

276

Sigerist to Singer, Baltimore?, 6 February 1940

My dear Singer:

At long last we are all back in America. My family sailed from Genoa at the end of November on an Italian boat and I sailed from Capetown and landed safely in New York on January 4. It was a great worry to me to be separated from my family when the war broke out and you can imagine how happy I am to be reunited with it. Please tell Mrs. Singer how very much we appreciated her kind letters.

What a queer war. It seems that nobody has a plan and that nobody knows what he is fighting for. Hitler must be destroyed, that's obvious but then what? Shall we learn from the past experience or make the same mistakes over again? It seems really hopeless.

I found the Institute in very good shape and it was a pleasure to resume my work after such a long interruption but my trip through South Africa was a most interesting experience.¹

This year for the first time in my life I shall not go to Switzerland in the summer. We intend to make a motor trip through the continent and visit a few national parks and other places which we have not seen before.

I hope you are all well, as well as one can be under the present circumstances, and I should love to have news from you.

With kind regards to Mrs. Singer and yourself, I am
Yours very sincerely,
Henry E. Sigerist

¹ Henry E. Sigerist, 'A physician's impression of South Africa', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1940, 8: 22–27.

277

Sigerist's secretary to Singer, Baltimore?, 27 February 1940

Dear Dr. Singer:

I wish to take the liberty of requesting a favor of you. Would you be so kind as to send me the latest address of Professor Max Neuburger? Unfortunately I do not have his address in my files and therefore I shall be very grateful to you for your kindness.

Thanking you once more, I am
Sincerely yours
[Hope Trebing?]
Secretary to Dr. Sigerist

Singer to Sigerist, Kilmarth, 28 February 1940

My dear Sigerist,

Many thanks for yours of Feb. 6 with the good news that you are safely back in America.

Yes, the whole European situation is very queer with a strange veil of unreality cast over it. As you say, the one thing clear is that Hitler & his group must be destroyed. I find it very difficult to get even a glimpse into the future. But it must, at least, be an interesting future & I want to live, if I can, to see some of it.

Since the war has begun I have felt more fit for work than I have for years. My job is now clear. I just [...] till my medical services are wanted & till then I am a free man & I have nothing on my mind. I have thus made real progress with my history of science.¹ Moreover during the last few days I have sent to the press the articles Medicine, Surgery, Anatomy & Physiology, Botany & Zoology for the Oxford classical dictionary.² I suggested Edelstein & Temkin for articles which, I believe, they have delivered. W. D. Ross the acting editor will be here next month & I shall be hearing about them.

By the way I found the articles & reviews on classical themes by the three of you in the 'Bulletin' very useful. I would suggest that you might publish them with very little alteration. They would make a handy collection. You might call them 'Essays on Greek Medicine'. Don't make the better the enemy of the good but get it out. Perhaps you could include a translation of Edelstein's Paul Wissowa [sic] article on Hippocrates.³

Incidentally I want to sell my Paul Wissowa [sic]. It really takes up too much room. If you know anyone who wants one I would part with it. It should fetch a good price now.

Poor old Neuburger [...].⁴ Financially he is adequately provided for – at the rate of £400 a year which we consider very good indeed for a refugee – and he has the guarantee of D'Arcy Power & myself.

By this post I have a letter from Sarton bringing the bad news of Meyerhof who is in hospital again.⁵

I wonder if we shall ever have an International Congress again. Have you any news of Klebs? I hardly like to write to him. He is such a very uncertain quantity.

Andrew will be 18 this October.⁶ He is due to go to an engineering college then & should do very well. His Mathematics, Physics & Chemistry are all good & he is the right type. If the war goes on he will, I think, go into the Navy, where he would be much better than in the army. But everything is dark.

Kindest regards from us all to all the family,
Yours ever
Charles Singer

¹ Singer (1941).

² Charles Singer, Articles in M. Cary et al (eds), *The Oxford classical dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949).

³Ludwig Edelstein wrote the supplement to the entry 'Hippokrates', in Georg Wissowa (ed.), *Paulys Realencyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft* (Stuttgart, 1893-), Supplement Band VI, 1290–1345.

⁴Two sentences deleted as Protected Health Information of the Alan Mason Chesney Medical Archive of the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions.

⁵Max Meyerhof (1874–1945), German historian of Arabic medicine; see Claudius F. Mayer, 'Arabism, Egypt, and Max Meyerhof', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1946, **19**: 375–432.

⁶Singer's son.

279

Singer to Sigerist, Kilmarth, 11 March 1940

My dear Sigerist,

Dr. Rhys Jenkins,¹ a distinguished engineer attached for many years to the Patent Office, possesses a manuscript of somewhere towards the end of the reign of Elizabeth – say 1590 – illustrating all kinds of mechanical devices. It is carefully illustrated in colour and has an English text. There are 71 coloured sketches. I enclose a photograph of one, with that of the corresponding text.

Jenkins and Dickinson of the Science Museum regard its contents as unique.² The only parallels are the so-called Hausbücher of which several are known in German.³ It is probably unique also for the skill of the drawing, since draughtsmanship was, at this period, at a very low ebb in England.

The Newcomen Society⁴ had thought to reproduce the figures and a page of text in facsimile and the rest of the text in print. The material has been annotated by Jenkins and others. The political situation makes this expenditure very difficult. Is it worth while to seek an American subsidy? It could be well done with two or three coloured plates for \$550, and quite satisfactorily but without coloured plates for half that sum. I should be glad to hear your reaction. The project might interest Larkey.

With all kind wishes,

Yours ever

Charles Singer

¹Rhys Jenkins (1859–1953), engineer and historian of engineering; see R. T. Smith, 'Jenkins, Rhys (1859–1953)', *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 29, 965–966.

²Henry Winram Dickinson (1870–1952), historian of engineering and technology; see Arthur Stowers, 'Dickinson, Henry Winram (1870–1952)', rev. *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 16, 93–94.

³Hausbücher, literally house books; private sketchbooks by scholars, architects and so on, that were kept at home.

⁴Newcomen Society for the study of engineering and technology.

280

Sigerist to Singer, Baltimore?, 30 March 1940

Dear Singer:

The manuscript sounds most exciting and it should be published by all means. If it were published in America, it would be very easy to get a subsidy but it is rather difficult to find money here to subsidize a publication of a group such as the Newcomen Society. I think the only foundation that could be approached would be the Carnegie Corporation. They have special funds for England and Dominions so that there may be a good chance of getting some money from them.¹

With kind regards, I am

Yours ever,

Henry E. Sigerist

¹ See previous letter.

281

Singer to Sigerist, London, 14 June 1940

My dear Sigerist,

Just a line to tell you that all is well with us all. Dorothea & I come a good deal to London and never hesitate to undertake the journey when we can be of the least use. We have been in London for the last 10 days but go back to Cornwall next week.

Physically we have both of us never been in better health & the nervous strain of the last years does not seem to have told on us in the least, but, of course, historical work has been almost impossible.

I visited D'Arcy Power today. He is now 85 but well & happy & working well too. I wish I had his wonderful power of abstraction.

About the political situation, I can only say that the change of government has come to us as an immense relief. The resolution & determination in this country is splendid. I have talked to many soldiers back from France.¹ Their attitude is most heartening & beyond all praise. I respect our ordinary soldiers more than I can say & feel that such men cannot fail. Only two days ago I travelled with a trainload of men on leave & it was an inspiring experience.

Love to you all from us all

Yours always

Charles Singer

¹ Winston Churchill had become Prime Minister in May 1940 shortly before France collapsed under the German invasion and the British Army in France escaped at Dunkirk.

Singer to Sigerist, Kilmarth, 18 August 1940

My dear Sigerist,

I have just read the review by Agnes Arber in *Nature* of the Aztec herbal published by the Johns Hopkins¹ and a point[?] occurs to me that you may care to have looked into.

Sir Hans Sloane in his Voyage to Jamaica says that Hernandez was the second botanist to visit America & that the first was “one Codrus an Italian.”² The discoveries he made were few or not communicated to the world”. Sloane’s book is a very good one which is undeservedly forgotten. He is normally a most accurate man. I suggest that this Codrus hunting out[?]. Had he anything to do with your[?] herbal?

I hope that you will manage to spare me a copy. It is impossible for me to buy it – even if I could afford it – because as a private buyer I should not be allowed to transmit the foreign currency.

All is well with us & we are pretty comfortable. I have actually sent to the Clarendon Press the very last page of the very last chapter of my History of Science. It is a shortish book.³

We are busy here doing all we can to grow food for which our land is particularly suitable. I never thought that I would become a market gardener in my old age. But I like it.

Andrew will try for the Navy or the Royal Engineers this autumn. He is 18 in October & if he is successful, he gets about a year’s special training. His whole bias is toward engineering.

We shall stay here whatever happens. We shall go to London a good deal but travelling naturally becomes more difficult & more expensive.

All kind wishes to you all from us all.

Yours ever

Charles Singer

Do you hear from Klebs? I had a rather silly letter from him when I congratulated him on your presentation number⁴

¹ Emily W Emmart, *The Badianus Manuscript. An Aztec herbal of 1552* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1940), reviewed by Agnes Arber, ‘An Aztec herbal’, *Nature*, 1940, **146**: 81–83.

² Hans Sloane (1660–1753), British physician and collector; see Arthur MacGregor, ‘Sloane, Sir Hans, baronet (1660–1753)’, *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 50, 943–949. Hans Sloane, *A voyage to the islands, Madera, Barbados, Nieves, S. Christophers and Jamaica* (London, 1707–1725). Francisco Hernandez, 16th-century Spanish naturalist; see Juan Vernet, ‘Hernández, Francisco’, *Complete dictionary of scientific biography*, Vol. 6 (Detroit: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2008), 309–310.

³ Singer (1941).

⁴ Henry E. Sigerist, et al., ‘Congratulatory epistle to Arnold C. Klebs’, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* (Arnold C. Klebs Number), 1940, 8: 319–328.

Sigerist to Singer, Baltimore?, 14 September 1940

Dear Singer:

I have to thank you for two letters. I meant to write you long ago but I have just been away for two months. Since we could not go abroad this year, we made a motor tour through the country from Coast to Coast, spent nine weeks on the road and made over 10,000 miles. I took advantage of the trip to make a study of new medical service plans and health cooperatives and wrote 25 articles on the subject for a New York paper¹. It was a most interesting tour. We took four weeks to reach the Pacific at Seattle driving through the Northern states and then followed the Coast down to Los Angeles and came back through the South.

God knows when we shall be able to go to Europe again. I was greatly worried about my Mother who lives a few blocks from the air field in Basel. Fortunately I could persuade her to leave the city and go to the mountains in the critical days of May when all Switzerland was living with the finger on the trigger day and night.² It seems that the immediate danger of invasion is over for Switzerland but squeezed in between Italy and Germany with a Fascist France as neighbor, nobody knows what can happen. We get regular news from my Mother and it is amazing that in spite of all, the Clipper service is functioning better than ever.³

We are reading the gruesome stories of the bombing of London with much concern. It is horrible to think how many cultural values are being destroyed in a stupid way. What worries me still more is that we have been unable to prevent a catastrophe that every child could foresee. The policy of the great powers, particularly from 1932 on was simply criminal. It was a deliberate suicide. And the trouble is that people do not learn from history. America is probably going to repeat all the mistakes made in the past. We are rearming feverishly but blindly and are fighting fifth columns [sic] activities⁴ by persecuting the anti Fascists.

I am glad to send you a copy of the Badianus Manuscript⁵ under separate cover and I am very grateful to you for your reference to Sir Hans Sloane's Voyage to Jamaica.⁶

I hope you will be spared in Cornwall. I can well imagine you as a market gardner [sic]. I remember that in Highgate you cultivated not only roses but vegetables as well.

It was excellent news to hear that your History of Science is completed.⁷ I have just finished a little book which will be published by the Yale University Press under the title, Medicine and Human Welfare, a series of lectures I gave at Yale some time ago.⁸ This winter I am writing an Introduction to Medical Economics, a historical and sociological study based on a series of lectures I gave in South Africa last year.⁹

The family is well. All of them enjoyed the trip very much. Both girls are in College. Erica, the senior, will graduate next spring with history as major subject and Nora is entering college just now. She is particularly interested in social work. It seems that there will be no medical woman in the family.

1940

With all good wishes to you all from us all, I am
Yours ever,
Henry E. Sigerist

¹ Sigerist had 18 articles published in the New York Newspaper PM, 1940.

² During the German invasion of the Netherlands, Belgium, and France.

³ The transatlantic clipper service, with the so-called flying boat planes.

⁴ Groups working for the enemy.

⁵ Emmart (1940).

⁶ Sloane (1707).

⁷ Singer (1941).

⁸ Henry E. Sigerist, *Medicine and human welfare* (New Haven, 1941).

⁹ Possibly Sigerist (1940a).

284

Singer to Sigerist, Kilmarth, 3 November 1940

My dear Sigerist,

Many thanks for the Badianus MS.¹ It is an admirable piece of work and quite a new line. I congratulate you heartily upon it. In studying it[,] several points occur to me, one or two of which may interest you. I have written to Miss Emmart² about them and, to save time, I enclose copy of that letter.

Today I enter my 65th year and am surprised and pleased to find myself working well. From the beginning of 1933 till the end of 1939 work was almost impossible for me. My mind was too occupied with the situation and with the fate of my colleagues. Including 1914–18, when I was in the army, the Germans have thus wasted 10 of my years and those the best years. This, should anyone be sufficiently interested, explains the smallness of my output.

I entirely agree with you that the whole situation might have been foreseen by a child. I foresaw it clearly enough and the situation has little to teach me that I did not know perfectly well already. Nevertheless two things I have learned. One is the extreme difficulty that even honest men find in seeing things that they do not wish to see. The other is the extraordinary determination, humanity and political intelligence of the British working-class. It is a very great people. The character and composition of our government at the outbreak of war was a world-misfortune from which we cannot hope for an easy recovery. That recovery has begun is due entirely to the good sense, judgement and courage of English working-class leaders who, by a most unfortunate political accident, were and are inadequately represented in Parliament. But the people is all right and would, I am convinced, vote that war is at least less detestable than the peace which preceded it.

We are not infrequently in London. Dorothea spends two or three nights there every fortnight and has been there during the worst bombing nights.³ It is a plain fact that there is no jitters, no disorder and no panic in London. The self-control of the people is most heartening and impressive. The general feeling might be impressed by saying that it

would be better to lose Westminster Abbey and the British Museum than to lose these plus everything else. And the latter would be the effect of a peace with Hitler.

Here, living right on the coast, we are of course in a highly protected area. The improvement in its defences during the last few months has to be seen to be believed. Moreover I feel, as a result of my military experience in the last war, that our troops have improved greatly since then. They appear to be of much better physique and are certainly better educated for English education has gone ahead tremendously in the last twenty years.

We, personally, suffer no privation at all. We are, of course, considerably poorer and for this and other reasons, travelling is more difficult to us. A few articles are rationed but the diet available is excellent and, personally, I prefer it. I think it probable that, as in the last war, the nutrition of the nation as a whole has actually improved. This locality is a grazing and vegetable growing region and has a record crop of vegetable and fruits. Of potatoes alone we ourselves gathered three tons of our own little bit of land so that we are certainly in no danger of starvation! Fuel also is ample – partly, of course, because of the cessation of exports.

The only thing from which we personally suffer is difficulty in getting the books we want. We cannot get any from the continent; we cannot now afford to buy in England as we used; nor do I review as much as I did. The Oxford University Press is very kind and usually sends me anything in my line that they publish but cannot give me things like the Badianus that they publish for others. We cannot buy books from America, – for one thing there would be great difficulty in obtaining exchange. I was thus particularly glad of the Badianus. I should be very grateful if Americans would send me their works or reprints. I do not yet know whether there will be difficulty in sending subscriptions to American societies.

I was at Oxford a few days ago and spent some time with old friends at the Clarendon Press. Despite war-time difficulties they hope to maintain their programme of learned works. Sales of these actually increased a little during the first year of war. You have, of course, now the complete new Greek Lexicon. The Classical Dictionary should be out soon with articles by Edelstein.⁴ By the way I have written to him by this mail. The Dictionary has also several articles by myself.

My Short History of Science should be out early in 1941. I want to call it A sketch of the History of Science – which is what it is – but the Clarendon Press insists on the wider title.⁵

What is happening to Klebs? Is he in U.S.A.? What about Castiglioni and Starkenstein and Meyer-Steinegg?⁶ Neuburger survives but has been through a very bad time. He is quite adequately provided for in a financial sense. Isidor Fischer is, I fear, failing. Friedenwald and Kelley sent me two hundred dollars to provide scientific books for Prag who is interned[.]⁷ For reasons with which I need not trouble you, it has proved difficult to administer this but I hope to do so within the next day or two. Dorothea and I are still burdened with all sorts of work for refugees but, of course, far less than before the war.

I am not sure if I told you that I found in the possession of the Scottish Beekeepers' Association a copy of the huge folio sheet of bees by Federigo Cesi. It is the only copy – so far as I can learn – outside the Lancisian Library. I am working on it with F. J. Cole and am publishing it in full.

Kindest regards to the family,
Yours ever,
Charles Singer

My pupil F. Sherwood Taylor has just been appointed to succeed R. T. Gunther at Oxford. It is, I think, an excellent appointment. F. J. Cole has just retired. Wolf retires at the end of this session. Partington is at Cambridge & comes here sometimes; his wife died a few weeks ago.⁸ Dickinson paid a visit with a new wife – a very charming woman. His work with the Newcomen Society goes on bravely. Have you seen a little work by A. P. Rossiter, *The Growth of Science in basic[?] English?*⁹ Rather good, I thought. H. T. Pledge's *Science since 1500* read (or rather cannot be read) like a work of Sudhoff!¹⁰ just a muddled [...] ! Sherwood Taylor's *Galileo* is the best of the recent vintage here.¹¹

¹ Emmart (1940).

² Emily W. Emmart, (born 1898) medical historian

³ After the occupation of Norway, Denmark, The Netherlands, Belgium, and France, Germany started the air raids on London and other British cities, apparently as a prelude for an invasion.

⁴ *The Oxford classical dictionary* was first published in 1949.

⁵ Singer (1941).

⁶ Theodor Meyer-Steineg (1873–1936), German historian of medicine; see *Theodor Meyer-Steineg (1873–1936), Arzt Historiker, Sammler: Ausstellung von Leihgaben des Instituts für Geschichte der Medizin, Naturwissenschaften und Technik (Ernst-Haeckel-Haus) der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena vom 18. Juni bis 4. August 1991 / Katalog bearbeitet von Christa Habrich ; mit Beiträgen von Ernst Künzl und Susanne Zimmermann (Ingolstadt: Deutsches Medizinhistorisches Museum, 1991).*

⁷ Isidor Fischer (1868–1943), German gynaecologist and medical historian; see Arturo Castiglioni, 'Dr. Isidor Fischer, 1869–1943', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1943, **14**: 114–115. Harry Friedenwald (1864–1950), ophthalmologist and medical historian; see Owsei Temkin, 'Harry Friedenwald', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1951, **25**: 185–187, and 'The medico-historical writings of Dr. Harry Friedenwald', *ibid.*, 187–190. There are several medical historians named Kelley; Prag not identified

⁸ Frank Sherwood Taylor (1897–1956), British chemist and historian of science; see Frank Greenaway, 'Taylor, Frank Sherwood (1897–1956)', *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 53, 884–885. Robert William Theodore Gunther (1869–1940), British zoologist, antiquary and historian of science; see Roger Hutchins, 'Gunther, Robert William Theodore (1869–1940)', *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 24, 261–262. Francis J. Cole (1872–1959), British anatomist and medical historian, see K. J. Franklin, 'Francis Joseph Cole. 1872–1959', *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society*, 1960, **5**: 37–47. Abraham Wolf (1876–1948), British historian of science, see Jacob Haberman, 'Abraham Wolf: a forgotten Jewish reform thinker', *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1991, New Series **81**: 267–304. James Riddick Partington (1886–1965), British chemist and historian of chemistry, see W. A. Smeaton, 'Partington, James Riddick (1886–1965)', rev. W. H. Brock, *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 42, 951–953.

⁹ Arthur Percival Rossiter, *The growth of science: an outline history* ([London]: Published for the Orthological Institute by Pitman, 1939).

¹⁰ Humphrey T. Pledge (1903–1960), British historian of science; *Science since 1500; a short history of mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology* (London: H.M.S.O., 1939).

¹¹ F. Sherwood Taylor, *Galileo and the freedom of thought* (London, 1938).

Singer to Sigerist, Kilmarnock, 27 February 1941

My dear Sigerist,

I want to draw your attention to the work of B. R. Townend, Borrowdale, Many Gates Lane, Sandal, Wakefield, Yorkshire, England (what an address!).¹

He is a practising dentist but his historical work is sincere, thorough original & incomparably better than most amateur stuff. I do not know him personally but he & I have corresponded regularly for about 6 years & I always encourage him. His work ought to find a wider public than Dental Journals!

I think that you might do worse than ask him to write for the Bulletin, something on rather broader lines. A little encouragement would, I think, do a lot for him. Of course in normal times we should be delighted to ask him to write for the Historical Section of the Royal Society of Medicine but at the present, we are bound to economise print & paper.

My History of Science is going through at last & nearly all of it is now in page proof & revise. I hope & believe that it be actually published this spring.²

All well here. Food quite good &, personally, I rather like the war diet with the increased proportion of vegetables. No one has any doubt at all that we shall beat the Germans in the end though it must be a long business. Everyone is prepared for an invasion & all sorts of set backs but we are going to finish the job off this time.³ As one looks back on what has happened one can almost weep at the misfortune that placed England in the hands of Chamberlain.⁴ He was just an inferior manifestation of the human spirit & there is no more & no less to be said of that miserable misfit.

Let me have a line to say that this has reached you.

All kind wishes

Yours ever,

Charles Singer

¹ B. R. Townend, 'The story of the toothworm', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1944, 15: 37–58.

² Singer (1941).

³ Unlike World War I the goal of World War II would become "unconditional surrender of Germany".

⁴ Neville Chamberlain (1869–1940), Prime Minister of the UK from 1937 to 1940; see Andrew J. Crozier, 'Chamberlain, (Arthur) Neville (1869–1940)', *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol.10, 934–955.

Sigerist to Singer, Baltimore?, 27 March 1941

Dear Singer:

Your letter of February 27 just came and reminded me of the fact that I have not written you for a very long time. Many thanks for drawing my attention to Dr. Townend. His paper is very good and I should be glad to have him write for our Bulletin although at present I am swamped with manuscripts. I have enough to fill the journal until next February. I am glad to say that the standard is improving in America, and I am particularly pleased that there are a number of young people like George Rosen – whose articles you have probably seen – who are doing excellent work in the field. I hope you receive the Bulletin of the History of Medicine regularly. Should you have any gaps, please let me know.

The Yale Press has just published a little book of mine, *MEDICINE AND HUMAN WELFARE*. It is a very unpretentious little book based on three lectures I gave at Yale some time ago. I am sending you a copy under separate cover.¹

We were very happy to hear that you are all well. The general situation looks infinitely better than last autumn. The African campaign was a splendid military feat and the situation in the Balkans is also infinitely better than it could be.² It is stupid to assume as some people here do that Hitler's war machine is invincible. The collapse of Mussolini should have opened their eyes. Once the German Army begins to crack up, I should think that it would collapse as rapidly as it did in 1918, if not more soon.³

If Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union, Turkey and China could really stick together and cooperate planfully, I should think the Axis would have little chance to survive.⁴

It was excellent news to hear that your *History of Science* is in page proof already.⁵ Such a book is badly needed, and I should think it would have a very good market in America where so many colleges offer a course and are looking for a good text-book.

With kind regards to Mrs. Singer and yourself from us all, I am
Yours ever,
Henry E. Sigerist

¹ Sigerist (1941a).

² African campaign refers to the British victory over Mussolini's troops in Libya. Sigerist could not foresee that the next countries to be invaded by the Germans were Yugoslavia and Greece.

³ The collapse of the German Army did not occur until 1944/45.

⁴ The Axis refers to Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy (plus Japan).

⁵ Singer (1941).

Singer to Sigerist, Kilmarth, 15 January 1942a

My dear Sigerist,

Many thanks for yours of Nov. 16 1941 which reached me a few days ago.¹

I had your letter of August 4 and answered it soon after receipt. I will gladly undertake the notice of D'Arcy Power. My only trouble is that I am now engaged in teaching biology to a group of schools evacuated in this part and find the work very arduous. I do all the practical laboratory work and enjoy it. I took my degree in it many years ago. I love the subject but I am naturally rusty so that my time is very full. The biology master, a young man, was called up into the army. As it is impossible to find another, I have undertaken his job. The work is, in effect, to prepare students for their medical course.

I have been in occasional touch with D'Arcy's son for many years, and I will at once get in touch with him again.

My book was published in June 1941 and is dedicated to you and Sarton.² There is some legal difficulty in my sending you a copy because the book is on sale in America on special terms. I have been repeatedly assured by the Oxford Press that you would receive one. It is being distributed in U.S.A. by the American branch of the Oxford University Press. You would do me a service if you would let me know, at once, whether you have received a copy & whether it is yet available in USA.

I was very glad to have your second letter. We are all in it now but nothing whatever has happened that you and I did not know perfectly well for years, was going to happen. What a wretched figure Neville Chamberlain will cut in history.

We are all well. Many American friends have sent us supplies of food, but we really are extremely well off and have enough and to spare. We grow a great deal ourselves[.] There are, of course, certain restrictions on diet but the fact is that they happen rather to suit us. Beyond that Dorothea and I are a bit older – I am now in my 66th year – we are really extremely well. I enjoy sea bathing & hard manual labour, in fact anything except cold! Andrew is in the midst of a course of engineering and it may be that he will be kept on that rather than be sent into the forces. It depends, of course, on where he may be most useful, but for the present he is reserved for engineering. He is in London living with an engineering colleague of mine. In the evenings he helps to train younger boys for the forces. Nancy is teaching at a school near Oxford and likes it greatly. We have had them both home for 3 weeks at Xmas.

The change of public opinion about Russia is, to me, one of the miracles of history.³ We have learned quite a lot about the nature and formation of public opinion in the last 10 years. But I don't think that even 2 years ago anyone could have guessed that an Archbishop of Canterbury, that the Cardinal of Westminster & the leaders of the Conservative party in England & the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary could have been quite so loud in their praises of Stahlin [sic] !

You might ask do we have any hardships. Yes we have. They are all minor hardships and I do not doubt that you in U.S.A. will soon be sharing them.⁴ The first hardship is overwork. Everyone really has too much to do. I don't see how that can be helped with

all the most active people taken from their work. We must put up with it. The second hardship is the black-out. This is a fatiguing, trying, and depressing nuisance, but it is no more. Third is the difficulty of travel: motoring is greatly limited and is getting more expensive & practically impossible. Train services are naturally curtailed; but worst of all, trains are overcrowded. We all travel as little as possible and I, personally, don't expect to be in London till April at earliest. Fourth is the lack of books and the limitation of contact with scholarship.

To me it seems that probably the worst feature in the situation is, in the long run, that the Roman Catholic Church is pretty consistently on the wrong side and is likely to remain so. This must lead to grim struggles lasting for many years even after the war is ended. The Church is likely to be greatly damaged in the struggle but that is not very much consolation!

I enclose an article which you may like to print in the Bulletin. For your convenience I write of it in an attached separate letter.⁵

I shall send this letter in duplicate, the second a fortnight after the first.

All kind wishes from family to family

Yours ever,
Charles Singer

¹ Sigerist's two letters are missing; the last one took two months from the U.S. to the UK

² Singer (1941).

³ Due to the Soviet resistance against the invading Germans.

⁴ As a result of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, December 1941, and the U.S.'s entry into World War II.

⁵ See following letter (15 January 1942b).

288

Singer to Sigerist, Kilmarth, 15 January 1942b

My dear Sigerist

I enclose an article that you may like for the "Bulletin".¹ No part of it has been published, nor have I offered it before. I gave it as a broadcast in 1932 and have used the material once or twice as a lecture. Archibald Malloch thought it the best thing that I have done. I have often been asked to print it but declined for the excellent reason that I had lost the MS! However[,] I found it a few days ago, and have reshaped it a little.

The Bibliography may be too sketchy for you. If so, omit it. Its completion might be a pleasant & easy student task and Americans seem to like bibliographical work. It is really impossible for me to complete it in England at the moment. Notably I cannot run down the reference to Adams' paper of 1829 On the Nervous System of Galen and other Ancient Authors. I have seen and read it, but cannot find where. I think it is probably in a local Aberdeen medical journal (probably of Aberdeen medical society) but it is 22 years since I visited Aberdeen for the purpose of collecting Adams material!²

1942

If you decide to print, it will have to be without sending me the proofs. I know how busy you all are but perhaps you or Larkey would correct them for me.

I am sending this letter and its duplicate at intervals of 14 days. Should you get both I suggest that you use the second later copy because I shall have had it a fortnight longer and may have made a few minor improvements.

Yours ever
Charles Singer

This bust of Adams is by the sculptor William Brodie 1815–81 who was well known for his efficiency in work of this kind.³ It is in Aberdeen University Library & was presented to the University by Dr. A. Leith Adams F.R.S., son of Francis Adams.⁴

If you decide to reproduce it, I suggest that it be enlarged & only the upper half be reproduced. This will partly conceal the ridiculous classical dress.

It is an excellent likeness I have compared it with a photo.

¹ Charles Singer, 'A great country doctor. Francis Adams of Banchory 1796–1861', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1942, **12**: 1–17.

² Francis Adams (1796–1861), British physician and classical scholar and historian of science; see Vivian Nutton, 'Adams, Francis (1796–1861)', *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 1, 224–226. *On the nervous system* not identified; perhaps part of a book by Adams.

³ William Brodie (1815–1881), British sculptor, see Helen E. Smailes, 'Brodie, William (1815–1881)', *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 7, 782–783.

⁴ A. Leith Adams (1827–1882), British army surgeon and professor of natural history; see Anthony J. Gaston, 'Adams, Andrew Leith (1827–1882)', *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 1, 222–223.

289

Sigerist to Singer, Baltimore?, 23 March 1942

My dear Singer:

Many thanks for your letter of January 15. I received the first duplicate with Adams manuscript. The second duplicate has not arrived so far but may come still. Of course, I shall be delighted to publish the paper in the Bulletin and we shall be very glad to take care of the galley proofs here.¹ I cannot tell you exactly in what number of the Bulletin the paper will come out, but I shall publish it as soon as possible. Just now I am flooded with manuscripts and have enough on hand to fill the next two volumes of the Bulletin. Many more people are working in the field of medical history here, and on the whole are doing quite decent work. In addition to American papers, I have several long ones from England, one from old Neuburger and one from Pagel. Haggis' Paper on Cinchona was very good indeed.² He seems to be a good man.

But first of all, I wish to congratulate you most cordially on your History of Science and want to tell you how very much I appreciated your thoughtfulness in having it dedicated to Sarton and myself.³ The book was issued in America a few weeks ago. It is a

splendid piece of work and I am sure it will have a very good reception in this country. A book of that type was badly needed. Many colleges are offering courses in the history of science and I am certain that your book will soon become a required textbook.

At the Institute we are carrying on as well as we can. So far, we have not been greatly affected by the war. Larkey has been in Washington for the last two years and drops in only incidentally but the rest of my staff is still here and I have three new fellows in the history of medicine in addition. Two of them are classical philologists who are working in the field of Greek science. One is a very good botanist and works on Theophrastus⁴ and the other is a very good mathematician. These two fellowships are a new experiment financed by the Carnegie Foundation. The idea is to steer young philologists into the field of the history of science. The third fellow is one of my old European students, Erwin H. Ackerknecht, who besides being a physician is a very good social anthropologist and is doing some work on primitive medicine.⁵

We have condensed the medical course from four to three years. The number of courses and hours remains the same but we have sacrificed the vacations. It is going to be very strenuous for the students and I have great doubts as to the results but it is an emergency matter.

I wish I could take a more active part in the war but I am too old for the armed forces and as to an office job, the one I have at the University is probably the best I can do. I am also working with a group of students on health insurance and similar problems. There is no doubt that after the war things will move very rapidly in the medical field and we should prepare for it now. I am, of course, in touch with developments in Britain and in the Dominions. We have two excellent English students in the Medical School; one from Liverpool and one from the University of London. They are doing exceedingly well and are unusually bright and alert young people. They are among my most faithful students. I have also a student from India, a young girl who works at the School of Hygiene and is also extremely promising. We are all watching Sir Stafford Cripps' mission to India with keen interest.⁶

We have no hardships yet. Automobile tires are unavailable but my old ones will run for at least one more year. You cannot buy cars either but since it was the custom to get a new car every two years, there are few old ones around. Sugar will probably be rationed but the rations will be ample, more than we usually consume. There is no doubt, however, that we are going to feel the pinch by the end of the year. The country must have had enormous supplies of everything.

The letter you sent me last summer never arrived and I hope you will let me have some time the obituary note of Sir D'Arcy Power.

The family is well. Erica, the older girl, is studying in the Library School at Columbia and will be a librarian soon. Nora, the younger girl, is at the Conservatory of Music where she is doing very well. She is a good violinist and wants to be a music teacher in a college some day. Of course, life is becoming very expensive. Prices are rising and taxes are increasing very rapidly so that we will have to cut down our expenses very considerably but this is the least we can do, and we certainly have no reason to complain in any way.

1942

Hoping to hear from you soon, I am, with kind regards and all good wishes to Mrs. Singer and yourself
Yours ever,
Henry E. Sigerist

¹ Singer (1942a).

² A. W. Haggis, 'Fundamental errors in the early history of cinchona', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1941, **10**: 417–459. Alec William James Haggis (1889–1946), a member of staff at the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum.

³ Singer (1941). Singer's dedication reads: "I would like this volume to go as a greeting to two transatlantic colleagues, George Sarton and Henry Sigerist. With the former I have been in fraternal relations for half a lifetime; with the latter for a time shorter only because he has had the advantage of having been born later. I owe much to the work and personality of both."

⁴ Theophrastus of Eressos (c.371–287 BC) successor of Aristotle.

⁵ Israel E. Drabkin and G. Raynor Thompson had Carnegie Fellowships in the History of Graeco-Roman Science; Erwin H Ackerknecht worked from 1942 to 1944 in Sigerist's institute, see Owsei Temkin, 'In memoriam Erwin H. Ackerknecht (1906–1988)', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1989, **63**: 273–275. For a biographical introduction and Sigerist's correspondence with Ackerknecht, see Marcel H. Bickel (ed.), *Henry E. Sigerist: Correspondences With Welch, Cushing, Garrison and Ackerknecht* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), 159–488.

⁶ Stafford Cripps (1889–1952), British politician; his Mission to India was to keep India loyal to the British war effort in return for independence after World War II; see Peter Clarke and Richard Toye, 'Cripps, Sir (Richard) Stafford (1889–1952)', *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 14, 200–206.

290

Singer to Sigerist, Kilmarnock, 11 May 1942

My dear Sigerist,

Many thanks for various offprints. I was particularly interested in your Paracelsus paper.¹ As you know, I have long hoped that you would do something on him on a larger scale – a general survey of the man & his work. There is nothing on him worth reading in English while nearly everything on him in German is unreadable either from ill-regulated erudition or idiotic mysticism.

I have just spent a fortnight in London but unfortunately missed D'Arcy Power's son. But I go again in a week or two.

I am glad you like my little "History of Science".² To me its only merit seems to be its scheme of arrangement. I tried to send you a copy but the Oxford University Press would, unaccountably, not allow this.

I wish you would be so kind as to send me a copy of your Four Paracelsus Treatises.³ I would buy it but to do so needs a permit to transmit the payment & the formalities for this are really worth while only for major transmissions.

Do you, by any chance, know anyone in America who is an authority on the early European knowledge of America & especially on the use of the word America? I have found what is, I believe, the first matter of course use of the word. It occurs in a pun in the course of a book on music published in Paris in 1509 by one Wollich.⁴ It seems very strange that

one could make so early the pun between AMERICUS & AMARICUS but so it is & I should like an opinion upon the whole queer story. Who could I write to about?⁵

I am glad that you will print my account of Francis Adams.⁶ I did not send you a second copy because I had nothing to alter & I heard from you pretty promptly that you had received it. The posts to & from USA are now fairly rapid.

F. J. Cole's History of Zoology is ready. It is good work. He finds it impossible to get it printed. I am urging him to have it multigraphed & if he does I will see that you get a copy. He is 72 & in poor health & I am very anxious to see it out in some form. Cole is an excellent & [...] scholar.⁷

A few nights ago Clifford Dobell (the authority on Leeuwenhoek) came to see me.⁸ He is the literary executor of William Bulloch the historian of biology. He tells me that Bulloch's work on Spallanzani is fit to print. Bulloch often spoke of it to me & wrote me several times about it but I had no idea it was so nearly complete.⁹ How goes the publishing trade in U.S.A.[?] Do you think it would be worth putting forward the idea of printing Cole's & Bulloch's work on your side?

I work pretty steadily, so far as school teaching allows. An abstract of my history of Amphioxus is to appear in "Endeavour".¹⁰ Do you think it worth while sending the fuller account to USA?

The war news seems to me distinctly better & there does seem to be at least the dawn of doubt in Germany.

Our Andrew is going into engineering works in a few weeks & I should not be surprised if he remains till the end of the war. But, of course, none of us knows his fate nowadays.

Did you & Miss Emmart get my letter on the Badianus MS. & was it any good. I have had no reply from her.

I saw T. R. Elliott the other day.¹¹ He told me a story of that quite excellent paper by Haggis on Quinine that you published. It seems that Haggis finished it more than 2 years ago but the first person he showed it to, Johnston Saint¹² of the Wellcome Museum (a most ignorant man) told him it was no good! He just accepted that & put it away! He certainly is a very modest man.

All kind wishes,

Yours ever

Charles Singer

¹ Paracelsus (1493–1541), Swiss physician and theologian; Paracelsus paper (Sigerist 1941b). See Walter Pagel, 'Paracelsus, Theophrastus Philippus Aureolus Bombastus von Hohenheim', *Complete dictionary of scientific biography*, Vol. 10 (Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2008), 304–313; and Dane T. Daniel, 'Paracelsus, Theophrastus Philippus Aureolus Bombastus von Hohenheim', *Ibid*, Vol. 24 (Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2008), 14–17.

² Singer (1941).

³ Henry E. Sigerist (ed.), *Four treatises of Theophrastus von Hohenheim called Paracelsus* (Baltimore, 1941).

⁴ Wollich not identified

⁵ Singer (1945a).

⁶ Singer (1942a).

⁷ Francis Cole published several works on the history of biological themes, however, no history of zoology.

⁸ Clifford Dobell (1886–1949), British protozoologist; see Claude E. Dolman, ‘Dobell, Cecil Clifford’, *Complete dictionary of scientific biography*, vol. 4 (Detroit: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2008), 132–133. Antoni van Leeuwenhoek (1632–1723), Dutch microscopist; see Johannes Heniger, ‘Leeuwenhoek, Antoni van’, *Complete dictionary of scientific biography*, vol. 8 (Detroit: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2008), 126–130.

⁹ William Bulloch (1868–1941), British bacteriologist, pathologist and historian of biology; see Clifford Dobell, ‘Bulloch, William (1868–1941)’, rev. Claire E. J. Herrick, *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 8, 638–639. Lazzaro Spallanzani (1729–1799), Italian physiologist; see Claude E. Dolman, ‘Spallanzani, Lazzaro’, *Complete dictionary of scientific biography*, vol. 12 (Detroit: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2008), 553–567. Bulloch’s Spallanzani was apparently not published.

¹⁰ Singer’s *Amphioxus* paper was not published in the 1940s.

¹¹ Thomas Renton Elliott (1877–1961), British physician and physiologist and Trustee of the Wellcome Foundation; see Harold Himsworth, ‘Elliott, Thomas Renton (1877–1961)’, rev. *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 18, 205–206.

¹² Peter J. Johnston-Saint, conservator of the Wellcome Museum

291

Sigerist to Singer, Baltimore, 17 June 1942

My dear Singer:

I just received your letter of May 11. I take great pleasure in sending you under separate cover the Paracelsus volume that we recently published as well as a few other publications.¹ I think I never sent you the translation of Pettenkofer’s lectures on *The Value of Health to a City* that I made last year.² I am also sending a big volume of Edgar Erskine Hume on “Ornithologists of the United States Army Medical Corps”.³ It is an interesting book and shows that some of the old Army doctors in America were keen observers and good scientists. Hume is a very good man, a graduate of both our Medical School and School of Hygiene. At present he is in charge of a training center for Army physicians, but he has such an enormous capacity for work that in spite of his official duties, he still has time for historical research. The Surgeon General’s Office bought 500 copies of the book for distribution to the various Army libraries which gave us a subsidy of \$2,000 and made the publication possible.

I am also sending a book by Edward H. Hume that we brought out last year, “The Chinese Way in Medicine”.⁴ Hume is lecturer at the Institute but lives in New York where he is chairman of The Christian Medical Council for Overseas Work. He speaks, reads and writes Chinese perfectly but he is not a very deep scholar as you will notice from the book. I am sending the books, each one separately with a few days’ interval so that they will not be all on the same boat.⁵

I was very interested in what you wrote about Haggis. His paper is first-rate and I had many inquiries about it. The Cinchona people were particularly interested in it since it forced them to revise all their propaganda literature.⁶

I am through with Paracelsus, at least for the time being. I read with much amusement the article debunking him in the Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine.⁷ I found the article rather weak, however. One could make a very good case against Paracelsus but it should be done in a more thorough way. The article contains a good many errors. I will take up Paracelsus again when I come to the Renaissance volume of my History of

Medicine. I do not know whether I ever wrote you that it is going to be an 8-volume book, a rather terrifying thought.⁸ However, there are many good one-volume histories available but I feel that we need a thorough and comprehensive book, fully annotated with bibliographies, charts, maps, etc. that will stimulate and aid further research. Laignel-Lavastine's *History* in four volumes has beautiful illustrations but the text is stupid. Neuburger and Pagel's *Handbuch* was a flop. Neuburger never finished his *History of Medicine* so that, since Haeser, there has not been any comprehensive book on the subject.⁹ I have been collecting materials for this book for the last 25 years. Next winter I hope to finish the first volume dealing with primitive medicine and the ancient Orient, and I plan to get the eight volumes out in the course of ten years.

My approach to medical history moreover is rather different from the conventional one and this is one more reason why I do not want to make a short book.

Yes, we have an authority on early European knowledge of America here, namely, Leonardo Olschki. I could not think of a better man for you to consult in the matter. His address is: 61 Sparks Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts. The poor fellow has been in this country several years but has not succeeded in getting a decent job. His tremendous knowledge scares the people off. It is very disagreeable to have such a man in a department when the other members all are mediocrities. For a while he made a living teaching elementary Spanish in a girls' school. As you know, he is the son of the book dealer in Florence and I think he must have some money that allows him to live very modestly.

I was very glad to hear about Dobell's book but I have no idea what the chances would be of publishing it in this country.¹⁰ You know what conditions are. We have so-called commercial publishers who will not touch a book unless they can expect good profits, and university presses who will not publish a book without subsidies. Just now I am on a money hunting expedition for two of my associates. Edelstein has just completed a splendid piece of work, a two-volume book on Asclepius which brings a totally new interpretation of the god and his cult.¹¹ It will cost \$3,200 to print and I do not yet know how I shall find the money. Temkin has just finished a *History of Epilepsy* for the publication of which I also need a subsidy.¹² I am a very poor beggar and there is nothing I hate more than going up and down Fifth Avenue with my hat in hand. I would advise Dobell to write to Dr. Barnett Cohen (Department of Physiological Chemistry, Johns Hopkins University, School of Medicine, 710 N. Washington Street, Baltimore, Maryland). Cohen is archivist of the American Bacteriological Association and in charge of the preliminary studies they are carrying out in view of preparing a history of bacteriology in America. He has a great admiration for Dobell and, I think, has been in touch with him at the time of the Leeuwenhoek centenary. He could possibly mobilize the bacteriologists to do something for Dobell's book.

I should think that your *Amphioxus* paper would be very suitable for *Isis*.¹³

Our plans for the summer are still very vague. In all probability we shall stay here until the end of July and go away for a few weeks during the month of August. The academic year is on but I managed to postpone my teaching until autumn. It is really too hot to prepare lectures now when we have 95° and 90% humidity.

I agree with you that the war situation looks much more hopeful. Hitler certainly did not count with the resistance he is finding in Russia, and I doubt if he can survive another

winter. With the growing forces of Britain and America, I do not see how Hitler can expect to hold out and the collapse may come sooner than we expect.¹⁴

With all good wishes to Mrs. Singer and yourself, I am

Yours very sincerely,

Henry E. Sigerist

¹ Sigerist (1941c).

² Henry E. Sigerist (ed.), *The value of health to a city. Two lectures delivered in 1873 by Max von Pettenkofer*, Translated by H. E. Sigerist, (Baltimore, 1941).

³ Edgar E. Hume: *Ornithologists of the United States Army Medical Corps* (Baltimore, 1942). For Hume see G. E. Armstrong, 'In memoriam: Major General Edgar Erskine Hume, *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 1952, **36**: 1154–1155.

⁴ Edward Hicks Hume (1876–1957), American physician, lecturer in the History of medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, formerly Dean and Professor of Medicine at the medical school and hospital of Yale-in-China; see Jean A Curran, 'Edward Hicks Hume 1876–1957', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1957, **31**: 575–576. Edward Hicks Hume, *The Chinese way in medicine* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins press, 1940).

⁵ This refers to the German submarine war in the North Atlantic.

⁶ Cinchona, a tree, the bark of which contains quinine. Cinchona people refers to the controversies about Cinchona in the 17th and 18th centuries.

⁷ H. P. Bayon, 'Paracelsus: personality, doctrines and his alleged influence in the reform of medicine', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 1941, **35**: 69–76.

⁸ Sigerist's planned 8-volume work was only started in 1945.

⁹ P.M. Maxime Laignel-Lavastine (ed), *Histoire générale de la médecine, de la pharmacie, de l'art dentaire et de l'art vétérinaire*, 3 volumes (Paris 1936–1949), this appeared in three volumes only; Max Neuburger and Julius L. Pagel (eds), *Handbuch der Geschichte der Medizin*, 3 volumes (Jena, 1902–1905.1902). Max Neuburger, *Geschichte der Medizin*, 2 volumes (Stuttgart 1906/1911); Heinrich Haeser, *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Medizin*, 2 volumes.(3rd ed. Jena 1881).

¹⁰ See letter 290.

¹¹ Emma J. Edelstein and Ludwig Edelstein, *Asclepius; a collection and interpretation of the testimonies* (Baltimore 1945).

¹² Owsei Temkin, *Falling sickness, a history of epilepsy* (Baltimore, 1945).

¹³ A journal of the history of science. See previous letter, note 10 for Amphioxus paper.

¹⁴ Hitler's war machine only collapsed in 1945.

292

Singer to Sigerist, Kilmarth, 8 August 1942

My dear Sigerist,

I have several of your letters unanswered. All contain interesting material. You must not think me ungrateful for all this but, as with everyone in the present situation, I am so fully occupied that any task that can be put off, tends to be so. Overwork is, in fact, one of the major evils of war.

First I want to say what an extremely brilliant book your Medicine and Human Welfare is. I am ashamed to say that I have only just read it, but I am very impressed by it indeed. It is, moreover, most beautifully written. You have produced a real work of art.

I should much like to see it published in England in a cheap form. It is, I know, already published in the technical sense in this country. But it ought to be in some very cheap

form, 6d or 1/- (10 cents or 20 cents) which is the price at which widely read books are now appearing here. It is also the most lucrative form for I made more out of a 6d book than out of anything else I have written! The most popular is the so called Penguin Series at 6d. I have today written to Sisam, the Secretary of the Oxford University Press, a letter of which I enclose a copy.¹ I hope that he will respond and that you will agree to let me try to get the book into a cheap form and to use my judgement in making the very small changes that I suggest in this letter. I ought to tell you, however, that owing to the shortage of paper, the publication of books is now much restricted here and that the task may prove impracticable. If you and Sisam and the Yale people agree, however, I will do my best. The book should be on to the bookstalls of this country.²

I have been to see Air Commodore Power, dear old D'Arcy's only surviving son, whom I have known for years. He has collected all the books and papers of D'Arcy which he thinks of interest for an account of the old man and has sent them to me here. The case has just arrived. I will try to get this work done during the next few months. Air Commodore Power was going abroad and he was glad that this material should be in my possession.

Many thanks for the reprint of my Francis Adams paper.³ I feel rather bad at loading the post with such slight material. But it was good of you, and I much appreciate the kind thought.

I read with much interest your notes on the Circle of Petosiris in the "Bulletin".⁴ I have a few further annotations to make on this queer little bit of Pythagoreanism and I have collected the material for the purpose. I will try to make time to write it up.

There has just turned up in London a late but illuminating new Five Figure Anatomical Series. It has been in the Wellcome Collection for years. Several people got on the track of it but that queerly secretive lunatic Wellcome actually went so far as to write twice that no such manuscript was in his possession!⁵ However it was all the time and he knew it! I have seen it and it throws quite a lot of light on the series as a whole. It is in the hands of a refugee art-historian, one Otto Kurz, working at the Courtauld Institute for the History of Art in London.⁶ He is not medical and is interested chiefly in the art side of certain aspects of the MS that have nothing to do with the anatomy. But he is setting out the anatomical stuff, and I am helping him. We shall probably send it to you for the "Bulletin". I have lent him my photos and transcriptions of other members of the series. Incidentally, like the Caius MS, the Wellcome MS portrays the appendix vermiformis. It is usually said, I think, that this structure was not portrayed till the 16th century.

You have not answered as to whether that letter of mine to Miss Emmart on the Badianus Herbal reached her. There were, I thought, one or two points worth taking up.

It is wonderful news that you have an 8 volumned history of medicine actually in hand. I look forward to it eagerly. If I may make a word of criticism it is that it would be best not to tackle the volumes in chronological order. You write that the vol. on the ancient East and on primitive elements will appear first. This would perhaps be a pity for this aspect alters most rapidly of all, so that when the last of your series appears, the first may be out of date. If it is not too late I would urge that you begin with Renaissance Medicine (on which something is badly needed) and from it as a central point you issue your volumes in the series, one completing the story forwards and the other backwards.

Many thanks for giving me Olschki's name as authority on the early European knowledge of America. I will write my inquiry to him.

Thanks for your hint about Dobell's book. I have told him to write to Dr. Barnett Cohen. As you may perhaps know F. J. Cole's History of Zoology also cannot get published. It is not a very long book and there is about 40 years work in it! It is first class. As Cole is 73 I am urging him to have it multigraphed but I do not think I shall be able to persuade him. The basic difficulties in publication are (a) paper shortage (b) embargo on uses of copper for plate making.

I have been publishing a fair amount but anonymously. I have a couple of long articles under the pen-name Anceps in the *Political Quarterly* on the decline of Christianity. One is out, the other is in the press. I will send them to you when the second appears but I have had no reprints made.⁷

Andrew has just finished his engineering exam. and his first experience in an Engineering factory. He has a commission and is now in camp training cadets. He will, I think, be sent back to engineering. He comes home next week for a few weeks holiday. Nancy is home for 3 weeks, then she works on the land with a farmer before going back to her teaching.

All kind wishes to you all from us all,
Yours ever,
Charles Singer

¹ Kenneth Sisam (1887–1971), see N. Ker, 1972. 'Kenneth Sisam, 1887–1971', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 1972, **58**: 409–428.

² Sigerist (1941a); no edition has appeared in England.

³ Singer (1942a).

⁴ Henry E. Sigerist, 'The sphere of life and death in Early Medieval manuscripts', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1942, **11**: 292–303.

⁵ Henry Wellcome (1853–1936), U.S.-British pharmaceutical entrepreneur and collector; see Robert Rhodes James, 'Wellcome, Sir Henry Solomon (1853–1936)', *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 57, 999–1001. This refers to Wellcome MS 49; A Seebohm, 'Texts and images in a fifteenth-century German miscellany (Wellcome MS 49)' (Ph.D. thesis, Warburg Institute 1982), a microfiche facsimile edition of this manuscript has been published as *Apokalypse, ars moriendi, medizinische Traktate, Tugend- und Lasterlehren : die erbaulich-didaktische Sammelhandschrift London, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, Ms. 49* Farbmikrofiche-Edition: introduction to the manuscript, descriptive catalogue of the Latin and German texts and illustrations, index of incipits by Almuth Seebohm (München: H. Lengenfelder, 1995).

⁶ Otto Kurz (1908–1975), Austrian art historian in the U.S.; see E. H. Gombrich. 'Otto Kurz', *Burlington Magazine*, 1976, **118**: 29–30.

⁷ Charles Singer (Anceps), 'Christianity, science, and the religion of humanity', *Political Quarterly*, 1942, **13**: 280–293 and 414–425.

293

Singer to Sigerist, Kilmarth, 12 August 1942

My dear Sigerist,

Enclosed from Sisam, Secretary of the Clarendon & Oxford University Press explains itself. I hope that you will go on with the matter & hasten things by allowing me to act for you on this side & that the Yale people will be willing.¹

Yours ever

Charles Singer

¹ Regarding an English edition of *Sigerist* (1941a). See previous letter.

294

Singer to Sigerist, Kilmarth, 19 August 1942

My dear Sigerist,

(1) Many thanks for “Ornithologists of U.S. Army Corps” which has just come to hand. I am very much obliged.¹

(2) Thanks for name of Olschki as an authority on early Americana. I have foolishly mislaid his address. Would you be so kind as to send enclosed note to him. And would you put me yet further in your debt by offering to forward his answer by air? Posts are otherwise so very slow and I am anxious to get this note on America published, since it has some minute value for Anglo-American relations.²

Yours ever

Charles Singer

¹ Hume (1942).

² Singer (1945a).

295

Sigerist to Singer, Baltimore, 23 September 1942

Dear Singer:

I have to thank you for two letters, those of August 8 and August 19. I was very glad to hear that you like my little book *MEDICINE AND HUMAN WELFARE* and I was perfectly delighted with your idea of having a cheap edition of it brought out in England.¹

I am very much in favor of the Penguins. Their list of books is excellent and they reach the public all over the English-speaking world better than any other series.

I quite agree with you that the illustrations could be omitted. As a matter of fact, they were forced upon me by the Yale University Press in order to make the book more expensive. It is very difficult to sell cheap books in America. The retail bookdealers will not touch them because the profit per volume seems too small to them— a perfectly foolish point of view.

I also agree with you that the footnotes could be omitted in such an edition and very much like the title that you suggested: Health, Disease and the State. I wish you would write a foreword for the English edition. I think the Penguins would even be better than the Oxford University Press for this type of book.

In the meantime I also had a letter from the Yale University Press informing me that the Oxford Press does not see its way clear to do a special edition but would have no objection to the Yale Press making arrangements with some other publisher. I wrote the Yale Press that I was very much in favor of an English edition and suggested to them to approach the Penguins.

Your papers on the Circle of Petosiris² and on the Five Figure Anatomical Series will be most welcome at any time like all the papers you ever cared to send me.

I have finished my book CIVILIZATION AND DISEASE that the Cornell University Press is publishing,³ and on January 1, I shall begin writing my HISTORY OF MEDICINE. I understand your suggestion to begin with the Renaissance volume very well indeed but I am afraid that I could not follow it. To me, writing a book is like building a house. I have to start it with the foundations. If I began with the second floor, I would feel that the whole is hanging in the air. I am making provisions, however, for having new editions of the individual volumes published periodically so that by the time Volume VIII will come from the press, Volume I should be in the second or possibly even the third revised edition – at least if the book does sell.⁴

I came back to Baltimore a few days ago. We spent a very pleasant month of August in the country where I could finish my book in peace. Then in September I spent a few weeks in Saratoga Springs in the State of New York. The waters there combined with massage, rest, exercises and inhalations for my nose always do me a lot of good, and I try to have such treatment every year before the winter's work begins.

I am going to have a lot of teaching this year. I have lost three of my associates either to the armed forces or to war work in Washington and others may follow soon.⁵ Fortunately, I have a German refugee working with me, one of my old European students, Erwin H. Ackerknecht. You may have seen his articles on primitive medicine in the Bulletin.⁶ He is an excellent man equally well trained in medicine, history and social

1942

anthropology [...] I will probably be able to keep him. We are running our departments now with women and cripples.

With kind regards to Mrs. Singer and yourself, I am

Yours as ever,

[Henry E. Sigerist]

¹ Sigerist (1941a).

² Sigerist (1942).

³ Henry E. Sigerist, *Civilization and disease* (Ithaca, NY 1943).

⁴ Sigerist's estimate of the future of his planned *History of medicine* was optimistic: he died before finishing Vol. II.

⁵ Larkey had joined the Army; Temkin had part-time work in Washington.

⁶ Erwin H. Ackerknecht, 'Problems of primitive medicine', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1942, **11**: 503–521; and, 'Primitive medicine and culture pattern', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1942, **12**: 545–574.

⁷ One half sentence deleted as Protected Health Information of the Alan Mason Chesney Medical Archive of the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions.

296

Singer to Sigerist, Kilmarth, 23 October 1942

My dear Sigerist

I am writing you a short but important letter. Two items of news that concern you have come in today.

The first is a letter from the Oxford University Press telling me that you and the Yale University Press will let me have a free hand with your "Medicine and Human Welfare".¹ I shall go ahead at once and see what can be done about a popular edition. The chief difficulty is paper shortage but I am in good hopes and will act immediately.

The second is a letter from F. J. Cole of Reading University concerning his "History of Zoology to 1800".² Cole is 72 and in poor health. He is a most careful and accurate worker and has been on this subject all his working life. There can be no doubt of his qualifications and anything that he produces is always first rate. Schumann [sic] the publisher wrote to me some time ago asking for suggestion of MSS for publication.³ I told Cole that I would gladly suggest his work. Cole writes me to say that he has written both to you and Schumann [sic] & asks me to write to you both.

If it is possible for you to consider Cole's work, it seems to me that you are hardly likely to find better material in war time. He is sound, recondite, readable and scholarly, and there is nothing effective yet available along the lines on which he writes. It is certainly a real contribution to knowledge. On the point of its medical bearing, I would urge that there was but little zoological writing before 1800 that had not that bearing but I know that this is not a point that will weigh greatly with you personally, though it may with the public with which you have to deal.

We are all well. I am very hard worked and in several different ways but chiefly in teaching biology which I really enjoy.

222

1942

It is strange how all fear has gone out of us all. This is a general phenomenon throughout the country. We are all confident but also quite ready to face whatsoever may come.

All kind wishes to you and yours from us both,

Yours always

Charles Singer

¹ Sigerist (1941a).

² Cole's history of zoology did not appear in the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* but was published as F. J. Cole, *A history of comparative anatomy: from Aristotle to the eighteenth century* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1944). Singer writes to Sigerist to secure Sigerist's recommendation for help with the publisher.

³ Henry Schuman (1899–1962) New York publisher and bookseller; see Warner Wells, 'Henry Schuman, 1899–1962', *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*, 1963, **51**: 152–154.

297

Sigerist to Singer, Baltimore?, 1 December 1942

Dear Singer:

Thanks for your letter of October 23. In the meantime I also received one from Professor Cole and you can be assured that I will do my best in the matter of his book. It will be extremely difficult, however, to bring the book out in America. A book of that size (200,000 words and 200 illustrations) would require a subsidy of a least \$3,000 and grants-in-aid of publication are very hard to get for foreign manuscripts.

In my own department we have at the moment manuscripts of ten books ready for the press and I do not know myself yet where to find the money for them.

I have written to Schuman but I doubt very much that he can undertake the job. He is primarily a second-hand bookseller and has very little capital. I have also written Sarton but I should think that he also would need a heavy subsidy in order to bring the book out in OSIRIS.¹ I will write John Fulton and see if he knows of any possibility.

Why does not the Oxford University Press print the book in the United States? They have an American branch and there is no reason why they should not produce their books here for the duration of the war.

I will certainly not fail to keep the matter in mind and will try every possibility, but I am not too hopeful. For the publication of Hume's book on Ornithology, we got \$2,000 from the Surgeon General of the Army otherwise we could not have considered it at all and even so, we are losing about \$1,500 on the book.²

With all good wishes and kind regards, I am

Yours very sincerely,

Henry E. Sigerist

¹ Publication series of the History of Science Society.

² Hume (1942).

*Singer to Sigerist, Kilmarth, 8 June 1944*¹

My dear Sigerist

Somehow or other the number of the Bulletin devoted to VESALIUS has not reached me. I have received the numbers on either side of it. Could you perhaps send me another copy as I am working at him.²

I have by this post received your CIVILISATION AND DISEASE for review and am much looking forward to reading it.³

I hope all is well with you. I have just returned from a month in London where I was when the exciting news of the landing in France came in.⁴

With all kind wishes,

Yours always,

Charles Singer

Sanford Larkey called on me yesterday.⁵

¹ The gap in the correspondence from January 1943 to May 1944 is most likely due to missing letters, possibly on account of the war, although by then the German submarines were all but wiped out.

² *Bulletin* number on Vesalius is December 1943. His article appeared as, Charles Singer, 'Some Vesalian problems', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1945, 17: 425–438.

³ Sigerist (1943a).

⁴ The landing of the Allied Armies in Normandy on 6 June, the beginning of the final phase of World War II in Europe.

⁵ Larkey was in Britain as a GI.

Sigerist to Singer, Baltimore?, 14 August 1944

Dear Singer:

I was sorry to hear that you have not received the December number of the Bulletin and I will see to it that another copy will be sent to you.

I am glad to know that you are reviewing my book, Civilization and Disease.¹ It is a somewhat enlarged series of lectures that I gave at Cornell University some years ago. The book is selling unusually well. The first printing was sold out in a few months. The second printing has just been made and the third printing is being prepared. The paper shortage is not as serious here as it is with you but nevertheless caused a great deal of trouble. Still more serious is the shortage of labor and printing presses. Once a book is in type you have to wait months before you can find a press to print it off. Thus we had a volume of essays presented to old Castiglioni² ready for a long time but so far it has been impossible to get it out.

I meant to write you long ago to thank you for your very interesting little book, The Christian Failure.³ It circulated among the members of the department and we discussed it in great detail. Personally I agree with you in almost every point.

1944

The Institute is still active although everybody is very much overworked. Everyone of us has several extra jobs. I am doing Larkey's work as librarian of the Welch Library and I do not know if you have seen my new journal, The American Review of Soviet Medicine. I am sending it on to you under separate cover. After less than [sic] one year we have 3,000 subscribers which shows that there was a real need for such a journal, but you can readily imagine that it was very difficult to get it launched. I took the editorship because we could not [find?] anybody else and because I was anxious to set the standard and to see that it would be kept free of politics. I will resign the editorship after a few years as soon as the journal is well established.

I am trying desperately to get back to my historical studies but somehow or other I am always driven into other fields. Thus I am just getting ready to spend a month in Canada making a survey of health needs and medical facilities in the province of Saskatchewan. The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, a farm-labor party, has just taken over the provincial government and they want me to advise them in the reorganization of their medical services. This takes me far away from medieval and renaissance studies but I feel that in times like these we have to help out wherever we seem to be needed.

The war situation looks good and at long last the Nazi machine is breaking down. I cannot help thinking how much better it would have been to prevent the rise of Hitlerism. It could have been done as we both know. I am also not to [sic] hopeful as to our ability to handle postwar situations. The job we have done in Italy so far is not very encouraging. I think a great deal will depend on you in Great Britain. You are so much closer to Europe and your population has been so much more deeply involved in the war that you should have a better understanding of the problems than [sic] the average American who is so far remote from the European scene.

With all good wishes to you both,

I am yours very cordially,

Henry E. Sigerist

¹ Sigerist (1943a).

² *Essays in the history of medicine, presented to Professor Arturo Castiglioni on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, April 10, 1944*, Supplement to the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* no. 3 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1944).

³ Charles Singer, *The Christian failure* (London, 1943).

300

Singer to Sigerist, Kilmarth, 29 September 1944

My dear Sigerist,

You would, I think, like to see the enclosed "leader" which appeared in this week's *British Medical Journal*.¹ You will see that it treats largely of your excellent Vesalius number.²

1944

My fascicule in the Tabulae sex is finished & has gone off for final typing. I see no reason why it should not be in print early next year.³ The war with Germany, at least, will then be over.⁴

All kind wishes
Yours always
Charles Singer

The leader is anonymous of course

¹ There are three short articles by Singer in the *British Medical Journal* of 1944; this refers to [Charles Singer], 'Vesalius the man', *British Medical Journal*, 1944, ii: 407–409.

² Vesalius number of the *Bulletin for the History of Medicine* December 1943.

³ Charles Singer and Chaim Rabin, *A prelude to modern science. Being a discussion of the history, sources and circumstances of the 'Tabulae anatomicae sex' of Vesalius* (Cambridge, 1946).

⁴ The war with Japan would last longer.

301

Sigerist to Singer, Baltimore?, 17 October 1944

My dear Singer:

Many thanks for your note of September 29 and for the splendid editorial on Vesalius.¹ I am very glad that you refuted some of Mr. Ivins arguments.² For over ten years he has been going around lecturing on Vesalius and picturing him as a plagiarist. I finally succeeded in getting a manuscript from him and now that his thesis is published, we are able to show how weak his arguments are. He is a very witty old devil and a good speaker but he does not know the history of anatomy.

I returned from Canada a week ago and I am just getting ready to leave for a short trip to India. The Government of India invited me to participate in the work of their Health Survey and Development Committee. Professor J. A. Ryle will be there too and I am looking forward to meeting him.³ The trip will undoubtedly be an interesting experience, very different from the one I just had in the Canadian Province of Saskatchewan where the general death-rate is 7 and the tuberculosis death-rate 25.

I expect to be back in America early in January and will then resume my historical studies.

I was very sorry to hear of the death of Sir Humphry Rolleston. He was an Honorary Member of our American Association of the History of Medicine and I would like to publish an obituary. Would you be willing to write it for us? You could make it as long as you like. It would also be advisable to add a bibliography of his historical writings and one or two good portraits. The obituary would be published in the July number of 1945 of the Bulletin of the History of Medicine and it would be early enough if I had the manuscript in hand by the end of April so that it could be presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association in May.⁴