

THE GOLD-HEADED CANE

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This little book of 179 pages, was written in 1827, in celebration of the opening of the new building of the Royal College of Physicians in London. The building is in the immediate vicinity of Trafalgar Square just behind Canada House. It was the headquarters of the Royal College of Physicians until about 1965, when the College moved to a new building in Regent's Park and this move was occasioned by the desire of the Canadian Government to expand its headquarters from the Canada House, which was opened in 1925, into the building behind it.

Thus, in 1827, a member of the Royal College of Physicians, Dr. Carmichael, took note of the fact that the College had recently been made the recipient of a Gold-Headed Cane which had been carried by five *who bequeathed it to one another* physicians, between the late 1680's and about 1815, when the last of the five men who carried the Cane, Sir Mathew Baillie, died. His widow, Lady Baillie, donated the Cane to the College. Dr. Carmichael wrote this little book in which the Gold-Headed Cane, speaking in first person singular, reports what it saw and heard as it went about daily activities with these five men.

When I undertook to deliver an address to the Montreal Clinical Society, at its first annual dinner meeting, in May 1938, I adopted Camichael's technique in reviewing what I found in the minute book of the Society between April, 1923, when the society had its first meeting, and May, 1938. Thus, the minute book speaks in the first person singular.

The first of these five physicians, John Radcliffe, was born in 1652, and died in 1714. He bequeathed his fortune of one hundred and forty thousand pounds to Oxford University. This appears to have been the largest bequest that the university had ever received. In the course of the years, the income from this fund went to the creation of important buildings and projects namely, The Radcliffe Camera, Radcliffe Infirmary, Travelling Fellowships, and the Radcliffe Observatory, which has played a very important role in the development of the study of Physics and Astronomy. All these institutions and scholarships are now still active.