the patient towards the unaffected side, or positioning the patient in a sitting or quadruped position.

Motor blockade may be assessed by testing the patient's ability to raise the legs or bend the knees against resistance.

In summary, we have outlined the anatomy of the epidural space, considered the physiological changes induced by extradural blockade and discussed its indications, contraindications, complications and technique as used by us. Extradural anaesthesia demands considerable technical and resuscitative skills, meticulous attention to detail and a profound knowledge of anatomy and physiology on the part of the operator. A further prerequisite is the ability to establish good rapport with the patient, thus obtaining his or her full confidence in the operator. However, attainment of the art of epidural anaesthesia will always prove worth while and rewarding to the practising anaesthetist.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


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**Medical Philately**

**The Pen and the Scalpel — the Story of Medicine and Literature**

A. DUBB

**SUMMARY**

The medical profession has always been prominent in the cultural life of the community. Many doctors have been able to carry out their professional duties as well as actively to pursue their outside interests. Some have abandoned their medicine altogether — they have been called 'medical truants'. Literature and medicine have always been closely associated, and a number of literary doctors who have appeared on stamps are presented in this article.


In 1936 Lord Moynehan delivered the annual Linacre Lecture at Cambridge. He chose as his title 'Truants — the story of some who deserted medicine yet triumphed'. His concluding paragraph reads: "It has always been one of the salient characteristics of medical men in all countries, and at all times, that they have ardently followed pursuits other than that of their own profession and have indulged in other forms of culture. They have developed what the Greeks have called parergon — work by the side of work.'

The practitioner of today is far too embroiled in his medical activities to have time for other interests. The curriculum of the medical student is so saturated that he is denied the opportunity of acquiring a wider education. As much as 40 years ago, C. C. Okell wrote: 'One thing seems certain — if we taught and examined less, our students would learn more. If we add anything further to the medical curriculum let it be spare time.' The scholar-physician has indeed become a rara avis, yet we have a noble intellectual heritage steeped in the study of the arts and sciences.

**Imhotep and St Luke**

The very first physician to emerge clearly from the mists of prehistory was indeed also the first truant. Imhotep, the 'father of medicine', illustrated on a 1928 Egyptian stamp, was not only a medical man but was also scribe, priest, teacher, architect and vizier of King Zoser of the Third Dynasty (2633-2613 BC). He constructed the first great stone building, the Step Pyramid at Sakkara, more
than 60 m high. He received his greatest tribute posthumously, being elevated to the rank of god by the Egyptians.

Nor did our own patron saint, Luke, confine himself to medicine. The 'beloved physician' was not only the first medical missionary but was also the scholar among the evangelists — artist, musician, historian, and author of the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. Indeed, doctors have to share his patronage with the artists. In the stamp illustrated (Fig. 1) we see him with his book open and by his side his symbol, the winged bull.

Literature is indebted to medicine for many writers and poets. Somerset Maugham has said that he knew of no better preparation for the profession of letters than to spend a few years in the practice of medicine — as he himself did. Sir Humphrey Rolleston, in the Lloyd Roberts Lecture at the Medical Society of London (1933), said: 'Medical men see so much of human nature, of its failings and disappointments as well as of its self-sacrifices and triumphs, that they have plenty of opportunity for the study of mankind and so for its excursions into literature'.

**Francois Rabelais**

One doctor-author who stands out is Francois Rabelais (1494 - 1553). He studied medicine after being expelled from a Benedictine monastery for heresy, graduated in Paris in 1530, and 7 years later was awarded his doctorate at Montpellier. He practised intermittently and became better known as a writer. His famous parody, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, is his literary monument. The characters express his own philosophy: a kindliness towards all men and a healthy aversion for superstition, humbug and tyranny. He believed that life for its own sake could be worth living. There is a more serious side to him too; he lectured in medicine and translated the works of Hippocrates and Galen.

**Oliver Goldsmith**

Oliver Goldsmith (1728 - 1774) may be better known as the author of *The Deserted Village* and *The Vicar of Wakefield*, but he too had a medical degree, albeit a dubious one. His academic career was distinguished only by its checkered nature; he was forever getting into scrapes and just avoiding being expelled from university. He eventually graduated in arts and was even accepted for medical school at Edinburgh. He dropped out, however, and went to Leiden where he also failed. Then began his grand tour of Europe — on foot and with a flute. When he returned to Dover, he was penniless but had acquired an obscure Italian medical degree.

Goldsmith's venture into practice failed, and he became successively but not successfully an apothecary's assistant, a school usher, a writer of ditties and a hack. Suddenly his luck changed and he achieved a rapid rise to fame as an essayist, journalist, poet and novelist. An inveterate gambler, he fluctuated between rags and riches. His last act in the practice of medicine was to treat himself — characteristically, he prescribed an overdose. He was only 46 years old when he died.
John Keats

A more lyric poet was John Keats (1795 -1821). Orphaned when young, he was induced by his guardian to become apprenticed to an apothecary-surgeon at the age of 16. After working as a dresser at both Guy’s and St Thomas’s hospitals he passed his licentiate examination, but having attained his majority at the same time he immediately abandoned medicine for poetry. His career was short-lived; 5 years later he was dead from tuberculosis, the disease which had claimed his mother and his brother. He had gone to Italy in search of a cure, and it was there that he died. ‘Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies’, from his ‘Ode to a Nightingale’, is an apt self-description.

John McCrae

A stained-glass window at McGill University in Montreal commemorates a ‘pathologist, poet, physician and soldier, and man amongst men’. That was John McCrae (1872 -1918). He was the author of that poignant poem, ‘In Flanders Fields’, the first two lines of which are quoted on a stamp from Canada issued on the 50th anniversary of Armistice Day. The poem was written on the battlefield in 20 minutes and first appeared anonymously in Punch in 1915. McCrae first studied arts, then science and finally medicine. He trained as a pathologist at Johns Hopkins and McGill before leaving in 1900 to fight in the Anglo-Boer War. He then returned to Montreal and devoted his energies to medical education. In 1914 he went to war again; he survived the battles, but succumbed to pneumonia in 1918. He wrote many poems which reveal a preoccupation with death, hardly surprising in the light of his dual role as soldier and pathologist.

Sir Ronald Ross

Sir Ronald Ross (1857 -1932), who received the Nobel Prize for medicine in 1902, was something of the universal man. He wanted to be an artist, but reluctantly became a doctor. But he was more than that — he was a poet, novelist, musician and scientist who expressed many of his hopes, his ambitions and his disappointments in poetry. He devoted his scientific efforts to finding the missing link in the riddle of malaria. When he found the female form of the parasite in the stomach of the anopheles mosquito, the story was completed. He celebrated his discovery with a poem which ends:

‘I know that this little thing
A million men will save —
Oh death where is thy sting?
Thy victory oh grave?’

Friedrich Schiller

Friedrich Schiller (1759 - 1805) was a reluctant doctor. After graduating from the Ducal Military Academy, Stuttgart, he became an army surgeon, but preferred poetry and playwriting to his monotonous regimental duties. In 1782 he fled to Mannheim to devote himself to the stage. His other love was history and he secured a professorship at Jena, where he befriended Goethe. The greatest dramatist Germany has produced, Schiller has as his leitmotiv the ideal of freedom and human dignity, and even today his works inspire liberal thinkers. He was only 46 years old when he died of tuberculosis.

Anton Chekhov

Anton Chekhov (1860 -1904), the celebrated Russian author and playwright, took a medical degree at Moscow but practised for a short while only. The success of his first volume of stories led to his desertion of medicine for literature. ‘Medicine is my lawful wife and literature my mistress’, he wrote. ‘That may not be quite respectable, but at any rate it is not boring and neither of them loses anything from my unfaithfulness’. He too contracted tuberculosis, and died at the age of 44 years.

Rintaro Mori

Another man of letters was Rintaro Mori (1862 -1922), who studied medicine first in Tokyo and then in Germany. He returned to become a military surgeon and lecturer at the Army Medical School, but his major interest shifted to literature and he became famous as a writer under the nom de plume Ogai Mori. He mastered several languages and translated Hamlet into Japanese.

Karl Schonherr

Well known to the Austrians is Karl Schonherr (1867 -1943), a physician and dramatist whose plays frequently feature doctors. He started writing poetry and short stories in his native Tyrolean dialect, but then turned to the theatre. At 35 years of age he finally gave up his medical practice to pursue a full-time literary career. His plays include such titles as Der Armdoktor and Herr Doktor, Haben Sie zu Essen.

Janusz Korczak

In 1962, Israel and Poland philatelically honoured Janusz Korczak (1878 -1942) on the 20th anniversary of his death. His real name was Henryk Goldszmidt, a Polish paediatrician who wrote many colourful stories for children. At the age of 37, he abandoned his practice to become administrator of a Jewish orphanage and devote his entire time and efforts to education and reform. When Warsaw was occupied by the Nazis he became defender and protector of all the 400 000 ghetto children.

In deference to his international reputation as an educator and pedagogue, he was twice offered freedom, but he refused. His fate was to perish with his young charges in the gas chambers of Treblinka. An eye-witness account of the scene concludes: ‘The children did not utter a cry, none made an attempt to run away, none sought to hide. They looked up at their teacher and protector, their father and brother. Dr Korczak, hatless, held the youngest child by the hand and marched out front. Behind him marched the nurses and the children to their slaughter. The very cobblestones wept.’
Robert Faehlmann, Friedreich Reinhold Kreutzwald and Elias Lönnrot

Doctors have often been in the forefront of campaigns to preserve the folklore and the culture of their people in their native tongues. Robert Faehlmann (1800 - 1850) and Friedreich Reinhold Kreutzwald (1803 - 1882) were both physicians and writers. They founded the Estonian Academic Society, whose object was to collect Estonian folklore and to study its linguistic peculiarities. Elias Lönnrot (1802 - 1884) did the same for his native tongue. He founded the Finnish Literary Society to revive the Finnish language and to prevent its supercession by Swedish and Russian. From practising medicine, he became Professor of Finnish Literature and Language at the University of Helsinki.

Ludwik Zamenhoff

One doctor went even further — he created a new language. Ludwik Zamenhoff (1859 - 1917), a Polish ophthalmologist, was so concerned at the misunderstanding and lack of communication in the world that he set about making a universal language which he hoped would abolish racial and national antagonisms. He called it Esperanto (one who hopes), published its rules and syntax in 1887, and organized international congresses to gain support for it. It produced an impressive volume of literature, including poetry and novels; it was accepted by reputable scientific associations and in the field of telecommunications, but it never really caught on and he died a disappointed and disillusioned man.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Returning to the English language, we can find many doctor-novelists who incorporate medical themes in their writing. A. J. Cronin, Francis Brett Young and Frank G. Slaughter spring readily to mind. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859 - 1930) is represented by a stamp from Nicaragua, issued in 1972 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Interpol. He graduated in medicine at Edinburgh and while in general practice in London he achieved success as a novelist which caused him to abandon medicine. His first novel, *A Study in Scarlet*, introduced Sherlock Holmes, a character based on Joseph Bell, a surgeon at his medical school. Conan Doyle's patriotism recalled him to medicine when he served as an army doctor in the South African War. He wrote a history of the event and subsequently published six volumes on World War I. From history he turned to spiritualism, lecturing and writing extensively on the subject. Conan Doyle is best remembered as the creator of the modern detective story, and his methods of deduction have undoubtedly advanced the study of criminology as well.

Sir William Osler

Writing is the very means by which medical knowledge is preserved and disseminated. How sad it is that much of what is written lacks literary value. Sir James Barrie, creator of Peter Pan, wrote: 'The man of science appears to be the only person who has something to say just now and the only man who does not know how to say it'. There have been (and still are) great medical writers. Sir William Osler (1849 - 1919), the 50th anniversary of whose death is commemorated on the Canadian stamp illustrated, was not only a great doctor; he was a teacher, an essayist, a historian, and an astute observer whose clinical descriptions have become medical classics. A fitting conclusion to this article would be to quote him: 'No man is really happy or safe without a hobby and it makes precious little difference what the outside interest may be — botany, beetles or butterflies; roses, tulips or irises; fishing, mountaineering or antiquities — anything will do so long as he straddles a hobby and rides it hard'.

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