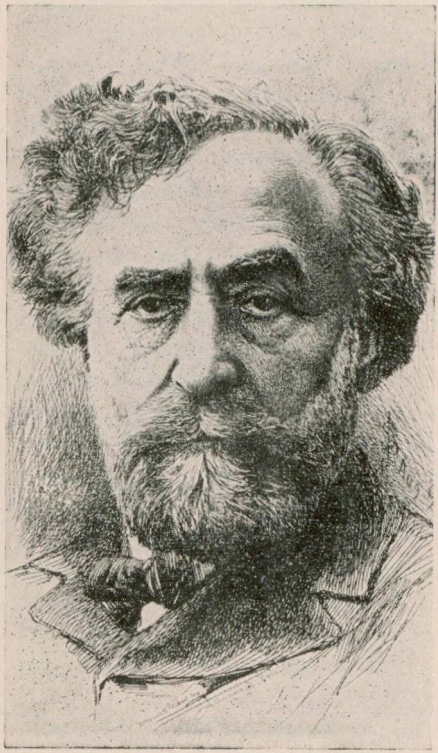

Pediatric Pioneer

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The Saga of Abraham Jacobi*

ABRAHAM JACOBI, pioneer in American pediatrics, was one of the intellectual giants of the last century, a century which had a number of such figures in medicine. Jacobi was one of the few great medical minds who migrated to the United States in the 19th Century.

Let us take a slice of time, say March, 1848. In Geneva, N. Y., the Geneva Medical Institute had only a year previously admitted the first woman medical student, Elizabeth Blackwell, who was to graduate the next year, 1849. She was in the middle of her medical school career in March, 1848.

In that same March, in Berlin and in certain other German cities, the 1848 Revolution was raging. The German Revolution unfortunately did not succeed, and this of course, was bad for the people

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fighting in it. Abraham Jacobi, Rudolf Virchow, and many other intellectuals were involved.

Jacobi was a young student of 18 years at the University of Griefswald. Virchow was well established in his research and teaching career at the Charité Hospital in Berlin. For a time it was thought that some freedom had been obtained, and, of course, it was this small breath of freedom which sealed the fate of the young revolutionaries. Hundreds of thousands of the "forty-eighters" fled to the United States. Virchow was first suspended from his position; after protests from students and medical societies he was reinstated "on probation." However, he wasn't persecuted further. Jacobi and his young contemporaries, such as Carl Schurz and Alexander Schimmelpfennig, were not spared.

Abraham Jacobi was born in the tiny town of Hartum-in-Minden, Westphalia, Prussia, in 1830. He attended the University of Griefswald in Pomerania, where he studied oriental languages. This portion of Prussia apparently was in great intellectual ferment during the early 19th Century.

After Jacobi finished his university studies, he attended several medical schools, as was the custom. One of them was Göttingen, where he fortunately came under the influence of Friedrich Wöhler, the "father of organic chemistry," who had synthesized urea in 1818. In 1851, Jacobi got his degree in medicine from the University of Bonn. By this time the counter-revolution was in full swing and Jacobi's contemporaries were being arrested left and right.

During the mounting tension Jacobi was living in Bonn, where he was preparing for his state medical examinations. When Jacobi arrived in Berlin to take his state examinations, he was met by a whole delegation of police who treated him with such exaggerated courtesy that he wondered if some mistake had not been made. In fact, this was the case. His name had been included on a list of suspects of political prominence. No real charges were brought against him other than being on the losing side of a revolution. He was committed to prison forthwith, and there the young physician soon gained the confidence and respect of the jailer.

At about the end of 2 years in prison, it turned out that he was to be released on a technicality so he could be arrested again later in the day. His friend the jailer followed the letter of the regulation and let him go unusually early in the morning on the day he was to be released. He was well on his way out of Germany by the time the police turned up later in the morning to arrest him.

He migrated to England where he stayed briefly, then sailed for New England, U.S.A. He finally went down to New York City, where he set up in the practice of medicine. In 1853, he opened his office, charging 25 cents for an office visit, 50 cents for a home visit, and 5 dollars for a home delivery.

Jacobi then launched into his marvelous career in this country which was productive on every turn. He was probaby the first person to start the bedside teaching of pediatrics in this country. He had the opportunity to work at a newly established hospital in New York City, and this is how it came about that he taught pediatrics at the bedside. Thus, in 1860, Jacobi set up a pediatric clinic at the New York Infirmary for Women and Children. He had initiated a series of pediatric lectures in 1857, because he saw a dreadful need for the care of small infants and children, and so he began teaching some of the things he had learned and read about. This series was given at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, to an audience composed of half a dozen students.

Together with his wife, Mary Putnam Jacobi, he wrote a book, *Infant Diet*, which went through many useful editions. In 1859 Jacobi, with the collaboration of Dr. E. Noeggerath, published a volume on the diseases of women and children. Apparently the physicians in the United States were not yet ready to be so concerned with the diseases of infants and children —the entire edition brought $68 when it had to be sold as waste paper!

Jacobi was one of the first to point out the importance of boiling milk. This was before modern microbiology had developed, and empiric trials had to be made. He didn't know why the babies got along better, but he was careful to point out that the mothers should watch that the milk bubbled before they stopped heating it. He also noticed that the babies got scurvy if the mothers boiled milk too long, so he was very active in advising them to use fresh fruit juices for babies getting boiled milk. These were extremely important pediatric public health measures.

Jacobi established the pediatric section of the American Medical Association in 1880. He was the first president of the American Pediatric Society. He was made Professor of Infantile Pathology and Therapeutics at the New York Medical College in 1860 (no apparent connection with the present medical school of the same name). In 1870, he was made Clinical Professor of the Diseases of Infancy and Childhood at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia. He was named president of the Association of American Physi-

cians in 1896, still one of the highest accolades in American medicine.

He was sufficently individualistic that he came into conflict with the national policies of the American Medical Association at a fairly early date in his career. Yet Jacobi was made president of the A.M.A. in 1911 in spite of his considerable differences with that organization in his earlier years. In 1918, when he was 88 years old, he urged the establishment of a governmental health department headed by a person of cabinet status.

The honors which were bestowed upon him are many. A partial listing follows. The Lennox Hill Hospital established a pediatric section quite early, which was named the Abraham Jacobi Division in 1895. The Roosevelt Hospital established an Abraham Jacobi Ward for Children about 1900. This was supposed to have been the first pediatric ward especially organized for the teaching of clinical pediatrics in the United States. It was set up under the aegis of Columbia University. Finally the Abraham Jacobi Hospital, a hospital of 898 beds, has been opened quite recently in association with the Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University, in New York City. It contains the pediatric teaching unit for the Einstein College of Medicine. Fig. 1 is a Byronesque drawing of Jacobi at age 69.

In later years both Abraham Jacobi and Carl Schurz had summer homes together on Lake George. During Schurz's final illness, Jacobi was constantly at his side. After his home burned, he spent his last few summers in Carl Schurz's house next door. At age 89 he died peacefully under the roof of the man with whom he had shared so many memories of their young adventures in bygone days.

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The Adrenal Medulla

RESPONSES of the adrenal gland to stress have been the subject of much research. Unlike the adrenal cortex, where emphasis is on the response to the nonspecific stress, the adrenal medulla, as a part of the sympathetic nervous system, is intimately connected with specific emotional expression.

—*Molecules and Mental Health* edited by F. A. Gibbs, M.D., J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, 1959.