

North Carolina and the cruelest summer months at Bass Rock, near Gloucester.

At the age of ninety-five and after having been inactive as the result of a stroke just before his ninetieth birthday, Harry Galpin Stoddard died in his nearby home during the night of May 21, 1969. He is survived by a son, Robert Waring Stoddard, a member of the Council of the Society, and a daughter, Marion Stoddard Fletcher, the wife of another Council member, Paris Fletcher. Another son, Lt. Col. Lincoln W. Stoddard, died in 1952. He also left five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. His loss is mourned by his family and friends and all who came to depend upon his unstinting generosity not only with money but with time and above all interest. Among his closest friends was Rae MacCollum Spencer who was a great help to me in writing this sketch.

J. E. M.

#### HENRY ROUSE VIETS

Henry Rouse Viets, neurologist and historian of medicine, was born in Lynn on March 7, 1890, the son of Henry Rouse and Annie Rebecca (Tufts) Viets. His father was in business in Boston and young Henry was brought up in Newton and went to school there before going to Dartmouth. At college he lived at Psi Upsilon house before graduating with the Class of 1912. He then went to school nearer home at the Harvard Medical School where he graduated with his medical degree in 1916. During the next year he was at Oxford, studying under Sir William Osler, and elsewhere as Moseley Traveling Fellow and for the following couple of years continued to travel with the U.S. Army Medical Corps, going into the war as a lieutenant and coming out of it as a major. Returned from serv-

ice he joined the staff in neurology at Massachusetts General Hospital and took a lectureship at Harvard Medical School which he held for thirty-six years. He specialized in myasthenia gravis, a muscle debilitation which leads to paralysis, and he established the first clinic for the diagnosis and treatment of the disease.

In the mid-twenties Viets wanted to publish facsimile copies of the three known editions of Thacher's *Brief Rule* and wrote to Clarence Brigham for help. When he was asked to contribute an article on Charles Cullis for the *DAB* he had little luck in his search for material and again turned to the Society for help and again got it. He continued to depend upon the library of this Society for his sketches for later volumes of the *DAB* and for his two-hundred-page *Brief History of Medicine in Massachusetts* which was published in 1930 under the auspices of the Massachusetts Medical Society. In the mid-thirties Brigham and Vail steered Viets to a collection of medical manuscripts here and Viets was excited about the prospects of using them but first had to finish his work on an edition of *A Journal of a Young Man of Massachusetts*, an imprint of 1816 important to medical history. He also did some work on the history of medicine in Massachusetts in the colonial period which was printed in *Isis* and in the next few years he contributed a number of articles, both medical and historical, to various journals.

At the April meeting in 1942 Viets was elected to membership in this Society and his connection with it grew even closer. On many occasions he sent along items of his own for the library and otherwise took a scholarly and financial interest in our well-being. Viets was a regular attender at meetings of the Society and wrote that 'only business of urgency keeps me away'. As he was active in UNESCO at the time in addition to a number of other important medical posts he was not able to compile the perfect attendance record he might have wished for. In this period he was also librarian of the Boston Medical

Library where one of his duties was to prepare an article for the hundredth anniversary of the first ether operation. The book-swapping of discards and duplicates between the two libraries soon grew to healthy proportions. In addition to his other jobs including visiting lectureships at the University of Texas and at Dartmouth Viets kept an active practice in medicine. In the early fifties he was at the other end of the scalpel for an abdominal operation which kept him out of his office for quite some time and after which he resigned from teaching at the Harvard Medical School, where a lectureship and scholarship have been established in his name, and voluntary activity at the Massachusetts General Hospital but did continue his private practice. Once healed he was back at his desk at the medical library and was helpful to Clifford Shipton in searching out material on medical men in those Harvard classes being written up for *Sibley's*. Shipton wrote to Viets at his summer place at Boothbay that he wished Viets could get 'back to historical writing. About once a week I tell someone that the most authentic volume on early medical history is that by Dr. Viets, but that it represents only a tiny bit of what he knows.' An indication of the recognition of this wide knowledge were his memberships in the Massachusetts Historical Society, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Colonial Society of Massachusetts, and the American Association of the History of Medicine, of which he was president for a year. He was also the only American ever elected to the Osler Club in London.

To cheer up Shipton, who had been operated on for an appendix, Viets sent along an article he had written on Edward Cutler and the first 'clean' appendectomy. Shipton demurred on Viets's 'statement that the condition is readily recognizable. The local surgeons poked me for twelve hours and agreed on but one thing, it was not an appendix and would have sent me to the Massachusetts General Hospital for further poking if they had thought I would survive the trip. The trouble was

that my inflamed appendix was around by my back pocket.' So much for the 'lower right quadrant of the abdomen' which Viets had mentioned in his article as the home of the appendix. Dr. Viets had been in the library most recently finishing his work on the London editions of Polidori's *The Vampyre*, the last of more than a thousand articles and reviews he had written, and helped me with a review I had to write of a book on the Doctors Warren of Boston.

On July 5, 1969, Dr. Viets died at the New England Deaconess Hospital in Boston at the age of seventy-nine. He never married and left no immediate family. At the time of his death he was Consultant to the Historical Collections of the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, the successor to his old love, the Boston Medical Library. In a paper he had done, Viets wrote of an English doctor of the eighteenth century that 'his contemporaries considered Cheyne a learned physician, a sound Christian, a deep scholar, and a warm friend.' Contemporaries and friends today feel much the same about Henry Rouse Viets and miss him very much.

J. E. M.

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