

News, Notes and Queries

turition, and the history of Caesarian section is surveyed from the earliest myths to the present time. The second major abdominal operation to be developed was that of ovariectomy, first performed by Ephraim McDowell in 1809 on Jane Todd Crawford of Kentucky. The development of operation for appendicitis was strangely slow, the first being performed in 1861, and its story belongs mainly to the post-antiseptic era of surgery. By the 1890s all the great landmarks of abdominal surgery had been passed, and all that remained was to consolidate techniques and to extend the scope of operations as the benefits of improved diagnosis, surgical techniques, anaesthesia and resuscitation began to emerge.

At the Thirty-Eighth Ordinary Meeting, held on 3rd March, Mr. G. R. Pendrill gave a talk on 'Some Historical Cases of Auto-Surgery', from notes prepared by Mr. W. J. Bishop, who was prevented from attending by illness. An extended summary of the paper is published in the Report.

At the Thirty-Ninth Ordinary Meeting, Dr. W. P. D. Wightman read a paper on the 'Life and Times of Dr. Duncan Liddel (died 1613)' which was unfortunately not ready for publication in the Report. Instead is printed a paper prepared by Mr. T. B. Mouat on 'An Eminent Victorian, Frederick John Mouat, M.D., Hon. LL.D., Edin., F.R.C.S. (1816-1879)'.

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IN THE COURSE OF DUTY

by

J. P. J. ENTRACT

THE recent murder of a doctor in Chelsea by a person so far unknown has focused attention on a hazard of medical practice which is not, as some might imagine, unprecedented.

In January 1691/2, Dr. Andrew Clench was called from his house in Brownlow Street, Holborn, by two men on the pretext of *seeing a friend of theirs who was ill*. They took him in a coach to Leadenhall Market where they sent the driver off to buy two fowls. When the driver returned, he found the doctor slumped against the foreseat of the coach. He had been strangled by means of a handkerchief with a coal placed in it. A man named Henry Harrison was later arrested and charged. Found guilty, he was duly hanged at Tyburn. One John Cook was also charged as a suspected accomplice but acquitted for want of sufficient evidence.

Harrison had murdered Clench because the latter had refused to increase a loan of money he had made to a Mrs. Vanwicke, between whom and Harrison there had been 'a great kindness'.

Dr. Clench was a fellow of both the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal Society. Evelyn, in his Diary, mentions his melancholy end and, on a date some three years before, records a conversation he and Pepys had with Clench's 'Wondrous Child', a boy aged about twelve who could discourse learnedly and 'without any set or formal repetitions' on religion, astronomy, mathematics, geography, history, the Latin authors, and even on natural and moral philosophy and metaphysics. 'I counselled his father,' wrote Evelyn, 'not to set his heart too much on this jewel. *Immodicis brevis est aetas et rara senectus.*' (See *Munk's Roll*, 1, 419-21.)

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The Churchyard at Broadway, near Weymouth, contains a headstone inscription relating to another tragic case.

SACRED
to the memory of
ADAM STAPLETON PUCKETT
who was murdered by a patient while
in the execution of his duty at
SUTTON POINTZ on the 8th day of JULY 1862,
in the 65th year of his age.
He was highly respected and deeply lamented
by all who knew him and was upwards
of twenty years Parochial medical officer
of the Upwey and Chickereil district.
ALSO of ELIZABETH ESTHER, relict of the
above who died January 6th 1865,
aged 66 years.
The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away.

The peculiar horror of Puckett's death was described in *The Times* of 10 July 1862.

MURDER BY LUNATIC AT WEYMOUTH

A murder was committed on Tuesday at the village of Sutton, Nr. Weymouth. (Sutton Pointz or Poyntz: Hardy's 'Overcombe'.)

It appears that a man named Cox had been labouring under a brain disease for some time, and was under treatment of Mr. Puckett, Parish surgeon. It had been determined to remove him to the County Asylum at Forston, but unfortunately it had been expressed in Cox's hearing. On the day in question, Mr. Puckett went to Cox's house, with a man named White to remove him; but on hearing that Cox had threatened to murder him and had been very violent, White was sent for a cart. Meanwhile, the doctor went in to Cox and endeavoured to quiet him, but the lunatic directly darted at him, and said he would kill him.

Mr. Puckett immediately ran outside the door and held the handle to prevent Cox from getting out, on which Cox tried to jump out of the window, but was prevented by some iron bars fixed in the front. The doctor incautiously let go the door, when Cox rushed out and felled him to the ground with part of a bedstead, after which he dragged the body into the house, procured a saw and deliberately sawed off the unfortunate man's head, right hand and right foot. Cox's father and mother were outside but so terrified as to be incapable of rendering any assistance. He also threatened his sister who was in the house, but she ran upstairs and hid herself. Cox afterwards rifled the deceased's pockets and threw the several members into the road, kicked them about most fiendishly and then ran away. After a short time he was captured at the Plough Inn, Osmington and conveyed in safety to Weymouth. The deceased's remains were taken to the Ship Inn, Sutton, where they await an inquest. Mr. Puckett was over 60 years of age, and highly respected by all who knew him.

Details of Puckett's life are scanty. He was born on 16 September 1798, at Sheerness, Kent, where his father (Adam) probably kept a public-house, as in 1824 his mother (Sarah) is listed as licensee of the King's Head. His baptismal entry (Adam Stapleton) in Minster Parish Church is unusual in stating that the child was 'half-baptized', i.e. privately, without full rites, and 'completed' in 1801. If delicate at this time, he was no longer so in middle life when he was described as a 'hard and hearty man, capable of undergoing a great deal of fatigue and labour in a practice extending fifteen miles across country'.

He was apprenticed for seven years to Mr. Henry Urmston Thomson of Kensington,

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Apothecary, and qualified at Apothecaries Hall in 1819. He then practised at Densted (Chartham Hatch) Kent, and married a girl from near-by Harbledown. A son, Edward Frederick, was born in 1829. Soon afterwards, the Pucketts (it is a Dorset name) moved to Weymouth (Bridge Street) where Puckett himself became a surgeon of the local medical union. Two daughters, Alice and Louisa, were born in 1834 and 1840 respectively. By 1847 the family had moved to the village of Broadwey. Edward, it would appear, did not follow in his father's profession. In the strictly factual census returns of 1851, he is described as a butcher.

Mr. Richard Griffin, J.P., of Weymouth, who raised the Puckett Fund* on behalf of the widow and children, had some acid comments to make on the administration of medicine in country districts:

Why he (Puckett) had such a district I must leave the Poor-law Board and the Board of Guardians to answer. That it was cruel to the poor there can be no question, as some of his patients had to walk nine miles for a bottle of medicine and as many home again, making medical relief a mere mockery. . . . It was given in evidence at the inquest that poor Puckett only visited the maniac twice a week and in reality was unaware of his dangerous state, which more frequent visits would have revealed to him; but his enormous district prevented him doing more, as his salary of £116 per annum, including extra medical fees, miserable for such a district, allowed him to keep but one horse; for out of that salary he had not only to pay for the keep of that horse, but had to find drugs for the poor, to maintain himself, his wife, and one daughter to look after the house and her mother who has been for the last few years incapable of attending to the household duties. How poor Puckett, out of so miserable a pittance, managed to do all this is a mystery. . . . (*Lancet*, 19 July 1862.)

Even at the very end, irony stepped in to give local antiquarians a fillip. For while the surgeon's grave was being dug, portions of a Roman cinerary urn came to light. (Hutchin's *History of Dorset* 3rd ed. 1861-70.)

Five years ago (1956), Bath was the scene of a similar crime.

Dr. D. R. Edwards, who had taken over his practice only three months before, was interviewing a male patient in his surgery when another patient named Wilcox crept up to the surgery window from outside and shot the doctor dead. Wilcox was later arrested, still carrying the shot-gun. He was found to be suffering from 'paranoid schizophrenia' and was consequently sent to Broadmoor. *Significantly, an opened letter had been found on his person written by Dr. Edwards to a psychiatrist on the subject of Wilcox's mental condition.* [*Brit. med. J.*, ii, 1956, p. 1062; *The Times*, Sept.-Dec. 1956 passim.]

Rare as they are, these cases—which could well have counterparts in other countries—should put practitioners on their guard when dealing with certain types of abnormal personality.

Other long-forgotten cases are to be found in an article entitled *Todesursachen im ärztlichen Stande* by Hermann Vierordt of Tübingen (Verlag von F. Enke, Stuttgart, 1926):

France	1832	Delpesch	Murdered by a patient on whom he had operated for varicocele.
Germany	1849	Amelung	Stabbed to death by a criminal lunatic.

* The fund reached £1,074 in six months, one large contribution coming from the garrison surgeon of Attock, India.

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Italy	1859	Gravina	Stabbed in abdomen by a sick woman.
France	1861	Grioret	Shot from the window by a crazy patient whom he had visited.
England	1873	Lutwidge (Commissioner in Lunacy)	Injured by a lunatic with a nail. Died a week later.
U.S.A.	1882	Adams	Stabbed in the belly by a patient.
Canada	1885	Metcalf	Stabbed in the belly by a patient.
U.S.A.	1886	Gray	Died four years after from wounds inflicted by a lunatic.
U.S.A.	1890	Lloyd	Shot by a patient in an asylum.
France	1900	Devay	Strangled by a patient while immunizing him.
Germany	1904	Forster	Mortally wounded by a lunatic at Stephansfeld asylum.
England	1907	Hirst	Shot by a lunatic patient in Leeds.
Portugal	1910	Bombarda	Shot by a paralytic at his clinic.
France	1911	Guinard	Shot by a lunatic at Hotel Dieu in Paris.
Germany	1912	Shoenfeldt	Shot by an escaping lunatic.
Germany	1925	Sichel	Killed by a lunatic in Frankfurt-am-Main.

SOME UNRECORDED ENGLISH VERSIONS OF FOREIGN
SEVENTEENTH-EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY WORKS

by

RICHARD DURLING

IN the *Journal of the History of Medicine* for 1957 (pp. 256–8) F. N. L. Poynter drew attention to a hitherto unnoticed English version of William Harvey's *De motu cordis*, contained in the English work entitled *Bibliotheca Anatomica*, comprising three volumes, published in parts from November 1709, with general title-pages dated 1711–14.* It was obvious at the time that the compilation would repay further study. The present note lists several translations of importance to the medical historian and bibliographer which might otherwise be overlooked.

Some preliminary remarks seem to be called for, however. R. M. Wiles in his book *Serial Publication in England before 1750* (1957), pp. 89–90, mentions this compilation and evinces some surprise that the publisher, John Nutt, should have issued a work in monthly numbers 'bearing so learned a title as *Bibliotheca Anatomica, Medica, Chirurgica, &c.*' Poynter suggested a possible explanation for its appearance at this time, seeing in it a resemblance to such periodical publications as *The Works of the Learned* which abstracted foreign works of importance for the benefit of the English reader. Detailed study of the contents bears out his contention. As is indicated by the section headings throughout the work, foreign authors excerpted include J. B. Alliot, G. Aselli, J. de Back, G. Baglivi, P. Barbette, C. Bartholin, L. Bellini, A. Belloste, G. Bidloo, S. Blankaart, G. A. Borelli, J. Chaillou, A. Cyprianus, J. de Diemerbroek,

* There are copies in the British Museum, Royal College of Physicians of London, Royal Society of Medicine, Wellcome Historical Medical Library, National Library of Medicine, Washington, and Yale Historical Medical Library.