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Charles Creighton

Charles Creighton (22 November 1847 – 18 July 1927) was a British physician and medical author. He was highly regarded for his scholarly writings on medical history but was widely denounced for disputing the germ theory of infectious diseases.



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Biography

Creighton was born in Peterhead, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, the oldest son of Alexander Creighton and Agnes Brand Creighton. He received a scholarship to attend the University of Aberdeen and received his M.A. in 1867. He then enrolled as a medical student and passed his M.B. and M.S. exams in 1871. After graduation, he studied for a brief time with Karl von Rokitansky in Vienna and Rudolf Virchow in Berlin. He was awarded his M.D. in 1878.^[1]

After returning from Berlin in 1872, Creighton worked in London as a hospital registrar until his appointment in 1876 as demonstrator of anatomy at Cambridge University. Over the next five years he wrote his first book, *Bovine Tuberculosis in Man* (1881) and published several articles on anatomy in the *Journal of Anatomy and Physiology*. In 1879 he became co-editor of this same journal.

Then, for unknown reasons, Creighton quit a promising career at Cambridge and returned to London in 1881. For the remainder of his life he worked independently on his studies and lived alone. His most significant work, *A History of Epidemics in Britain*, took several years to complete and the two volumes were published in 1891 and 1894. It was recognized as an important contribution to the study of medical history.

In 1918 Creighton moved to Upper Boddington, Northamptonshire, England where he lived until his death in 1927.

Anti-vaccination

Creighton was an anti-vaccinationist. He has been described by historian Roy Porter as the anti-vaccination movement's "most ardent and distinguished spokesmen".^[2] Creighton argued that

vaccination was poisoning of the blood with contaminated material, which could provide no protection from disease.^[2]

Two articles he wrote for the *Encyclopædia Britannica* on pathology (1885) and vaccinations (1888) cast doubt on the existence of germs and the efficacy of vaccines. He was widely condemned for these views by leading medical journals. He continued to express his unorthodox and unpopular anti-vaccination views in *The Natural History of Cowpox and Vaccinal Syphilis* (1887) and *Jenner and Vaccination* (1889).

Creighton was an active member of the London Society for the Abolition of Compulsory Vaccination.^[2]

Publications

- *Type of Giant Cells of Tubercle*, Journ. Anat. And Physiol
- *Illustrations of the Pathology of Sarcoma* Journ. Anat. And Physiol
- *Function of the Periosteum*, Journ. Anat. And Physiol
- *Homology of the Suprarenals* Journ. Anat. And Physiol
- *Formation of Placenta in Guinea Pig* Journ. Anat. And Physiol
- *Illustrations of Unconscious Memory in Disease, including a Theory of Alteratives*
- 1878 Contributions to the *Physiology and Pathology of the Breast and its Lymphatic Glands*
- 1881 *Bovine Tuberculosis in Man*
- 1883 *On the Autonomous Life of the Specific Infections* (address in Path. Brit. Med. Assoc., 1883)
- 1883-6 *Handbook of Geographical and Historical Pathology* (translated from the German of A. Hirsch), 3 vols.
- 1885 "Pathology", *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th edition
- Contrib. *On Infection of Connective Tissue in Scirrhous Cancers of Breast* Journ. Anat. And Physiol.
- 1887 *The Natural History of Cow-pox and Vaccinal Syphilis* Cassell & Co
- 1888 "Vaccination", *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th edition
- 1889 *Jenner and Vaccination: A Strange Chapter of Medical History* (<https://archive.org/details/b21357067/page/n4>) Swan Sonnenschein & Co.
- 1890 *Vaccination: a Scientific Enquiry*, Arena, Sept. 1890
- 1891, *History of Epidemics in Britain, Volume I*
- 1894, *History of Epidemics in Britain, Volume II*
- 1896 *Microscopic Researches on the Formative Property of Glycogen*
- 1905 *Plague in India*. A paper read on 18 May 1905, before the Indian Section of the Society of Arts. George Bell & Sons: London.
- 1902 *Cancers and other Tumours of the Breast: researches showing their true seat and cause*. Williams & Norgate: London & Oxford
- 1908 Contributions to the *Physiological Theory of Tuberculosis*. Williams & Norgate: London.

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- Porter, Dorothy; Porter Roy. (1988). *The Politics of Prevention Anti-Vaccinationism and Public Health in Nineteenth-Century England* (<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/d7b7/486d6292a0f90a38f04996f6c872f5e5854a.pdf>). *Medical History* 32: 231-252.
- Dolman, Claude E. (1981) "Creighton, Charles" *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*. Charles Scribner's Sons

External links

- Works by Charles Creighton (<https://www.gutenberg.org/author/Creighton,+Charles>) at Project Gutenberg
 - Works by or about Charles Creighton (<https://archive.org/search.php?query=%28%28subject%3A%22Creighton%2C%20Charles%22%20OR%20subject%3A%22Charles%20Creighton%22%20OR%20creator%3A%22Creighton%2C%20Charles%22%20OR%20creator%3A%22Charles%20Creighton%22%20OR%20creator%3A%22Creighton%2C%20C%2E%22%20OR%20title%3A%22Charles%20Creighton%22%20OR%20description%3A%22Creighton%2C%20Charles%22%20OR%20description%3A%22Charles%20Creighton%22%29%20OR%20%28%221847-1927%22%20AND%20Creighton%29%29%20AND%20%28-meditype:software%29>) at Internet Archive
 - "Vaccination" (<http://www.1902encyclopedia.com/V/VAC/vaccination.html>), from Encyclopædia Britannica, 9th Edition, Volume XXIV (1888).
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