

Medical School in Kilkenny

“According to an anonymous writer in the “Dublin Journal of Medical Science” (1918) Kilkenny was the site chosen for one of the few attempts to regularise medical practice outside Dublin in the seventeenth century. In 1685 James II granted a Charter to Nicholas Shee, Walter Keyly, Richard Mading and others to found a ‘Royal College of Physicians in Kilkenny.’ Nicholas Shee was named first president. The functions of the College were to be the supervising and correction of the said College or Community and all men exercising the faculty of Physic, Surgery, Selling of Drugs and Apothecaries within our said Cities of Kilkenny, Waterford, Queen’s County, Tipperary, Carlow, Kildare and Wexford — no person or persons within the said Cities, Towns or Counties shall exercise the said faculties unless he or they be thereunto admitted by the said president and community.” (Spelling modernized).

—Dr. Fleetwood: “History of Medicine in Ireland.”

There are no records of any meetings or proceedings of this proposed College. The most outstanding point of the Charter is its recognition of the unity which should exist between Physicians, Surgeons and Apothecaries, and the desirability of their inclusion under a single governing body.

Enquiries in Kilkenny failed to reveal any document which would throw light on this College. In 1687 a priest named Donat O’Leary received a Royal Charter from James II creating the Royal College of St. Canice in Kilkenny “with authority to teach and confer degrees, in all arts and sciences, and moreover with all the privileges, immunities and faculties which are wont to be granted to such establishments.”