

Society Reports

Leyden, they chose a university rather than the alternative offered by William, a remission of taxes for ten years. He would have been more surprised if he had known how profoundly the newly established university was destined to guide the advance of medical learning. Founded in 1575 and staffed by teachers who had studied at Padua, Leyden University attracted students of all nations, most of them students of medicine. There were many English-speaking students and about one-quarter of them were Scottish, this proportion rising to almost one-third early in the eighteenth century when Hermann Boerhaave was the leading teacher. Among his pupils were Alexander Monro, *primus*, and four others from Edinburgh who, on their return home, became professors and constituted the first Faculty of Medicine there in 1726. But the Leyden influence was not only strong at Edinburgh; it extended to Glasgow and to Aberdeen.

Thirty-first Meeting

The thirty-first ordinary meeting of the Society was held on 26 April 1958 at the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. As this was the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the Society, the first meeting having been held at the Royal College of Surgeons on 23 April 1948, it was decided to have an informal luncheon to precede the meeting, and Dr. W. S. Mitchell, the President, presided over a gathering of some forty members and guests. After the luncheon Dr. Mitchell briefly reviewed the activities of the Society over the last ten years, highlighting some of the more notable events during that period.

Following this happy little function, the Society was constituted for its meeting proper at which Dr. Mitchell delivered his presidential address, taking as his subject Dr. William Bullein, Elizabethan physician and author. Most of our knowledge of Bullein's life came from scraps of information contained in his various works, which were *The Government of Healthe* (1558); *The Bulwarke of Defence* (1562); *A Comfortable Regiment against the Pleurisi* (1562); and *Regiment against the Fever Pestilence* (1564). Bullein was born some time about the middle of the reign of Henry VIII and died in London on 7 January 1575–6. He served for a time as physician to Sir Thomas Hilton, Captain of Tynemouth Castle, whose widow he married.

Bullein wrote his *Bulwarke* in prison. It is really four works in one, and contains *The Book of Simples*, one of the earliest English herbals, the illustrations of which are obviously based on those in Fuchs's *De Historia Stirpium* of 1542. The *Regiment against the Fever Pestilence*, inspired by the London epidemic of 1563, is a series of dialogues designed to give not only bodily relief but also spiritual comfort in time of pestilence.

Bullein's works, which have been unjustly neglected, are still worth perusing not only for the picture of the author and his times which they afford, but for the racy English (including a few examples of what was later to be known as 'Euphuism') in which they were written.

NORWEGIAN SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

THE Society held the last meeting of the current session on 17 April 1958 when Professor Robin Fåhraeus, M.D., of the University of Uppsala, spoke on the Swedish anatomist, botanist, architect, composer and philosopher Olaus Rudbeck, who was born in Vesterås, Sweden, in 1630 and died in 1702.

Rudbeck studied at Leyden and was appointed professor of anatomy at Uppsala

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in 1661. Even as a student he made important anatomical discoveries. He taught botany in addition to anatomy, and founded a famous botanical museum in Uppsala. He also built an anatomical theatre which is still in use.

The name of Olaus Rudbeck can hardly be mentioned without recalling his work *Atlantica* and the fantastic theories propounded therein. This work certainly influenced Swedish foreign policy in a period when Sweden reached great power under the rule of Gustavus (II), Adolphus and Charles XII. Rudbeck's idea, like that of Archbishop Magnus, was that Sweden was the historical source of all the cultures of Europe, including those of Greece and Rome.

Professor Fåhræus's vivid account of this erratic genius made a great impression on all those who had the privilege of listening to it.

BERNHARD GETZ

News, Notes and Queries

ROBERT CHESSHER (1750-1831): AN ENGLISH PIONEER IN ORTHOPAEDICS

by BRUNO VALENTIN, M.D. (Rio de Janeiro)

THE name of Robert Chessher is one which deserves to be better known to all historians of medicine and especially to those who are interested in the history of orthopaedics. Although he is occasionally referred to as the inventor of the double inclined plane for the treatment of fractures of the femur and of 'Chessher's collar', it is now practically forgotten that he spent many years in active orthopaedic practice in his home town of Hinckley in Leicestershire. It was there that I was fortunate enough to find a comparatively unknown miniature portrait of Chessher which is here reproduced for the first time (Fig. 1). Nothing has been added to the scanty biographical information on Chessher which Muirhead Little published in 1928, and the reward of my own efforts has not been substantial, but by filling in the contemporary background of Chessher's achievements I hope that I may inspire more fortunate investigators to seek further details. When considering a man of whose personal life we know so little it is important that we can now see what he looked like. The painter of this miniature was a certain William Bass (1756-81), the brief outline of whose life is found in an obituary notice.

At Hinckley, Leicestershire, in his 26th year, of a deep decline, Mr. W. Bass. This worthy and ingenious young man, by profession a painter and engraver on tomb-stones, was for some time a lieutenant in the Leicestershire militia; but, having resigned his commission in the vain hope of recovering his health, lingered a few months, and dies sincerely regretted by all who knew him.

Robert Chessher was born at Hinckley in Leicestershire in 1750. His father died when he was still young and his mother married as her second husband a local surgeon named Whalley, to whom Robert was apprenticed. He early showed aptitude