

Society Reports

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY HISTORY OF MEDICINE SOCIETY

The Officers of the Society for 1959–60 are:

<i>President</i>	Professor H. A. Harris
<i>Vice-President</i>	Dr. R. Williamson
<i>Secretary</i>	Dr. A. J. Rook (13, Brookside, Cambridge)
<i>Treasurer</i>	Dr. D. Woollam
<i>Other Members of Council</i>	Dr. L. C. Martin
	Mr. H. T. Matthews
	Mr. C. Parish

NORWEGIAN SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

A MEETING of the Society was held in Damms Bokhus, Oslo, on 5 November 1959. Dr. Wolfram Kock, director of the Medico-historical Museum of Stockholm, gave a most interesting account of his tour in Europe and the United States, in the course of which he visited medical museums and historical institutes in Copenhagen, Leyden, Paris, Vienna, Chicago, Cleveland, Rochester and Washington. Dr. Kock also spoke about the relatively new historical museum in Stockholm, where some 8,000 items have already been collected. Dr. Kock's lecture was most inspiring and it is felt that it has done much to stimulate the effort to establish a medico-historical museum in Norway.

The last meeting of the session was held on 26 November, when Professor Folke Henschen, M.D., gave an account of his work on the identification of the skull of Emanuel Swedenborg. The problem was to decide whether the skull in the coffin which was taken to Sweden after the philosopher's death or the skull which is still preserved in England was the genuine one. In Professor Henschen's opinion, the skull in the coffin cannot possibly be that of Swedenborg and there is, on the other hand, a considerable amount of evidence in favour of the authenticity of the 'English' cranium.

The Society has had a very successful year and the membership has risen from 70 to 90.

BERNHARD GETZ

SECTION OF MEDICAL HISTORY IN THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (Victorian Branch)

A MEETING of the Section of Medical History was held on Monday, 14 September 1959, when papers were presented by three of the members.

Professor K. F. Russell showed a copy of Matthew Baillie's 'Series of Engravings

Book Reviews

. . . to illustrate the *Morbid Anatomy . . . of the Human Body*', London, 1798–1803, from the Medical Library of the University of Melbourne. It had formerly belonged to William Clift (1775–1849) amanuensis to John Hunter and first Conservator of the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons. This volume contains 48 of Clift's original drawings which he had prepared for Baillie, most skilfully drawn in ink and brown wash with some colour. Another 24 of the original drawings are preserved in the Royal College of Physicians, London. The University of Melbourne purchased the book in London about 1870 but its earlier history is not known.

A brief sketch of Clift's life and work was given.

The second paper was presented by Dr. Bryan Gandevia, Curator of the Museum of the Medical Society of Victoria, who gave an account of the progress of the Museum in the last few years. A grant from the British Medical Insurance Company had made it possible for a part-time assistant to be employed in the Museum. With her help considerable progress has been made in the work of classifying the historical articles by Australian authors and articles dealing with Australian medical history. In addition, a considerable number of documents, manuscripts, letters and photographs had been filed and indexed. Part of the policy of the B.M.A. Library was that all books by Australians or of Australian medical interest published before 1900 were transferred to the Museum. All books in the Library dealing with medical Australiana, as well as other books of historical value were kept under review with the object of transferring them to the Museum when their period of active usefulness in the Library had ended.

The third paper, by Dr. Frank Forster, dealt with the life of Dr. Samuel Merriman (1771–1852) one of the busiest of the London obstetricians in the late eighteenth century who, in his lifetime, performed over 10,000 deliveries. Dr. Forster showed three interleaved volumes of Smellie's textbook of midwifery, which had contained the bookplates of Merriman's nephew, also named Samuel Merriman, who had himself been a well-known *acoucheur* at the Middlesex Hospital. It had been realized that these bookplates covered other bookplates belonging to some previous owner so they were removed. It was then found that the earlier owner had been the elder Merriman. The interleaved pages contained one hundred of the elder Merriman's case histories. Merriman's descendants are still living at Reading and there is an unpublished memoir of the life of the elder Merriman in the possession of the family.

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A History of Embryology. JOSEPH NEEDHAM, F.R.S. 2nd edition. Revised with the assistance of Arthur Hughes. London: Cambridge University Press, 1959; pp. 304. Illustrated. 5s. 6d.

In the early nineteen-thirties Dr. Joseph Needham gave a series of lectures at the University of London entitled 'Speculation, Observation and Experiment as illustrated by the History of Embryology', and, in amplified form, these were published in 1934 as *A History of Embryology*. This has been out of print for a number of years and now a second edition has been published, in the revision of which the author has been assisted by Dr. Arthur Hughes, Lecturer in Anatomy in the University of Cambridge.