still sharing one goal: obtaining a medical degree from the University of Edinburgh. They were not inextricably tied together, but they were still united: this contradictory existence becomes clear when their formation under the leadership of Sophia Jex-Blake is explained.

Jex-Blake thoroughly believed women had the natural characteristics ideal for medical practice, and she was devoted to the cause almost to a fault. Her intense personality surprised many, and her stubbornness alienated others. She understood the importance of appearances but was far more concerned about instigating enduring change. Born into a conservative, religious family of comfortable means in 1840, she had little interest in marriage and motherhood and instead pursued higher education, despite her father's initial frustrations.[43] She found joy in work that benefited others, and she described herself "very like a life-boat - valueless in itself, yet useful enough in saving better things alive."[44] Originally interested in teaching, she closely observed Garrett-Anderson's efforts to join the medical profession, even helping her with her application to the University of Edinburgh in 1862.[45] Although supportive of her work, Jex-Blake found Garrett-Anderson's strategy to be weak and roundabout as it avoided obtaining a degree from an official institution. She wrote to her friend about the issue around 1863:

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[43] Roberts, 16, 21. Jex-Blake never married, but she had many close relationships with other women, such as Octavia Hill, Lucy Sewall, and Margaret Todd. While it is hard to determine their exact nature, some scholars believe these relationships were romantic.
[44] Roberts, 24.
[45] Roberts, 35.

> I think it is almost comparatively immaterial whether she individually ever does or does not practice medicine, but immensely important that the public acception [sic] of the possibility of female physicians should be gained. If I were she I had rather force my way to a physician's M.D. through all difficulties and opposition and then die, than live a cosy life of medical practice, half-recognized, and evading the really critical object. … Of course the other is the easier - even perhaps the most plausible - and it would want a very deep conviction, a very complete self dedication, to give up one's life to a struggle *for a principle* in the face of all that must be encountered.[46]

When writing this letter, Jex-Blake did not intend to practice medicine, but she became enamored with medical work while visiting the United States between 1865 and 1868. Observing and working at the New England Hospital for Women and Children, she became close friends with Dr. Lucy Sewall, the resident physician. She wrote to her mother, "I find myself getting desperately in love with medicine as a science and as an art, to an extent I could not have believe possible."[47] In 1868, Jex-Blake began her education at the newly-opened Women's Medical College of the New York Infirmary, but she was forced to return to Britain after her father's death.[48]

After dedicating some time to take care of her mother, Jex-Blake returned her attention to continuing her medical studies in Britain. The only way to become a medical professional was for her to obtain a degree from a British university, not that she minded the challenge. Rather, it was the perfect way to "force her way" to a degree without loopholes. She would face the University and the medical profession directly. When choosing the university, she described in her essay *Medical Women* that "her thoughts naturally turned to Scotland, to which so much credit is always given for its enlightened views respecting education, and where the Universities

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[46] Sophia Jex-Blake, "Sophia Jex-Blake to 'Dearest Dora,' 3 January, 1863(?)," RP 9813, British Library, London, England. This letter appears to be one that was not destroyed by Todd. Exactly who "Dearest Dora" is is unknown.
[47] Roberts, 61.
[48] Roberts, 76. The Women's Medical College of the New York Infirmary was founded by Elizabeth Blackwell, the only other woman listed on the British medical register. Roberts, 72.

boast of their freedom from ecclesiastical and other trammels."[49] She applied to the University of Edinburgh in 1869, and despite the initial approval from the medical faculty and the University Senatus, the University Court rejected her application, claiming they could not make "temporary arrangement in the interest of one lady."[50] Jex-Blake would not let this small issue to deter her. With the encouragement of Professor Masson, she published an advertisement in the *Scotsman* asking for other "ladies" to join her to take separate classes for medical degrees.[51]

One of the first of the women to respond to Jex-Blake's advertisement was Isabel Thorne. Like Jex-Blake, Isabel Jane Pryer was born to a family of comfortable means in 1834.[52] She grew up outside of London, and after her father's death when she was sixteen, she worked to help support the family. Finances must not have been a significant issue, however, as she was able to continue her studies at Queen's College and in Paris.[53] She worked as a governess for four years before marrying Joseph Thorne in 1856.[54] Immediately after their wedding, the couple traveled to Shanghai for Joseph's business. Her first son, Thomas, was born in 1857, but he was premature and frail. Thorne described her doctor as "not well acquainted with attendance on women and children," and he struggled to improve the child's situation. A little over a year later, Thomas died from what was likely whooping cough.[55] This tragedy sparked Thorne's desire to learn medicine so that she may be able to provide proper care for women and children that her firstborn did not receive.

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[49] Sophia Jex-Blake, "Medical Education of Women" in *Medical Women: Two Essays* (1872), 82.
[50] Roberts, 85.
[51] Roberts, 85.
[52] Isabel Thorne, "Diary of Isabel Thorne," E2009.17, Coll-1175, Edinburgh University Library Special Collections, Edinburgh, Scotland, 6.
[53] Thorne, "Diary," 7.
[54] Thorne, "Diary," 10-11.
[55] Thorne, "Diary," 16.

When one of her daughters became dangerously ill, she returned to England in 1862 with her and her other daughter.[56] She then began her education in midwifery, taking classes at the Ladies Medical College in 1864. She recalled later on that she found the teaching "of a very elementary character," claiming she realized "the risk of imperfectly trained persons being expected by the public to undertake the duties of fully qualified practitioners" and, therefore, the importance for women to receive the best education in order to gain the trust of others.[57] She was "anxious to follow in [Garrett-Anderson's] footsteps"[58] and attempted to take the Apothecary examinations in 1868 but was unable to because of the resolution put in place after Garrett-Anderson's success.[59] She must have seen Jex-Blake's advertisement as the perfect opportunity to study at a school far more renowned than the Ladies Medical College.

One other woman responded soon after Jex-Blake placed her advertisement: Edith Pechey. Mary Edith Pechey, the youngest of these three women, was born in 1845 in Essex to a middle-class family. Edythe Lutzker, in *Edith Pechey-Phipson, M.D.: The Story of England's Foremost Pioneering Woman Docto*r, describes Pechey's parents: "Both parents possessed — along with their questing, nonconformist minds — a deep and serious love of learning."[60] She was considered by one friend to be a "silent, quiet woman," and when she responded to Jex-Blake about the advertisement, she offered her services modestly:

> Do you think anything more is requisite to ensure success than moderate abilities and a good share of perseverance? I believe I may lay claim to these, together with a real love of the subjects of study, but as regards any thorough knowledge of these subjects at present, I fear I am deficient in most.[61]

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[56] Thorne, "Diary," 22.
[57] Thorne, *Sketch*, 4.
[58] Thorne, "Diary," 25.
[59] Thorne, *Sketch*, 5.
[60] Edythe Lutzker, *Edith Pechey-Phipson, M.D.: The Story of England's Foremost Pioneering Woman Doctor* (New York: Exposition Press, 1973), 8.
[61] Todd, 235.

Later on, Jex-Blake described Pechey as "strong, ready-handed, with great ability, resolution and judgement; great calmness and quiet of manner and action, and probably strength of feeling."[62] Indeed, despite the humble description of herself, Pechey's academic ability would prove to be impressive as she vied for top student of her class. Joining Jex-Blake and Thorne at the University of Edinburgh would become the opportunity for Pechey to recognize her own strength and demonstrate it to others as well.

When the matriculation examination arrived in October 1869, two other women had joined the group: Helen Evans and Matilda Chaplin.[63] A month later, they signed the matriculation roll, becoming official students of the University of Edinburgh.[64] Although they would take classes separate from the male students, these classes, in theory, would be equivalent to normal university classes and therefore applicable towards an equivalent medical degree. The women had begun their education, but had the Edinburgh Seven been formed? As of now, only five of the official seven have been mentioned. Here, the identity and membership of the Edinburgh Seven becomes debatable.

Roberts explains that Mary Anderson and Emily Bovell joined the group in the winter session of 1870, and "henceforth the group was often referred to as the 'Edinburgh Seven.'"[65] Other sources suggest, however, that the numbers do not match so simply. Thorne recalled in her diary that the women who took classes during that first session included Jex-Blake, Pechey, Evans, Chaplin, and two other women: a Miss Clapperton and a Miss Cadell.[66] Indeed, all these

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[62] Lutzker, 10.
[63] Todd, 263.
[64] Roberts, 87.
[65] Roberts, 101.
[66] Thorne, "Diary," 26.

women, except for Emily Bovell, were listed in the matriculation roll for 1869 and 1870 session alongside two more women; in total, ten women had signed the matriculation roll or were participating in classes at the university.[67] Although it is difficult to determine if these other women stayed at the university or not, it challenges the idea that seven women stood alone in this group. Where, then, did the title the "Edinburgh Seven" develop? Thorne used the term *Septem contra Edinem* — Seven Against Edinburgh — when writing about her experiences after leaving Edinburgh.[68] In one writing, she notes the increase from five to seven but does not account for the other women who are listed on the matriculation roll. Besides Thorne's own use, it is difficult to determine who first used the term; the *Scotsman* most often referred to the group simply as the "lady students."

The women not included in the "Edinburgh Seven" may not have wanted to pursue medicine professionally. The regulations created by the University in 1869 to accommodate the women made a distinction between women who "[intended] to study medicine professionally" and those who did not.[69] These women who did not seek to join the profession may not have felt the need to work professionally or may have been simply intellectually curious. Perhaps they did not want to participate in such a controversial group or associate with women whose names would inevitably become controversial. Although the reasons cannot be confirmed, the exclusion of certain women from the Edinburgh Seven suggests a division in goals among the women present at the University of Edinburgh at this time.

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[67] First Matriculation, 1869-70, EUA IN1/ADS/STA/4, Edinburgh University Library Special Collections, Edinburgh, Scotland.
[68] Isabel Thorne, "Some Early Edinburgh Experiences," *Magazine of the London School of Medicine for Women* no. 4 (May 1896), Magazine of the London School of Medicine for Women microfilm, British Library, London, England, 136. *Sketch*, 10.
[69] Calendar of the University of Edinburgh, 1870-71, EUA IN1/PUB/1, Edinburgh University Library Special Collections, Edinburgh, Scotland, 165-166. See Appendix.

All this to say: the Edinburgh Seven is a title that complicates the number of women studying medicine at the University. Yet, at the same time, this title was a powerful tool because it created an image of solidarity and camaraderie between these seven women. Although the creator of the "Edinburgh Seven" is uncertain, the women embraced the image that came with this title. Jex-Blake and Pechey lived together in a house on Buccleuch Place, which Todd described as the "*rendezvous* for a choice little circle."[70] The women would meet at this headquarters, offering a secure space separate from what would become a hostile environment as they continued their studies. United, they took their classes together and faced the challenges that threatened their education. For independent middle class women, Vicinus claims, "Formal institutions were alternatives to the nuclear family. Within them we can see the development of leadership skills, friendship networks, and a power base for public work."[71] The Edinburgh Seven only existed within the University for a short period, yet their education allowed the women to develop skills and, more importantly, share an experience that created the beginnings of a potential network for medical women. While increased adversity would ultimately thwart their chance to earn a medical degree, their solidarity with one another would also gain supporters for their cause and benefit them long after they left Edinburgh.

[70] Todd, 264.
[71] Vicinus, 7.

Scholarships, Riots, and Expulsion: The Edinburgh Seven Challenges Gender Expectations

Edith Pechey, the winner of the Hope Scholarship, in the 1870s.[72]

As fully matriculated students at the University of Edinburgh, the Edinburgh Seven believed they would be able to attain their medical degrees. Yet over the next two years, the women would encounter relentless barriers as they demanded equal treatment by the University because of their matriculated status. Their demands were denied as the male medical students and faculty became increasingly hostile. Each new conflict caught the attention of observers across the nation, and the group gained supporters for their cause. This chapter will explore a few

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[72] Frank Meadow Sutcliffe, *(Mary) Edith Pechey-Phipson*, 1870s, albumen cabinet card, National Portrait Gallery, London, England, https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw160902/Mary-Edith-Pechey-Phipson?LinkID=mp97666&role=sit&rNo=0. Note the faded "M.D." written after her name.

crucial points of conflict during these few years and how observers reacted. The intense reactions reflected gendered expectations, not only for the women but also for the men involved in the conflicts. All these events not only brought together the women as a united front against their opponents but also drew public attention to the Edinburgh Seven as a cohesive group that gained sympathy and support from others.

The Hope Scholarship Controversy

The first major controversy rose at the end of the women's first session at the University in April 1870. Although the women were taking separate classes, these classes included the same material and required the same examinations as those given to male students. At the conclusion of the chemistry course, taught by Professor Crum Brown, the top student would receive the Hope Scholarship as a distinction for his academic achievement. The final examination results for the course revealed that Edith Pechey was the top student and fully entitled to the Hope Scholarship. The original results must have been publicized because a person submitted a poem to the *Scotsman*, dedicating it to her achievement. "Philoparthenos"[73] lauded Pechey and her fellow female classmates: "Now the female nation, / In the fresh bloom of young emancipation, / Stands forth; and all the fair unbearded clan / Claims equal honours with full-bearded man."[74] The author's poetic language embraces the romantic ideals of women's rights. The efforts of Pechey and the Edinburgh Seven represented a fight for emancipation for all women, not just those who wanted to become doctors. For some, Pechey's success was a symbol of women's ability to achieve anything and become man's equal.

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[73] "Philoparthenos" is a combination of the Greek words for "knowledge" and "chaste girl."
[74] "Philoparthenos," "To the Lady-Students at the University," *Scotsman*, Apr. 9th, 1870.

Pechey, however, did not receive the Hope Scholarship, as Crum Brown decided to give it to a male student who ranked lower than Pechey. He argued that Pechey's results did not count because the women were not in the "regular" class. He also offered different certificates for the women for attending a "ladies' class of the university" rather than certificates for *the* chemistry class at the University. This distinction between the certificates was a dangerous threat to the women's education because "ladies' classes" would not count towards a medical degree from the University. The women protested, insisting Pechey receive the scholarship and they all receive regular certificates. If their classes were truly equal in subject matter and difficulty, then they should be able to receive the same certificates, and Pechey should be considered for her outstanding performance. The ensuing conflict produced contradictory results. With only a majority of one member, the Senatus agreed to give the women the ordinary certificates, ensuring the course would count toward their degrees, but at the same time supported Crum Brown's action by insisting Pechey was not a member of the ordinary class and therefore not eligible for the scholarship.[75] Ironically, Pechey received a "bronze medal of the university" as one of the top students of the class, recognizing her as an official student.[76] Thus, Pechey could be recognized for her achievement as long as she did not receive a pecuniary reward.

Although Pechey appealed to the Senatus to claim her scholarship, neither she nor the other women made a public statement immediately after the incident.[77] The Senatus' decision to give the scholarship to another student received mixed responses from publications across the

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[75] *Scotsman*, Apr. 13, 1870.

[76] Jex-Blake, "Medical Education of Women," 93.

[77] Pechey apparently did not initially want to appeal. She wrote to Jex-Blake during the controversy: "You understand that I leave you to do as is thought best about the scholarship,—only remember that my own judgment—apart from personal feeling—is against appealing, and that I do not wish to do so unless our friends are very decisively of opinion that we ought to." Todd, 272. Pechey made few public statements, as she "[deplored] those events that placed her in the public eye." Lutzker, 24.

country, many of which defended Pechey. The Conservative *Spectator* insisted that "such a decision cannot stand," declaring the University's actions were like "the conduct of the captious schoolmaster, who first sent a boy into the corner and then whipped him for not being in his seat." The *British Medical Journal* agreed, arguing the University had done "no less an injustice to itself than to one of its most distinguished students." At the same time, however, the *Lancet*, another medical journal, supported Professor Crum Brown's decision, believing he was generous to offer a separate class for the women at all.[78] The *Scotsman* summarized these reactions within its pages, displaying the national attention given to Pechey and, in turn, the Edinburgh Seven.

Independent individuals also offered their opinions in the *Scotsman* through letters to the editor. "Suum Cuique,"[79] in "Fairness to Both Sexes," argued that scholarships should not be points of competition between men and women because they were more than "mere distinctions or rewards." Rather, scholarships were "practical and substantial stepping-stones to the real business of life." Suum Cuique's comments implied that men required these scholarships to propel them into successful careers so that they could support their future wives and families. Women threatened to take these awards away from the men who needed it for their future careers.[80] A few days later, "One of the Five" countered Suum Cuique's argument. The name implies the letter was written by one of the members of the Edinburgh Seven, yet it is unknown who wrote it. Referring to the group as "our little band of five," she insisted they had the same goals as the male students: to join the profession and "prepare [themselves] for the business of life." The financial benefits of a scholarship benefited the women as much as the men. "One of the Five" makes it clear that this education is not to satisfy pure curiosity. Married or not, these

[78] "The London Medical Journals on the Hope Scholarship Decision," *Scotsman*, Apr. 18, 1870.
[79] Latin for "to each his own."
[80] "Letter to the editor," *Scotsman*, Apr. 14, 1870.

women viewed their education as a step towards financial independence. She concludes, "If scholarships are to be regarded as charitable donations, by all means let them be given to the most needy; if as rewards of merit - 'palmam qui meruit ferat.'"[81]

Pechey's near-success shifted people's perceptions of the Edinburgh Seven as the group demonstrated their intelligence and skill as medical students. For some, this controversy was an offense to the women's hard work. For others, especially the male students, it represented a threat. The medical school had become increasingly popular for hopeful doctors as it provided a space for the profession to define itself not only as learned and authoritative but also as social group of like-minded men. Participation in lecture-style classes, extracurricular activities, and other social interactions with classmates and professors allowed the medical student to gain "a new sense of membership in a corporate group."[82] In these ways, "students developed loyalties to their medical school, to their associates there, and to the profession they entered. Discipline and competition as well as friendships bound them to these institutions."[83] The women certainly faced this competitive and exclusive community from the moment they stepped into the classrooms. After the women proved their ability to compete with the men, however, the chance of the women encroaching on this exclusively male space became very real. Jex-Blake claimed the success of the women, especially Pechey's domination at the top of the class, during that first session "aroused in [their] opponents a conviction that the so-called experiment was not going to fail of itself, as they had confidently hoped, but that if it was to be suppressed at all, vigorous measures must be taken for that purpose."[84] Thorne agreed: "The opposition against the

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[81] "Letter to the editor," *Scotsman*, Apr. 18, 1870. The Latin reads, "Let whoever earns the palm bear it."
[82] Peterson, 71.
[83] Peterson, 88.
[84] Jex-Blake, "Medical Education of Women," 94.

admission of women to the University was intensified by this incident."[85] The accomplishments of the women challenged the male students and threatened the professional enclave developing at the University. The threat brought increased animosity that would escalate to a public altercation.

The Surgeons' Hall Riot

As the year continued, the Edinburgh Seven pushed on with their education by any means possible. Professor Turner refused to teach a separate anatomy class for the women, so the women turned to an extramural course taught by Dr. Handyside. The extramural schools offered medical classes outside the University of Edinburgh, and despite a slight rivalry between the two institutions, the University allowed its students to take a limited number of these courses toward their University degrees.[86] The women benefited from this system, as many University professors refused to teach the women, while extramural professors tended to support their education. During this time, the women were also applying to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary in order to continue their technical education in surgical practice.[87] Their application stirred further controversy and became a whole new battle fought between the women and another adverse institutional board. Meanwhile, fellow male students were increasingly harassing the women; Jex-Blake insisted these students "took every opportunity of practising the petty annoyances that occur to thoroughly ill-bred lads."[88]

The women ignored the unruly behavior until some male students confronted them directly. On November 18, 1870, the women arrived at Surgeons' Hall to take an examination for

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[85] Thorne, "Diary," 26.
[86] Roberts, 97.
[87] In order to qualify for the official medical register, "clinical experience in a hospital was… essential." The Edinburgh Royal Infirmary was the only hospital approved by the University for this form of education. Roberts, 101-102.
[88] Jex-Blake, "Medical Education of Women," 101.

Handyside's class. They were met by angry male students, some of whom were drunk, who closed the gate to Surgeon's Hall and refused the women entry. Jex-Blake described the incident: "The gates were shut in our faces by a mob, who stood within, smoking and passing about bottles of whiskey, while they abused us in the foulest possible language."[89] Thorne recalled that the male students also threw mud at them.[90] Soon after, sympathetic male classmates within Surgeons' Hall opened the gates and helped the women enter the building. During the examination, a sheep was let into the lecture theater by the students, to which Handyside said, "Let it alone: it is more sensible than those who thrust it in."[91] Afterwards, with their male classmates surrounding them as a bodyguard, the women left Surgeons' Hall and returned home "with no other injuries than those inflicted on our dresses by the mud hurled at us by our chivalrous foes."[92] Smaller but similar altercations continued the next few days between agitators and male sympathizers of the women, but the initial incident was enough to capture the attention of Edinburgh's residents and the nation.

The overwhelming majority of opinions supported the Edinburgh Seven: for days after the Surgeons' Hall Riot, the *Scotsman* published multiple letters to the editor, almost all in favor of the women. One writer, "A Sufferer," appealed to the mistreatment of women under a male-dominated profession. She complained, "Which evil is the greater - that five hundred youths in full health and vigour should be made a little uncomfortable by the presence of seven women, or that seven times five hundred women, unnerved by suffering, should be subjected to the very trial they shrink from." Victorian taboos surrounding female modesty often forced

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[89] Jex-Blake, "Medical Education of Women," 103.
[90] Thorne, "Diary," 28.
[91] Thorne, "Diary," 28.
[92] Jex-Blake, "Medical Education of Women," 104.

women to silently endure their illnesses for fear of embarrassment. "A Sufferer" saw the Edinburgh Seven as saviors for all suffering women who needed proper health care. "This objection," she concluded, "looked at fairly, is a case of the delicacy of five hundred men, *versus* that of all suffering women."[93] "A few days later, she wrote again, imploring husbands and fathers directly: "Consider that, though yourselves safe, your daughters may have to trust to the 'delicacy and chivalry' of the men who have just hooted down the seven frail champions of womanhood."[94] Interestingly, "A Sufferer" includes the Edinburgh Seven as women subject to the suffering similar to female patients. For "A Sufferer," the group became a symbol not so much of female achievement but rather of women subject to the mistreatment of men who could become their "caretakers."

The public statements of Pechey and Jex-Blake revealed concerns shared with "A Sufferer" and a conviction to become doctors for the sake of suffering women. Pechey, writing in the *Scotsman*, claimed that the actions of the men did not scare her but rather encouraged her: "Each fresh insult is an additional incentive to finish the work begun. I began the study of medicine merely from personal motives; now I am also impelled by the desire to remove women from the care of such ruffians."[95] She called the men the "dregs of the profession" and insisted, "I should be very sorry to see any poor girl under the care of such young men as those."[96] Jex-Blake believed the event justified their goal even more, stating, "Women must, at any cost, force their way into it, for the sake of their sisters, who might otherwise be left at the mercy of such human brutes as these."[97] This concern for the suffering of women at the hands of male

[93] "Letter to the editor," *Scotsman*, Nov. 21, 1870.
[94] "Letter to the editor," *Scotsman*, Nov. 23, 1870.
[95] Lutzker, 20.
[96] Lutzker, 20.
[97] Blake, 136.

doctors demonstrates a perception about the weakness of unprotected women, especially poor women, that reflected Victorian understandings of female nature. Pechey and Jex-Blake believed they could provide proper, safe care for these women, reasserting their natural ability as women to support the weak and powerless, unlike the harsh treatment of male doctors.

Meanwhile, the aggressive actions of the male students were condemned as "ungentlemanly behavior," even by other male students. One writer, simply named a "Male Medical Student," denounced the actions of the rowdy male students. This writer did not approve of mixed classes with the women at the Royal Infirmary, but he insisted, "to insult women is both a cowardly and unmanly way of gaining one's point, and one that *no man* - not to say gentleman - can adopt." He concluded his statement by imploring others to sign a petition to show that "not *all* the medical students at Edinburgh are entirely destitute of one of the chief attributes of a gentleman, 'respectful behavior and gentleness towards women.'"[98] With the medical profession still struggling to prove its gentlemanly status, these men understood that their professional success after graduation depended on others' perceptions of their behavior. Observers also speculated about who might have encouraged such behavior and how the riot reflected the University as an institution. On November 22, "Vir" condemned the men who rioted against the women and suggested professors played an implicit or even explicit role in encouraging the behavior:

> If such conduct be permissible on the part of the Professors, alas for the school, whose teachers have not even but one halfpenny worth of manliness to their intolerable deal of nastiness - or boasted philanthropy, as the case may be - and whose students crowd the academic precincts to hustle, hoot at, cover with mud, and even to strike at ladies who have always shown themselves to be gentle and noble women.[99]

[98] "Letter to the editor," *Scotsman,* Nov. 21, 1870.
[99] "Letter to the editor," *Scotsman*, Nov. 22, 1870.

The *Globe* also blamed the University for the unruly behavior: "Edinburgh has ceased to be so attractive as she was as a centre of education. She cannot afford to forfeit all claim to respect through the licence of a rabble of underbred lads calling themselves 'students.'"[100]

Reflecting on the event later on, Jex-Blake slyly claimed "it [was] not for [her] to say what means were used, or what strings were pulled," yet such a statement suggests she believed someone encouraged this behavior.[101] Indeed, unable to control herself, she publicly accused Mr. Craig, Professor Robert Christison's assistant, of leading the riot; in response, Mr. Craig charged Jex-Blake with libel.[102] This case reflected negatively on Jex-Blake, whose brash, headstrong actions were unbecoming of a lady. She was not representing medical women in a positive light, but she compensated for her behavior with her appearance in court: "Plainly dressed in black, with white round her neck and wrists, she presented the appearance of a tall and well formed, handsome and determined woman."[103] The presence of the other women, particularly Thorne and Pechey, also impressed observers, perhaps improving the situation by presenting themselves as ladies: orderly, composed, and polite.[104] The trial drew attention to the attitudes of University administrators and professors, especially those in the medical department. Although it cannot be confirmed, the presence of Christison's assistant may reflect Christison's own disapproval of the Edinburgh Seven and, perhaps, either implicit or explicit words to encourage negative behavior among the students. The University's reaction was unexceptional: The Senatus reprimanded

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[100] *Scotsman,* Nov. 23, 1870.
[101] Jex-Blake, "Medical Education of Women," 101.
[102] Roberts, 108.
[103] Todd, 311.
[104] Todd, 311. A newspaper reported this about Thorne: "Mrs. Thorne succeeded as witness, and the assembled public thought it very hard that she should be neither odd nor eccentric. … Sedate, quiet and ladylike-looking, and dressed in an unobtrusive fashion, and yet fairly within the pale of orthodoxy, Mrs. Thorne confused the minds of many." Pechey also impressed observers with her looks: "A tall figure and a classically shaped head with dark hair, are generally supposed to be the attributes of young ladies who keep to their 'sphere.'"

three students for the "disturbance," threatening expulsion if the behavior continued. Afterwards, University authorities never mentioned the incident again.[105]

Although the University took little interest in pursuing a thorough investigation into the Surgeon's Hall Riot, the event became a critical moment for the Edinburgh Seven. Their male classmates disparaged them openly with little to no consequences. The women, however, refused to hide. United, and with bodyguards surrounding them, the group marched out of Surgeon's Hall and into the streets after completing their examinations, undeterred by "the still howling crowd at the gate."[106] This small decision represented a larger retort: instead of exiting through the back door, they left the building normally, demanding their presence be acknowledged and respected. Observers saw not only a unified group but also a group of ladies unnecessarily tormented by men. The Edinburgh Seven became a symbol of both sympathy and courage. They were the helpless targets of rowdiness and, at the same time, confident ladies able to withstand such behavior. In other words, the Surgeon's Hall Riot, while troublesome and frustrating, provided an opportunity for the women to present themselves as *the* Edinburgh Seven: a united front worthy of sympathy but also capable of facing the challenge ahead of them.

Final Expulsion of the women

In 1872, the conflict between the women and the University hit its peak. The women had reached their limit of extramural courses, yet University professors refused to teach the women, and the University administration would not force the professors to accommodate them. Without the professors' support, the women could not take classes and, therefore, not complete their degrees. With no other option, the women filed a lawsuit against the University for failing to

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[105] College/Senatus Minutes, 1733-2002. EUA IN1/GOV/SEN/MIN/1, Vol. IV (1869-1872), Edinburgh University Library Special Collections, Edinburgh, Scotland, 247.

[106] Jex-Blake, "Medical Education of Women," 104.

follow the regulations set for them to obtain an education. By now, the Edinburgh Seven had gained a significant following, including individuals from diverse classes and backgrounds. The Committee for Securing Complete Medical Education to Women in Edinburgh, founded in 1871, dedicated itself to supporting the women's education. Contributors to the Committee's funds included Charles Darwin, Thomas Henry Huxley, Louisa Stevenson, and "representatives" of working men and women.[107] The diversity of these contributors represented a strong desire by both upper-middle class and lower class women to have a woman doctor to provide care. The Committee had previously raised money for the women's medical education, including their clinical training, as well as legal costs for the libel suit against Jex-Blake. This new lawsuit became the Committee's focus that certainly demanded more funds. After the case concluded, the Committee published a pamphlet called "Ten Matriculated Lady Students Against the Senatus of Edinburgh University," giving a summary of the events and full transcripts of the decisions by the Lords.[108] With this pamphlet the Committee hoped to promote the Edinburgh Seven and raise further support for their cause.

While the women insisted the University was failing to provide an education which was promised to them, the University claimed that "only an experiment was contemplated, and that only permission for partial instruction was given, with no view of graduation."[109] This statement contradicted the original regulations put in place when the women first matriculated. Although the regulations did not explicitly mention any agreement on graduation, it specifically describes

[107] Committee for Securing Complete Medical Education to Women in Edinburgh, "Ten Matriculated Lady Students Against the Senatus of Edinburgh University," 1872, EUA IN1/GOV/CRT/LEC, Da 26/2, Edinburgh University Library Special Collections, Edinburgh, Scotland, 21.

[108] The pamphlet's title includes ten "lady students" rather than seven, another interesting example of how the Edinburgh Seven has inadvertently hidden the stories of three other women.

[109] Committee, 14.

that the instruction of women is for the "profession of medicine."[110] As mentioned previously, the regulations also distinguished between women seeking professional education and those who were not. This distinction suggests that the University originally viewed some women as potential candidates for the medical profession, or perhaps the administration stated this with the assumption that the women would never complete their education. Instead, the women had proved to be insistent and, worse, actually competent. It became clear the women could complete their education and become members of the profession quite successfully. If the University of Edinburgh allowed the women to graduate, its reputation could suffer if observers interpreted their degrees to be lesser because they were given to women alongside men. Therefore, by 1872 the University insisted they had no intention to support the women's full education, forcing the women to take legal action over the regulations as a "matter of legal interpretation."[111]

Initially, the outcome for the women appeared positive. In July 1872, the Lord Ordinary decided in favor of the women.[112] Soon afterwards, however, the Senatus appealed the decision to the Inner House of the Court of Session, the supreme court of Scotland.[113] A year later, in June 1873, the Inner House decided in favor of the University with a majority of seven to five.[114] The Court's decision was not based on the perceived incompetence of women as doctors but rather the University's constitution. The University did not have the legal power to admit women for degrees, and therefore it should not have admitted the women at all in the first place; there was no precedent that allowed the University to accept women. Lords Mackenzie and Shand stated,

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[110] Calendar of the University of Edinburgh, 1870-71, 165-166. See Appendix.
[111] Roberts, 129.
[112] Committee, 1.
[113] Committee, 2.
[114] Committee, 2. The Lord Justice General, who was also Chancellor of the University, abstained from the vote. The Lord Justice-Clerk, who was the Rector of the University in 1869, voted in favor of the women.

"The University was founded by Royal authority, and by Royal authority alone can its constitution be altered and extended."[115] Although the question of women practicing medicine was not a main concern for these men, Lord Neaves argued the legal distinction between men and women limited women from matriculating. This legal distinction extended to the respective duties of each sex in Victorian society, which then determined their proper education:

> Much time might or ought to be given by women to the acquisition of a knowledge of household affairs and family duties, as well as to those ornamental parts of education which tended so much to social refinement and domestic happiness; and the study necessary for mastering these must always form a serious distraction from severer pursuits.[116]

For Neaves, the University not only acted illegally by admitting women but also challenged the natural distinction between the sexes by allowing these women to study a subject beyond the realm of the domestic sphere.

The decision frustrated many observers, including the Lords who opposed the final decision. Many felt the University broke its contract with the Edinburgh Seven. The Committee complained in its pamphlet, "In simple fact, the ladies have lost their lawsuit, and, with it, all the labour and all the pecuniary outlay of the past four years… for the single offence of having trusted implicitly to the good faith and legal knowledge of the University of Edinburgh."[117] Some believed the University may have acted illegally but still had an obligation to allow the women to at least complete their education; instead, the women were charged with the fees of the lawsuit and forced to leave. Lord Ardmillan, who voted in favor of the women, insisted admitting the women, allowing them to complete half their education, and then refusing them the opportunity

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[115] Committee, 29.
[116] Committee, 26.
[117] Committee, 3.

to graduate "would truly be to lead them into a delusion and a snare."[118] The Lord Justice-Clerk, a former Rector of the University in 1869 who also voted for the women, admonished the University for punishing the student for a mistake made by the University: "If their lawfulness was disputed, that must be done in a question with those who made them, not with the student who trusted them."[119] He further stated that the University was created for "the instruction of the community" and therefore could not be limited to only men.[120]

Others complained that the decision placed the University in a ridiculous position, subject to its own constitution that was now centuries old.[121] Alexander Russel, the editor of the *Scotsman*, wrote sarcastically about the situation: "Scotch University — for the principle must apply to all — are tied hand and foot by their own customs, and that the more ancient the times in which these customs originated… the more impermissible it is for universities to alter them." [122] The argument that the University could not accept women based on a constitution written within an entirely different social context baffled observers. Russel believed such a claim made little sense and insisted the work of the Edinburgh Seven reflected larger social shifts:

> The question has arisen at this time because of a change, and it is but one among many similar changes, in the ideas, circumstances, and wants of society, regarding the position and employment of women. Who in such questions are to be the judges? Our contention is that every man (meaning thereby to include every woman) must judge for himself, and not any man for his neighbour.[123]

The University's and Court's response to rely on an ancient constitution to bar the women from graduating with a medical degree appeared to be a ridiculous attempt to hold onto customs that

[118] Committee, 34.
[119] Committee, 39.
[120] Committee, 40.
[121] The University of Edinburgh was founded in 1582. Anderson, 3.
[122] *Scotsman*, June 30, 1873.
[123] *Scotsman*, June 30, 1873.

Russel believed were now being rightfully challenged. Russel also attacked the medical profession for its refusal to allow significant change in its membership. In particular, he insisted the monopolization of the medical profession allowed "dominating sections" to "have professional prejudices and supposed interests favouring exclusion."[124] The *Spectator* questioned the privilege of individual professors who had the power to refuse teaching topics to the women, thus limiting the Edinburgh Seven's options tremendously.[125]

The Women Depart

These three events represent much, but certainly not all, of the conflicts the Edinburgh Seven had to face while studying at the University of Edinburgh. The reactions to these events also demonstrate the increasing tensions between those who supported and opposed their efforts. The reactions in the *Scotsman* and the creation of the Committee for Securing Complete Medical Education to Women in Edinburgh reflected an interest in the Edinburgh Seven's success that could lead to further change. The University, its medical department, and the Courts, meanwhile, represented the stubborn refusal of male-dominated institutions to accept women and grant them privileges. Aware that public image was beneficial to their cause, the Edinburgh Seven presented themselves as sensible, composed ladies united in a common goal. Despite their best efforts against increasing hostile opponents, however, the Edinburgh Seven could not overcome the adversity. In the end, the opposition won, and the Edinburgh Seven had little reason to remain a cohesive group. Yet leaving Edinburgh did not mean the end of these women's careers. Rather, it provided the women new opportunities to complete their education, create networks, and carve out successful careers without the imposition of an antagonistic institution.

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[124] *Scotsman*, June 30, 1873.
[125] *Scotsman*, July 7, 1873.

Individual Success after Edinburgh: Creating the Next Generation of Medical Women

Isabel Thorne and her family.[126]

With the University of Edinburgh officially closed off from the Edinburgh Seven, any chance of receiving a medical degree from a British university were slim to none. If the women wanted to complete their education and become doctors, they had two viable options: receive medical qualifications abroad — a relatively straightforward task — or fight for an official position on the British register — a far more challenging enterprise. Jex-Blake refused to be forced out of the UK: "I most firmly believe, that every woman who consents to be thus exiled does more harm… to the general cause of medical women in this country, and postpones

[126] Thorne, "Diary." This image was on the cover of a copy of Thorne's diary. The caption included with the image lists the names in this way, likely following from left to right: "May, Atwood, Isabel [Thorne's daughter], Charlie, Foster, Grannie [Thorne herself], and Yoell."

indefinitely… the final and satisfactory solution of the whole question."[127] For her, the goal was full registration and inclusion in the British medical profession. Thus, if no university would teach the women, and if foreign universities failed to solved the issue, then the final option was clear: open a medical school dedicated to teaching women.

As the women weighed their options, they allowed their personal interests to guide their next steps and, because of this, they began to go their separate ways. Helen Evans decided to halt her pursuit of a medical career and remained in Edinburgh to marry Alexander Russel, the editor of the *Scotsman*.[128] Matilda Chaplin continued her medical interests individually, supported by her husband, William Edward Ayrton.[129] Emily Bovell traveled to Paris to complete her studies, leaving Sophia Jex-Blake, Isabel Thorne, Edith Pechey, and Mary Anderson in Britain.[130] These four women would be members of the first class of students at the London School of Medicine for Women (LSMW), founded in 1874. From here, the women's lives would continue to diverge, yet they all remained dedicated to medical work and the medical education of women.[131]

This final chapter analyzes the lives of Thorne, Pechey, and Jex-Blake immediately after their departure from Edinburgh. Each woman took her experiences from Edinburgh and applied them to new challenges, remaining dedicated to the practice of medicine, especially for women and children, and the pursuit of medical education for women. Thorne remained in London and

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[127] Roberts, 139.
[128] Blake, 140.
[129] Roberts, 118. "Matilda Chaplin," *University of Edinburgh*, Jan. 5, 2018, accessed April 12, 2019, https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/celebrating-diversity/inspiring-women/women-in-history/edinburgh-seven/matilda-chaplin.
[130] "Emily Bovell," *University of Edinburgh*, Jan. 5, 2018, accessed April 12, 2019, https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/celebrating-diversity/inspiring-women/women-in-history/edinburgh-seven/emily-bovell.
[131] While the LSMW offered an excellent education, this would do little if the women could not participate in any official examinations to join the register. With the help of MPs Jame Stansfeld and Russell Gurney, Parliament passed the Russell Gurney Bill on August 11, 1876, which enabled medical examining bodies to admit women to participate in examinations, although it did not require them to do so. Roberts, 153-154.

oversaw the education of the next generations of medical women; Pechey traveled to Bombay, practiced at a hospital for women and children, and became a vocal advocate for women's social reform; and Jex-Blake returned to Edinburgh to found another medical school for women, never stopping her efforts to create competent medical women. Despite the distance between them, all three women remained in contact with one another throughout their lives and often reminisced about their time in Edinburgh. While they reminisced, others would honor them as the "pioneers" of British medical women, recognizing them as the women who sacrificed much for the success of future generations. Their interactions with the younger generation inspired reverence or, sometimes, created tension as new attitudes began to emerge. By exploring the experiences of these women after their time with the Edinburgh Seven, this chapter will demonstrate how shared values inspired the distinct work of each women, all supported by new networks, while also crafting a narrative of legacy surrounding their accomplishments.

Developing a Network of British Medical Women

Isabel Thorne became a prominent figure at LSMW during some of its most active years. Creating a fully equipped and staffed medical school for women required students willing to learn, teachers willing to educate, and extensive funds. Luckily, many of the supporters of the Edinburgh Seven did not completely abandon the women and their cause. With the help of many influential and generous individuals, including politician James Stansfeld, a fierce advocate for the women in Parliament and beyond, the LSMW was founded only two years after the Edinburgh Seven dissolved. The financial support in Edinburgh had followed those of the group who remained in London, and without it, the LSMW may not have been as successful. Thorne

proudly described it later as the "Mother School of all British Medical Women."[132] A legacy of medical women was already beginning to form, and Thorne contributed significantly to the creation of this legacy.

Thorne became the school's Honorary Secretary in 1877, yet she had not intended to devote her life to its functioning. After helping administer the school in its first few years, Thorne hoped to become a student there in order to complete her medical training and begin a professional career. When the position of Honorary Secretary opened up to new candidates, she nominated Jex-Blake, who wanted the position but was seen as a liability by the board members due to her brash and controlling attitude. Garrett-Anderson became another potential candidate; she did not want the position either, but she also believed Jex-Blake would jeopardize the school's success.[133] Jex-Blake entreated Thorne, whom she trusted far more than Garrett-Anderson, to take the position.[134] Thorne agreed, giving up what was her final opportunity to become a doctor.[135] The board elected Thorne unanimously;[136] described by Todd as a "fine undercurrent of stability," Thorne's composed but confident personality easily convinced the board that she could lead the school well.[137] She did not offer many of her own thoughts on the subject in her diary, but Todd described her decision to accept the position as a significant sacrifice: "She cast aside her own ambitions, and made the success of the School her main object in life."[138] Jex-Blake praised Thorne in her diary, demonstrating her appreciation:

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[132] Thorne, *Sketch*, 19.
[133] Ironically, Garrett-Anderson had not been an enthusiastic supporter of the LSMW originally, and Jex-Blake had to convince her to show support in order to "avoid the appearance of a split in the camp." Roberts, 146.
[134] Roberts, 159-160.
[135] Dr. Lucy Sewall, Jex-Blake's close friend from the United States, believed that out of all the members of the Edinburgh Seven, Thorne was the most suited to the professional medical career. Roberts, 160.
[136] Roberts, 160.
[137] Todd, 449.
[138] Todd, 448.

"About the best possible, with her excellent sense and perfect temper. So much better than I."[139] Jex-Blake trusted the LSMW in Thorne's capable hands.

For the remainder of her life, Thorne dedicated herself to making LSMW a "lasting and conspicuous success."[140] As Honorary Secretary, she managed the daily affairs of the school, ensuring a quality education for each class of women seeking to join the medical profession. She was also the editor of the school's magazine.[141] This magazine included medical research, artistic compositions, and news about students, alumnae, and the school as a whole. Contributions from different people revealed the debates surrounding women entering the medical profession.[142] Contentious issues such as women's specialization — the argument that women should only specialize in medical branches like obstetrics and pediatrics — or women's separation from male doctors due to their "bodies and temperaments" demonstrated the uncertainty surrounding women's participation in the medical profession.[143] The magazine provided a space for women like Thorne to discuss these issues and, in this way, enforce ideas about the proper practices and behaviors of the new medical women.

Through the publication of this magazine, the LSMW sought to create a network beyond its campus, connecting students and alumnae by sharing knowledge and applauding accomplishments. Thorne utilized the magazine as "a print medium for the cultivation of community and collectivity among female physicians," according to Kristin Kondrlik.[144] The magazine featured the stories of LSMW graduates practicing medicine around the world,

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[139] Todd, 448.
[140] Todd, 449.
[141] Kristin Kondrlik, "Fractured Femininity and 'Fellow Feeling': Professional Identity in the Magazine of the London School of Medicine for Women, 1895-1914," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 50, no. 3 (Fall 2017): 492.
[142] Kondrlik, 501.
[143] Kondrlik, 502.
[144] Kondrlik, 494.

including India, Canada, Australia, and even South America.[145] In these ways, it not only became a powerful tool for building an international network of medical women, but it also offered a space soley for medical women at a time when other medical journals often ridiculed or ignored them. Thorne herself wrote a few pieces for the magazine, which often focused on the work of women before the LSMW was established. In "Some Early Edinburgh Experiences," Thorne recalled her membership in the Edinburgh Seven, referring to the group poetically as *Septem contra Edinem*.[146] By telling this story, Thorne utilized the magazine as a space to pass on narratives of legacy and sacrifice: the Edinburgh Seven struggled against multiple antagonists in order to create the LSMW and guarantee a medical education for future generations. Thorne recognized the magazine's potential to bring together multiple generations of medical women, all connected through the LSMW, which in turn strengthened the school's reputation.

Thorne's legacy also continued through her own children. While Thorne was studying at the University of Edinburgh, she continued to support her children as her husband worked in Shanghai.[147] Thorne's experiences clearly inspired her children as May, her eldest daughter, and her son Atwood became medical professionals.[148] May was around eight years old when the Edinburgh Seven began their education, while Atwood was two. Her mother's experience at Edinburgh must have impacted May profoundly, and perhaps because Isabel could never complete her education, May took it on herself to achieve the goal for both of them. She attended the LSMW, became a successful practitioner, and was elected President of the Association for

[145] Kondrlik, 493.
[146] Thorne, "Some Early Edinburgh Experiences," 136.
[147] Thorne, "Diary," 25, 30.
[148] Thorne, "Diary,' 43.

Registered Medical Women in 1907.[149] She was also a member of the Royal Army Medical Corps and was stationed in Malta during World War I.[150] Such a position demonstrated a huge leap for medical women who could now offer their services towards the war effort and were not limited to the care of women and children. Thorne must have treasured May's accomplishment: her daughter was able to achieve great success as a medical woman which would not have been possible without Thorne's own sacrifices.

Although unable to complete her medical education, Thorne still devoted her life to the advancement of women in the medical profession. A capable and modest leader, she was well respected by her peers in the Edinburgh Seven as well as at the LSMW. Throne began her work at the LSMW with a support network that included generous benefactors, enthusiastic professors, and reliable friends. She "made [the LSMW] emphatically her own" while also "[securing] … many valuable friends and supporters" by encouraging students and alumnae to connect and create a new network of medical women.[151] Embracing the image of the Edinburgh Seven as pioneers dedicated to the success of future medical women, Thorne crafted a narrative of legacy and sacrifice that became crucial to the school's values and its ultimate success.

Advocating for Women's Health and Rights

Of the three women, Edith Pechey traveled the farthest after the Edinburgh Seven dissolved, spending most of her professional career in India. After completing her education at LSMW, she persuaded the King's and Queen's College of Physicians of Ireland to accept her for

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[149] *Magazine of the London School of Medicine for Women* no. 38 (Oct 1907), Magazine of the London School of Medicine for Women microfilm, British Library, London, England, 803. May Thorne would later perform surgery on Pechey when her health began to fail.
[150] Documents Related to Mary (May) Thorne, D14/2/1, Royal Free Hospital Archives, London, England.
[151] "Mrs. Thorne, An Appreciation," *Magazine of the London School of Medicine for Women* no. 47 (Oct 1910), Magazine of the London School of Medicine for Women microfilm, British Library, London, England, 318.

examination. Alongside a few other women, including Jex-Blake, Pechey passed her examinations and joined the official register of British medical professionals in 1877.[152] That same year, she gave an inaugural address at LSMW and implored the students to devote their energies to "leaving the world better and richer and wiser" through their work rather than seeking a profit.[153] Pechey embraced a more global perspective towards her medical work, interested in providing care for those beyond the British Isles. Following her own advice, she traveled along the Nile River for 90 days between 1879 and 1880 to study the climatic benefits for invalids.[154] She practiced medicine and gave lectures on physiology in Leeds and the surrounding area for the next few years before Garrett-Anderson offered her an exciting proposition: to run a prospective hospital for women and children in Bombay, India.[155]

Pechey would not be an anomaly in India as an English woman providing care for Indian women and children, although she may have been one of the first secular medical women in the colony. The colonial government was frustrated by Indian women's refusal to be treated by Western male doctors due to strict cultural norms surrounding gender.[156] Meanwhile, female missionaries, social reformers, and doctors took it upon themselves to provide care and guidance for the Indian women, resulting in a somewhat reluctant reliance of the colonial government on these women to "save" and "improve" the lives of the colonized.[157] Kumari Jayawardena, in *The White Woman's Other Burden*, notes that secular doctors were more readily accepted by Indian women than missionary doctors: "Because women doctors were involved in saving lives rather

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[152] Roberts, 157.
[153] Edith Pechey, *Inaugural Address* (London: McGowan's Steam Print Co, 1878), 29.
[154] Lutzker, 65.
[155] Lutzker, 63-64.
[156] Kumari Jayawardena, *White Woman's Other Burden: Western Women and South Asia During British Colonial Rule* (New York; London: Routledge, 1995), 76.
[157] Jayawardena, 4.

than souls, the local non-Christian population regarded them with great affection and respect. They were the 'noble' foreigners of colonial society."[158] Pechey would benefit from this distinction when she arrived in Bombay to begin her work as Honorary Physician for the future Cama Hospital for Women and Children.

Even before the hospital was completed, Pechey began to serve the community, establishing herself as a reliable and knowledgeable doctor. She ran the Jaffer Sulleman dispensary to provide medical care and medicine to local patients. The dispensary could barely satisfy the number of patients, demonstrating a large demand for Pechey's services.[159] Hoping to gain the trust of her patients, she learned the local language and made an effort to develop strong relationships with both poor and affluent Indians. She became a well-respected figure of the community and was praised by newspapers for promoting "good feeling between the rulers and the ruled" as well as encouraging the "cause of female education and enlightenment."[160] She also contributed to the growth of the LSMW network by coordinating the movement of prospective medical women to and from the LSMW. On one occasion, Pechey requested an LSMW student to work with her at Cama Hospital through the recommendation of Thorne, and later that same year Pechey helped two Indian women secure a scholarship to study at the LSMW.[161] Before her work at Cama Hospital began and even after the hospital opened, Pechey dedicated her time to nourishing her relationship with the community as a medical provider, and she took advantage of her new connections to continue her work as a doctor and social reformer.

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[158] Jayawardena, 77.
[159] Lutzker, 75-79.
[160] Lutzker, 85-86.
[161] Lutzker, 122, 164.

Pechey's late marriage to Herbert M. Phipson improved her social standing within the networks she frequented. Earlier in her life, Pechey strongly opposed marriage. When responding to a letter from a woman named Anne Jane Anderson who revealed she was abandoning her education for her marriage in 1873, Pechey lamented:

> That one should burden oneself with a husband whilst undertaking the duties of a profession seems to me foolish in the extreme, but to give up the profession for the sake of the husband is a thing so totally incomprehensible that I put it aside as one of these things which it is beyond human intelligence to fathom.[162]

Pechey did little to hide her disapproval in this "congratulatory message." Years later in India, she met Phipson, a wine merchant and an intellectual interested in natural sciences.[163] Pechey and Phipson were both members of the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, a group dedicated to the pursuit of science, literature, and art in the Asian colonies.[164] They supported each other in their intellectual pursuits and careers, and in 1889, Pechey wrote to her aunt: "We both came to the conclusion that we should be much happier if we were always together… We have known each other so well, and worked together in so many things these five years, that there is no reason to wait for anything."[165] They married that year, and, according to Lutzker, "her marriage even gave her heightened professional authority… many who in the past had been a shade cautious about championing her, now on occasion joined with others in her praise."[166] Pechey earned further respect in her community with her marriage because it fit social norms that she, for the most part, did not fulfill. Pechey's decision to marry, however, was not to fulfill any societal expectations; it was simply a result of her close companionship with Phipson. Their

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[162] Edith Pechey, "Edith Pechey to Anne Jane Anderson, 3 September, 1873," Papers of and relating to Anne Jane Anderson (b. 1847), Coll-1835/14, Edinburgh University Library Special Collections, Edinburgh, Scotland.
[163] Lutzker, 181.
[164] Lutzker, 181.
[165] Lutzker, 183.
[166] Lutzker, 189.

marriage was a partnership that allowed both of their careers to continue and flourish. Perhaps she was a bit perturbed by a new respect by skeptics, but perhaps she mostly appreciated that she could find a partner that gave her such strong support.

Along with her medical work, Pechey advocated for feminist social reform for various issues, including the education of local women as doctors, equal pay for women in medical services, and the banning of child marriages.[167] She became a vocal supporter of Rukhmabai, a young Indian woman who fought against her arranged marriage. After multiple appeals, Rukhmabai won her freedom, and she credited Pechey as one of her original, most passionate advocates.[168] She claimed, " "Where my trials began in 1884… Dr. Pechey took up my cause in real earnest… She was my mainstay for sympathy and support all through the four long weary years of my trials."[169] Pechey also sponsored Rukhmabai's medical studies in Great Britain, where she gained entrance to multiple universities including LSMW.[170] Jayawardena claims many Western women working in South Asia were "involved with… critiques" of women's exploitation and "concerned with women's status in the family and society."[171] Pechey represented this type of Western woman who took it upon herself to fight what she saw as women's exploitation by supporting Rukhmabai's efforts and education in Britain. Pechey's involvement in Rukhmabai's life demonstrates how Pechey implemented her feminist ideals to advocate against the low status of Indian women. Pechey dedicated her time in India to providing care and support for women both in and beyond the Cama Hospital.

[167] Jayawardena, 84. Pechey's advocacy for women's rights would continue until the last years of her life when she joined the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies and participated in its famous Mud March in 1907.
[168] Jayawardena, 86-87.
[169] Lutzker, 207-208.
[170] Lutzker, 207.
[171] Jayawardena, 9.

Opening a New Medical School for Women

Sophia Jex-Blake, the leader of the Edinburgh Seven, also had a successful career as a doctor and educator, but her strong, abrasive attitude may have prevented her from achieving the full extent of her goals. For some people, her personality made her compelling and interesting; for others, it was a dangerous threat to the goals of medical women. Todd, Jex-Blake's closest companion in the last years of her life, admitted, "She was impulsive, she made mistakes and would do so to the end of her life."[172] Indeed, she had the perseverance and determination to make her aspirations a reality, but her habit of alienating others more than winning their support would exclude Jex-Blake from the institutions she helped create: the LSMW, and the Edinburgh School of Medicine for Women (ESMW).

Despite Jex-Blake's dedication to the LSMW from its very inception, the election for Honorary Secretary in 1877 demonstrated a complicated attitude shared by the other leaders about Jex-Blake. After the Edinburgh Seven's removal from the University of Edinburgh, Jex-Blake focused all her attention to the LSMW. She dedicated herself to the founding of the school while also coordinating with sympathetic MPs to gain Parliamentary support for their official medical registration, and people recognized her tireless efforts.[173] James Stansfeld, one of the MPs who was most loyal to the cause, commended Jex-Blake in 1877, stating, "Such struggles do not persist and succeed… without the accompanying fact, the continuous thread as it were, of one constant purpose and dominant will. Dr. Sophia Jex-Blake has made that greatest of all the contributions to the end attained."[174] At the same time, however, Stansfeld also recognized

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[172] Todd, 185.
[173] MP stands for Member of Parliament.
[174] James Stansfeld, *Medical Women: An Historical Sketch* (Edinburgh Executive Committee for Securing a Complete Medical Education for Women: 1878), London School of Medicine for Women microfilm, LSE Women's Library, London, England, 24.

how this steadfast attitude did not work in all situations. When the board was discussing the Honorary Secretary nominations, he emphasized the importance of "tact and judgment" for the position, implying Jex-Blake did not possess these traits.[175] The members probably remembered the libel trial in Edinburgh, which brought more negative than positive attention to the Edinburgh Seven. Michaelsen points out, "Creating a spectacle of themselves through an ugly libel trial could only serve to harden the opposition of their enemies."[176] It was not the type of publicity the LSMW wanted. Thus, as mentioned above, Garrett-Anderson and Thorne became new candidates for the position of Honorary Secretary, with Thorne assuming the job. Jex-Blake knew Thorne would do the job well, but she was disheartened to leave the project and the people she had worked with for almost a decade. Leaving the LSMW meant leaving the center of women's medical education in Britain. Jex-Blake's exclusion prevented her from participating in the very work from which she gained the most fulfillment.

She decided to return to Edinburgh to continue her career: there, she would attempt to build another institution of learning that she would ultimately lose as well. She opened her a small private practice there in 1878.[177] She offered her services mainly to women, many of whom were working class because, as Roberts explains, "society ladies thought Sophia rather eccentric" as she was less interested in sharing pleasantries and more interested in conducting her work.[178] She even drove herself to her appointments rather than using her coachman. She also opened Edinburgh Hospital and Dispensary for Women and Children in 1885.[179] Relying on connections

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175 Roberts, 159.
176 Michaelsen, 62.
177 Roberts, 163.
178 Roberts, 165.
179 JM Somerville, "Dr Sophia Jex-Blake and the Edinburgh School of Medicine for Women, 1886-1898," *Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh* 35, no. 3 (2005), 261.

from her many previous years in Edinburgh, Jex-Blake was able to build a large network. She may not have attracted the close relationships of wealthy women in the area, but social ranking never bothered her much. Todd explains, "For years she had lived among the Edinburgh people… they might like or dislike her, but she went on her way, doing her work absolutely without ostentation."[180]

In October 1886, Jex-Blake faced a new opportunity to provide medical education for women, this time in Edinburgh. Two sources offer different explanations for how this opportunity came about: while Roberts claims that women reached out to Jex-Blake specifically for her help in pursuing a medical degree, JM Somerville suggests that Jex-Blake heard about growing interest and took it upon herself to provide education for them.[181] It is likely both arguments hold some truth: Jex-Blake probably had the idea to set up a medical school for women ever since she returned to Edinburgh, but she needed willing candidates to teach. When the Edinburgh School of Medicine for Women (ESMW) began its first session, eight students studied in separate classes at Surgeon's Hall, with Jex-Blake as Organizing Secretary and Dean. [182] When Pechey heard the news, she teased Jex-Blake about her success by recalling their experiences with the Edinburgh Seven: "In the very place where we were stoned and beaten 18 years ago. Well, I am glad to have lived to see the day… I don't know when I have felt so pleased and elated and especially that it should happen to *you*, it is so appropriate."[183] Thorne, however, was less congratulatory because she believed Jex-Blake's growing school would divert attention from the LSMW. Just as Jex-Blake wanted Garrett-Anderson to support LSMW to

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[180] Roberts, 185. Cited from Todd, 525.
[181] Roberts, 173; Somerville, 262.
[182] Somerville, 262.
[183] Roberts, 175. Cited from Todd, 505.

avoid any "split in the camp," Thorne was concerned the ESMW would create unnecessary competition between the schools. Jex-Blake did not seem too concerned, and she probably disliked the idea of shutting down her work for the sake of an institution that let her go.[184]

Jex-Blake's high expectations brought her into direct conflict with her students, threatening the success of the ESMW. Students were required to follow strict rules regarding quiet hours, attendance, and curfews, and Jex-Blake often gave severe punishments for what the students saw to be trivial matters. While some students continued to respect Jex-Blake as an experienced pioneer, others wanted to challenge her unreasonable demands. Somerville and Roberts connect this tension between Jex-Blake and her students to a generational gap. Roberts explains, "Sophia was now close to fifty, and the attitudes of the average young woman had changed since her own student days. … They did not understand that the rules reflected her anxiety to protect their hard-won access to the world of masculine privilege."[185] A growing group of students, led by the Cadell sisters, Grace and Ina, began to vocalize their disapproval.[186] The situation escalated until Jex-Blake, concerned about the dissent, expelled the Cadell sisters, who then took the issue to court in 1889. A year later, the Cadell sisters won the settlement, although they received less money than which they claimed. Nevertheless, the publicity surrounding the case brought negative attention to Jex-Blake as her overbearing personality pushed the younger generation away. Around the time the Cadell trial began, another ESMW student, Elsie Inglis, left the school, upset with Jex-Blake's administration. Later that year, she opened the Medical College for Women in Edinburgh for its first session.[187]

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[184] Roberts, 175.
[185] Roberts, 176.
[186] Roberts, 173.
[187] Somerville, 263-264. Inglis would go on to become a successful doctor and suffragist, renowned for founding the Scottish Women's Hospitals for Foreign Service, which sent all-women medical units to numerous countries during

Now, Jex-Blake was forced to compete with another medical school within Edinburgh, supported by a younger woman who did not have a notorious reputation like Jex-Blake. She wished to cooperate with the new College, but she would only do so, as Somerville explains, "on her terms."[188] The College Committee, understandably skeptical of the idea of working with a person who was so domineering, refused, insisting ESMW was not "conducted on sound and catholic principles" nor had been "truly an open and public establishment."[189] The ESMW continued to function for a few more years, but in 1896, it lost its partnership with the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, which decided to work with the College instead, thus losing the necessary space for clinical training. In 1898, the ESMW closed officially.[190]

Jex-Blake's exclusion from the LSMW and inability to gain the respect of her students at the ESMW do not suggest Jex-Blake failed in her work. On the contrary, her tenacity was consistently one of the most important strategies for advancing women in the medical profession. Indeed, many of her colleagues, admirers, and simple observers recognized this trait as a positive attribute. Others, however, recognized it as a dangerous threat to compromise. Furthermore, her lack of interest in building stronger connections with the ladies of Edinburgh society blocked her from benefiting from any resources they could provide. With limited support and a refusal to budge on her interests and beliefs, Jex-Blake could not reap long-term benefits from her projects, unlike Pechey or Thorne, who continued to build connections in their respective careers. For Jex-Blake, Roberts argues, "there was no distinction between serving and leading. She could

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World War I. Leah Leneman, "Inglis, Elsie Maud (1864–1917), physician and surgeon," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, last modified September 23, 2004, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/34101.
[188] Somerville, 264.
[189] Somerville, 264.
[190] Roberts, 182.

serve the cause best by leading it."[191] This attitude, while laudable, harmed Jex-Blake in her career after Edinburgh. In 1869, she represented seven other women who had similar goals and a willingness to follow her lead. By 1896, she could not inspire the same following from a younger generation of women, forcing her to step down from the positions of leadership she enjoyed so much.

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[191] Roberts, 90.

Conclusion: "It's Dogged That Does It": Crafting Legacy

On July 6, 1899, the Association of Registered Medical Women held their annual meeting. Mary Scharlieb, a graduate of LSMW who practiced in both India and the UK, was elected president. The meeting included a dinner, at which Sophia Jex-Blake was an honored guest. The Magazine for the London School of Medicine for Women reported the event, quoting Scharlieb's toast:

> The sight of our guest recalls to mind the gallant struggle carried on in Edinburgh, and the fact that out of its temporary defeat sprang up the London School of Medicine for Women. It is difficult for us to estimate the debt we owe to the Pioneers and to Dr. Jex-Blake in particular, and while we extend a hearty welcome to all our guests we cannot but welcome her most warmly of all.[192]

Members of the Edinburgh Seven often received this title of *pioneer*, demonstrating a respect and deference held by other medical women towards the group's work at the University of Edinburgh. Unlike Garrett-Anderson, these women could not benefit from loopholes to join the register, and they were not satisfied with receiving a foreign degree (at least, in the beginning). With Jex-Blake leading the group, they struggled against an unenthusiastic medical department, rowdy, ungentlemanly classmates, and a confusing bureaucratic system. Although they did not obtain their degrees, their experience roused sympathy and support for their cause, which in turn offered new opportunities to accomplish their goals.

After the University of Edinburgh removed the Edinburgh Seven, no visible tie united the women as a group. Priorities shifted as some abandoned the cause; others continued abroad, perhaps frustrated by the barriers in the UK; and others remained steadfast in their determination

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[192] "Association of Registered Medical Women," *Magazine of the London School of Medicine for Women* no. 14 (Sept 1899), Magazine of the London School of Medicine for Women microfilm, British Library, London, England, 569.

to open paths for women to the medical profession within Britain. The experience at Edinburgh prepared the women for whatever challenges they would face next, especially against the stubbornness of institutions. They could face the institutions directly, or they could create their own institutions. If the men would not allow the women access to the knowledge in their space, the women would have to create a space for themselves. In some ways, the original goals of Jex-Blake, Thorne, and Pechey were accomplished within a few years, and this achievement only encouraged these women to continue their work as leaders in the medical profession. Their responsibilities were different, yet they all dedicated significant efforts to ensuring the success of the next generations of medical women.

Reflecting on their own experiences encouraged the crafting of a legacy that contributed to the creation of the next generation of medical women. Both Jex-Blake and Thorne later wrote accounts of their time in Edinburgh, identifying important figures and key dates to create a narrative in which they fought gallantly but could not push past the formidable wall that blocked them from completing their education. Pechey often teased Jex-Blake with memories of their time together: before Jex-Blake gave a lecture about their experience in Edinburgh in 1872, Pechey ordered, "Don't have any libel cases, and don't be hard on the students. They're very bad, but they're not so bad as the Professors… How I wish I could be in the gallery to make faces at you and throw peas!"[193] By reminiscing and retelling their shared story, these women began to craft their legacy as pioneers facing hardship for the sake of future medical women.

The women also advised the next generation directly, emphasizing the unique responsibilities of a medical woman. In *Sketch of the Foundation and Development of the*

[193] Roberts, 128. Numerous city council meetings were held to consider various issues related to the Edinburgh Seven, especially surrounding their acceptance into the Royal Infirmary. During one of these meetings, when Jex-Blake was speaking, some individuals threw peas at her.

London School of Medicine for Women, Thorne urged the next generation of medical women to "carry on the traditions." These "traditions" demanded an important balance between being a doctor and a lady. A medical woman must not only be "skillful in the practice of her profession, but also an example to all other women for purity of mind and large-heartedness." Pechey agreed: in her inaugural address to LSMW students, she insisted, "There is no profession which calls more urgently than does that of medicine for the exercise of those qualities summed up in the words, Gentleman, Gentlewoman."[194] Being a proper lady became almost as — if not more — important for potential medical women if they wanted to succeed. These assertions established what would become the rhetoric of female professionalism, a balance of professional capabilities and womanly, caring behavior.[195]

Of course, not all medical women of the next generation greatly admired the Edinburgh Seven. Jex-Blake's return to Edinburgh in the 1880s and 1890s proved a generational gap existed between the "pioneers" and the new recruits. The insurrection and departure of many students who chose instead to enroll in Elsie Inglis' Medical College for Women resulted from not only Jex-Blake's stubbornness but also from new attitudes towards the increased freedom and independence of women that surprised even Jex-Blake. Russel mocked the University when it was restricted by its ancient constitution, insisting that society was changing. By the time the Edinburgh Seven was guiding the next generation, further societal changes were already apparent as the next generation sometimes questioned the formalities and rules the women imposed on them. The generational tension threatened the attempts to create a legacy that intended to inspire a particular type of medical woman.

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[194] Pechey, *Inaugural Address*, 33.
[195] For further discussion on female professionalism, see Michaelsen and Kondrlik.

Today, people do not recognize the group known as the Edinburgh Seven. The group does not come to mind immediately when one thinks about early medical women in the UK, unlike Elizabeth Blackwell or Elizabeth Garrett-Anderson. Of all the individuals in the group, Sophia Jex-Blake is probably the most well-known name. Perhaps because the Edinburgh Seven failed to complete their medical education at the University of Edinburgh, their efforts are dismissed as unimportant. Yet they crafted a legacy to pass onto the next generation, and this legacy embraced their struggle and, indeed, their failure. The women of the Edinburgh Seven proved they could be dignified ladies as much as they could be uncompromising fighters, determined to met their goal. When the University of Edinburgh shut them out, the women took the experience, strengthened their determination, and continued their work. The tenacity of these women brought them success later in life, and it became their legacy and a lesson for future medical women to remain determined while maintaining a polite, professional personality.

During the meeting of the Association of Registered Medical Women in 1899, Jex-Blake spoke and offered some thoughts about the Edinburgh Seven and the work that had resulted over the previous two decades. Despite Jex-Blake's disappointments in London and Edinburgh, the Association recognized Jex-Blake as a successful medical woman and wished to include her voice. She said:

> A friend recently reminded me of some words I dropped years ago when discouraged in the thick of the fight: "It's dogged that does it," was my comment. We fought with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other. The struggle made it difficult for us to keep in the van of progress. But for you younger women it is different: it is for you to build and make the best of your chances. Our piece of work was that of a battering ram, but we've been a long way from building the ways. It is for you to do new work in surgery, medicine, or hygiene, and whenever you get a tough quarter of an hour remember my dictum and say, "it's dogged that does it."[196]

[196] "Association of Registered Medical Women," 570.

In her inaugural address, Pechey used the same line — "it's dogged that does it" — to encourage the students to push forward. This line seemed to govern, if unconsciously, the actions of Jex-Blake, Pechey, and Thorne as they petitioned and appealed the university to give Pechey her rightful scholarship or forced their way through crowds of rowdy men after taking an examination. Perhaps it remained in their minds as Thorne secured the success of the LSMW, as Pechey advocated for women's rights in India, or as Jex-Blake fought to create new spaces where she could lead the next generation to medical glory. Such tenacity brought not only success these women but also allowed a space for newcomers to grow and, hopefully, for their legacy to flourish.

Appendix

Abridged Version of "Regulations for the Education of Women in Medicine in the University," published in the 1870-71 edition of the Calendar of the University of Edinburgh[197]

1. Women shall be admitted to the study of Medicine in the University.
2. The instruction of women for the profession of medicine shall be conducted in separate classes confined entirely to women.
3. The Professors of the Faculty of Medicine shall, for this purpose, be permitted to have separate classes for women.
4. Women not intending to study medicine professionally may be admitted to such of these classes, or to such part of the courses of instruction given in such classes as the University Court may from time to time think fit and approve.
5. *concerned with cost of classes and power of the administration to change fees*
6. All women attending such classes shall be subject to all the regulations now or at any future time in force in the University as to the matriculation of students, their attendance on classes, examination, or otherwise.
7. The above Regulations shall take effect as from the commencement of session 1869-70.

[197] The fifth regulation has not been included for direct quotation. Calendar of the University of Edinburgh, 1870-71 EUA IN1/PUB/1. Edinburgh University Library Special Collections, Edinburgh, Scotland, 165-166.

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