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SHORT NOTES

SOME REMARKS ABOUT A FAMOUS SWEDISH SCIENTIST

GÜNTER SCHULZE-DEWITZ
Fellow IAWS

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SUMMARY

Outside of the large field of biology, it may be imaged that some representatives of other natural and technical sciences know the name of Carl Linnaeus or Linné, the name he used after rising to the peerage. He is renown by his noticeable observation "Minerals grow, plants grow and are sensitive, and animals grow and are sensitive and they move".

Born in 1707 in the south Swedish countryside of Småland, Linné entered the university of Lund as an undergrate of medicine. But after one year he went to Uppsala to start his second main track of botany.

This short contribution is not meant to be a curriculum vitae of this esteemed physician and remarkable botanist. We should remember the unique case of both professorial chairs of medicine and botany at the very same university not far from here. The achievements of Linné by giving minute descriptions to plants and animals are worthy of mention to this day. He promoted the development of biology by establishing botanical terminology. Linné perfected the binary nomenclature used by botanists before his time. Some strictures of this process may be put down to the fact that he had termed previously described genera and species as new individuals. Thus, these new names are now to be found within the ocean of synonyims.

The number of plants and animals which Linné originally marked with his own letter "L" can only be estimated by specialists in filing systems. At the start of his activity, he felt thoroughly convinced of his doctrine "*Nulla species nova*" . His P*hilosophia botanica* was published in 1751. Then, nearly 20 years later, when he had observed the development of new species by hybridization, Linné cancelled this dogma of the unchangeableness of species.

Linné published nearly 70 books and booklets of which his *Systema riaturae per omnia regna tria* with its 12 editions (the last extending to 2300 pages) is probably the most worthy of mention. Its first edition led to Linné's appointment as president of Stockholm's Academy of Sciences at the

age of 32. However, towards the end of his life, the *Princeps botanicorum*, as he was characterized by his friends and pupils, a somewhat conceited Linné, wrote to his relatives listing his merits in the field of botany and all the awards he had received. Nevertheless, he closed that letter with the comment "*Quidquid et apicem pervenit, ad exitum properat*" which says "Whatever supreme completion is reached, it decends immediately to the end of all things".

In those days it was a progressive performance that Linné worked on the influence of extreme factors on human society. Therefore we can regard him as the founder of today's ecology.

The legacy of Linné's library and botanical collection was enoraious. His successor to both professorial chairs was his son Carl, who could not prevent the sale of these valuable items to the Linnean Society which was later founded in Great Britain. The king of Sweden, Gustaf III, took great pains to recover this material but no avail.

Our Academy considered it an honour to hold its 2008 annual meeting in the venerable building of the Linnean Society in London, where a Fellow from Sweden had been elected vice president. Now and for the first time IAWS is holding its annual meeting for the present year 2011 in Sweden. It is therefore an appropriate opportunity for us to remind ourselves of this man of science, to whom we wood biologists owe a great deal of our fundamental knowledge.

Dr. habil. Günter Schultze-Dewitz
Fellow IAWS
Rudolf Virchow Str.17
D-16225 Eberswalde
Germany