

News, Notes and Queries

shall be given by the Institute to the person who shall have advanced our knowledge of cholera or of any other epidemic disease.”

“The prize has never been awarded, but the interest, in accordance with the wishes of the donor, has been frequently disbursed. It was given in the first instance in 1858 to L. Doyère and, in fact, the Académie des sciences gives each year a prize of 20,000 frs from this fund.

“Our records contain two letters from John Snow referring to his candidature, under the dates of March 7th and October 13th, 1855. The printed documents which he sent at that time have been placed in the Library of the Institute of France.”

A CASE OF CONJOINED TWINS

THE small village of Narborough in mid-Norfolk, a few miles north-west of Swaffham, is a picturesque spot in an agricultural district, on the banks of the little river Nar. The Hall was for generations the seat of the Spelman Family, many members of which are buried in the parish church of All Saints which contains many Spelman monuments, the earliest being a brass of 1496. The most famous of this family was the statesman and antiquary, Sir Henry Spelman, who died in London in 1641 and is buried, not with his kinsmen, but in Westminster Abbey.

In the parish register of Narborough, which begins in 1558, there is recorded a case of conjoined twins, baptized, probably on the day of birth, and buried four days later. The entries, in the year 1709, read as follows:

Maria filia Francisci Legate et Elizabethae uxoris ejus baptisata fuit 30 die Aprilis.
Mary daughter of Francis Legate and Elizabeth his wife buried 4 May 1709.

To the second entry is appended a note in Latin. As it is very unlikely that the parish clerk knew Latin, the note was therefore probably written by the vicar, the Rev. Benjamin Ingram, who was inducted to the benefice in 1692 and died in office, 26 November 1735. He is buried with his two wives in the nave of the church under a ledger-stone with a Latin inscription. As to the parents of the twins, there is nothing to indicate their rank or condition. The surname Legatt (var. Legat, Legate, Leggat, Leggett, etc.) is a frequent one in Norfolk. The note is as follows:

Huic Mariae a pectore ad femur usque secunda fuit adunata filia mortua quidem sed ejusmodi inter hanc et vivam communicatio ut hac spirante in illius corpore visibilis dabatur motio: biceps fuit hic foetus cujus capita quatuor sustentabant humeri totidem annexis non tantum brachiis sed et manibus, a pudendis etiam quae fuerunt duplicia in quatuor femora totidemque dividetatur crura necnon et pedes omnino perfectos.

This may be rendered as:

To this Mary a second girl-child was united from the chest as far as the thighs; and although it [i.e. the second child] was dead, yet between it and the living child there was some kind of communication, so that when the latter breathed a perceptible movement was visible in the body of the former. This foetus was two-headed and its heads were supported upon four shoulders, with as many arms and hands attached to them; from the pudenda, which were double, the body divided out into four thighs with as many legs and feet also, in all respects perfect.

Of the conjoined twins, one was regarded as dead at birth, and the baptism was accordingly confined to the survivor, one name only being bestowed. The question of the spiritual unity or duality of the twins which so perplexed the parents and the

Book Reviews

priests in the case of the conjoined twins of Española* in 1553 did not arise in this case, as one of the Narborough twins was regarded as a still-birth which had no legal or religious status.

I am not aware that this Norfolk case has been recorded in the literature of teratology. Though of little value as a medical record, the case is interesting historically. †

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* Pena Chavarria, A., and Shipley, P. G. (1924), *Ann. med. Hist.*, 6, 297.

† The entry in the Narborough register was printed inaccurately in Francis Blomefield's *History of Norfolk*, 2nd ed., 1807, 6, 167.

THE HISTORY OF RAUWOLFIA

DR. F. W. RIEPPEL of Basle has forwarded the following comments on Dr. K. Somers' 'Notes on Rauwolfia and Ancient Medical Writings of India' (*Medical History*, April 1958, p. 87).

Dr. Somers' findings seem to confirm the opinion of the eminent sinologist and historian Professor Reinhold F. G. Müller, who stressed the almost unsurmountable difficulties arising from the unclarified nomenclature of the ancient Indian *Materia Medica*. Some of the points raised by Dr. Somers, however, had been cleared up long before he published his paper.

Rather than quoting Professor Filliozat as 'Chief witness' (p. 88), Dr. Somers should have mentioned the fact that Garcia da Orta was the first European to publish a book on Indian *Materia Medica*. His *Coloquios dos simples, e drogas he cousas medicinaes da India* appeared in 1563 at Goa, and not only does it contain a chapter on Rauwolfia and its use in India, but also an acceptable explanation for the origin of the name Sarpagandha (Somers, p. 89).

It was not Linnaeus who renamed the genus Rauwolfia as the author believes (p. 90). This name was introduced some 95 years earlier by the French botanist Charles Plumier in his *Nova Plantarum Americanarum Genera*, Paris, 1703.

Both Plumier and Linnaeus spelled the generic name Rauwolfia with a 'v', the reason being that both published their works in Latin which does not have the letter 'w'. Since we are dealing with a family name, and since his own handwriting proves that the German doctor and explorer wrote his name with a 'w', most authors today have agreed that this spelling should be preferred.

For further information, see Dr. Rieppel's recent papers:

'Leonhard Rauwolf. Ein Beitrag zu seiner Biographie', *Dtsch. med. Wschr.*, 1955, 80, 653-5.
'Zur Frühgeschichte der Rauwolfia', *Sudhoffs Arch. Gesch. Med.*, 1956, 40, 231-9.

Book Reviews

Paracelsus—An Introduction to Philosophical Medicine in the Era of the Renaissance. WALTER

PAGEL. Basle/New York: S. Karger, 1958; pp. xii + 368. Illustrated. Swiss francs 70. Paracelsus is one of the most controversial figures of the sixteenth century. There are societies which were founded specifically to encourage the study of his writings, special journals to report the work of scholars engaged in interpreting and illuminating his ideas, and a host of monographs in which an attempt is made to define and discuss his contribution to some particular branch of science or philosophy. Most of this published work is in German, although biographies and translations of a small