

**SYNOPSIS OF THE
CONTENTS OF THE MUSEUM
OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF
SURGEONS OF ENGLAND**

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Synopsis of the Contents of the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons of England by
Various

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ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS
OF ENGLAND.



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1871.

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MUSEUM
OF
THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

SYNOPSIS.

THE Collection of THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS is designed to facilitate the study of the phenomena of Life, both in health and disease, as the true foundation upon which the rational practice of the healing art is based.

With this view, the Collection is divided into two chief departments.

The first, THE PHYSIOLOGICAL SERIES, contains examples of every important modification of the different structures or organs by which the functions of Life are carried on, throughout the whole range of organized beings, in a natural condition.

The second, THE PATHOLOGICAL SERIES, exhibits the same structures or organs, under the influence of injury, disease, or malformation.

Besides these two principal departments, there is a small collection of objects of historical or general interest to the profession, such as various forms of instruments which have been used in the practice of Surgery, the different methods of embalming and preserving the dead, &c.

The Hunterian Collection, which forms the basis, and still a large proportion, of the contents of the present Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, was originally arranged in a building which its Founder, JOHN HUNTER, erected for it in 1786, behind his house in Leicester Square. In 1787 he had completed its arrangement, the principle of which is still adhered to; and the Museum was opened for inspection during the month of October to the Medical Profession, and in May to non-professional Patrons, Cultivators, or Lovers of Physiology and Natural History.

JOHN HUNTER died October 16th, 1793, aged 64. By his will he directed his Museum to be offered in the first instance to the British Government, on such terms as might be considered reasonable, and in case of refusal, to be sold in one lot, either to some Foreign state, or as his Executors might think proper.

In the year 1799 Parliament voted the sum of £15,000 for the Museum, and an offer of it being made to the Corporation of Surgeons, it was accepted on the terms proposed by Government*.

* The following are the Terms and Conditions on which the Hunterian Collection, purchased by Parliament, was delivered to the late Corporation of Surgeons; which Corporation having become dissolved, the Members thereof were re-incorporated by Charter, dated the 22nd day of March, 1800, under the title of The Royal College of Surgeons in London:—

1st. The Collection shall be open Four Hours in the Forenoon of two days every Week for Inspection and Consultation of the Fellows of the College of Physicians, the Members of the Company of Surgeons, and persons properly introduced by them, a Catalogue of the Preparations, and a proper Person to explain it, being at those times always in the Room.

2nd. That one Course of Lectures, not less than twenty-four in number, on Comparative Anatomy and other subjects, illustrated by the Preparations, shall be given every year by some Member of the Company.

3rd. That the Preparations shall be kept in a state of Preservation, and the Collection in as perfect a state as possible, at the Expense of the Corporation of Surgeons, subject to the annual Inspection and Superintendance of the Trustees.

4th. That there shall be a Board of Trustees, to consist of sixteen [increased to seventeen by the Lords of the Treasury in 1856] Members, by

In 1806 the sum of £15,000 was voted by Parliament in aid of the erection of an edifice for the display and arrangement of the Hunterian Collection; a second grant of £12,500 was subsequently voted, and upwards of £21,000 having been supplied from the funds of the College, the building was completed in Lincoln's-Inn Fields, in which the Museum was opened for the inspection of Visitors in the year 1813.

From the number of the additions, the Museum, completed in 1813, became too small for their adequate display and arrangement; and more space being at the same time required for the rapidly increasing Library, the greater portion of the present building was erected, wholly at the expense of the College, in 1835, at a cost of about £40,000, and the Hunterian and Collegiate Collections were re-arranged in what are now termed the Western and Middle Museums, which were opened for the inspection of Visitors in 1836.

Further enlargement of the building having become necessary by the continued increase of the Collection, the College, in 1847, purchased the premises of Mr. Alderman Copeland, in Portugal Street, for the sum of £16,000, and in 1852 proceeded to the erection of the Eastern Museum at the expense of £25,000, Parliament granting £15,000 in aid thereof.

virtue of their Public Offices, and of fourteen others, to be appointed in the first instance by the Lords of the Treasury, and afterwards to be elected, as Vacancies may happen, by a Majority of the remaining Trustees.

5th. That the Museum shall always be open for the Inspection of all or any of the said Trustees, who are to take care that the Corporation of Surgeons perform their Engagements respecting the said Collection. That a day be appointed for the annual Inspection of the Museum, by the Trustees acting collectively as a Board; and that they are also to have quarterly Meetings, for the transacting of any Business relative to the Museum, and for the filling up of such Vacancies as may happen in the Number of the Trustees; and that the Corporation of Surgeons shall engage some Person to officiate as Secretary to the Board upon such occasions, and to issue previous Notices to the Members, in which he is to state particularly whether any Vacancies are to be filled up by new Elections.