

Polunin Aleksey Ivanovitch (1820-1888, Moscow)

Doctor of Medicine, privy councilor, a dean of the Medicine faculty and a professor of Moscow University, a publisher, a writer. He was born on the 19-th of November 1820., died on the 30-rd of October 1888. Polunin was born in Bezhetsk of Tversky province where his father Ivan Nikititch was a district teacher. When he was 7 years he entered to Bezhetsk district specialized school and in 1829 he moved to even Kostromskaya district specialized school where his father received a position of a supervisor and then he entered to the local gymnasium. The same year his father died of cholera and the boy due to the director of Kostromskiye district specialized schools was given to the Charity based in Moscow by the high injunction for the orphaned during the epidemic of cholera. This Charity House was renamed soon into Aleksandrinskiy Institution for orphaned children. In 1837 Polunin graduated a course in it and entered to the Medical Faculty of Moscow University where he was educated for account of Aleksandrinskiy Institution. He studied very well, in 1840 he was awarded by a golden medal for the compositions in Latin language written on the competition's topic "About means of opening arsenic and antidote for it" the composition was issued by the faculty on the 10-th of June in 1842. He was the first who graduated the University Course with a status of the Doctor of the first Department (with honor). In August of the same year he was sent by the solicitation of Prince M.Golitsyn and a chancellor of the University A.A. Alfonskogo to the Berlin for improving in the sciences. He was listening lectures of Muller during 3 terms on physiology, comparing anatomy and pathological anatomy, by Frorin –on pathological anatomy and others and he visited clinics. The main attention he turned to the sciences consisted of the medicine's foundation. For deeper studying of them he asked for visiting Vienna, Paris, Ginseng and London. In all these cities he worked on studying of anatomy, physiology and chemistry of sick organisms. In January 1847 Polunin returned to Moscow, in June 1847 he was appointed by a junior Doctor at the Aleksandrinskiy Institution for orphans. In September by asking of Professor G.V.Varvinskiy he was assigned to the therapeutics department of hospital clinic of Moscow University for implementation of junior scientific assistant's position.

Polunin had to work too much at the University so he left his position at the Institution of the same year. In September of 1847 the epidemic of cholera began in Moscow. A new junior scientific assistant professor with a great interest began to study this disease and collected a great scientific material. The result of this work was "Discussion about cholera" published in 1848. Soon Polunin satisfied doctor's test and defended his dissertation "Dechoiera" on the 25-th of April 1848. He got Academic Doctor Degree. His scientific observations above cholera were approved by other scientists and the dissertation was translated into German and issued in Leipzig. Being a junior scientific assistant of a therapeutic clinic Polunin read lectures for students and led their practical lessons. On the 22-nd of May 1849 he was appointed to academic title of extraordinary professor of pathological anatomy and pathological physiology. On the 11-th of September 1853 he became an ordinary professor of the same department. In addition he read lectures on pathological physiology which he professed by compositions of Rokityanskiy, Andrel, Virhov, Bokk, Genl, Vunderlich, Shomel, Shults and Budge and on his own observations. At the same time he turned attention on chemical changes which were happened in organism and showed students microscopic and another preparation. Polunin fully scientifically related to the subjects of his lectures. His pupil Serhey Petrovitch Botkin spoke about him with a great praise and told that he had without doubts "the most influence on the development" of the students. Doctor Radulovitch also appreciated highly him as a teacher of Russian teachers. Among other things he told that Polunin as a representative of a scientific medicine "fulminates to anathema the empiricists". He appoints that Alexey Ivanovitch "reading the common pathology and pathological anatomy had a habit under a case to examine students of the V-th course on all fields of the medicine, having fear to present a diploma to disreputable student who can damage to sick people". From February 1850 he read also a common therapy instead of the dean of Medical Faculty.

In 1849 Polunin entered to the number of members of Moscow of Physics-Mathematics Society, from 1850 till 1858 he was a secretary of this Society, in 1852 he was elected by a member of Moscow Society nature's testers, the next year of the Saint Petersburg Society of Russian Doctors. In addition he was a member of

Moscow Committee of National health protection and many other scientific societies where he reported and communicated and took part in their activities. In 1853 and 1854 Polunin took part in the cholera struggle: disclosed dead bodies in anatomic cholera departments of different offices, manage by cholera hospitals and others. Polunin had skills of philosophy generalization: his views on reciprocal connection of different sciences and on their meanings for public life were scientific and real.

From 1851 to 1859 Polunin issued “Moscow Doctor Magazine” in which he put his own scientific works and works of the most outstanding Russian scientists of that time: V.Basser, V.A.Basov, A.N.Beketova, A.U. Davidova (mathematician), G.A.Zaharjin, F.I.Inozemtsev, V.N.Leshkov, A.S.Sevruk, I.M.Sechenov and others. At the same time his work had influence on the development of medical sciences in Russia: in appendix to his journal he began to issue translated by him the most famous medical compositions of foreign scientists which had basic characters, guidance and wide treatises. The same compositions he published by separate issues. There it was printed his “Pathology and therapy” consisted by the way of procession of the compositions of Kanshtatt, Vunderlich, Rockitanskiy, Virhov and other scientists. Some articles of that guidance Polunin composed of his own researches.

From 1868 to 1878 Polunin had except of professor’s duties a difficult duties of a dean of Medical Faculty of Moscow University. He was elected to that position five times. It was expressed truth for him from the friends-professors. At the same time Polunin many times implemented duties of University chancellor. From 1866 to 1870 he was a president of Moscow Physics Medical Society.

During 20 years Polunin was working in a small and damp building of Pathological Museum which was situated under Ekaterininskaya Hospital. Subsequently he was suffered much because of developed in his organism chronicle arthropathy. Finally he hadn’t energy to work and in 1879 he left University service. Leaving Moscow University where he spent nearly 40 years of his life he received address from the Medical Faculty and the Council of the University elected him as a honorable member. A Society of Russian Doctors in Saint Petersburg on the 22-nd of November 1884 elected him as a honorable member too. Polunin achieved a position of a privy councilor. His activity as a practical doctor was described in the University

Report of 1888: “Aleksey Ivanovitch left fond memories of himself essentially of a humane, ideal disinterested doctor, he has never refused to anyone poor man who turned to him for help”. Radulovitch ranged him to the amount of those rare scientists which “due to their energy and talents get honorable position and popularity and at the same time by the means of the word and affair act to the interests of Russian Medicine, make ready doctors and appoint them honest way to self work for Motherland’s needs”.

Polunin’s publications:

“Report about teaching and a state of Medical sciences in Berlin and Vienna” –
Notes about Medical sciences” 1845, book 2 and 3;

“About man and his attitude to the nature” – the same book 1;

“Sweating in epidemic cholera on the necrotic large bowel cast and others” (written together with Varvinskiy) – “Moscow. Doctors Journal” 1847, 3, p.55;

About Medical part in Paris and about some notable buildings in London” –
“Moscow list” 1848, №№102 – 104;

“Decholera”, Diss. M. 1848; translation it “Cholera discussion”, M. 1848; the same in German 1849;

“Introduction into pathology” – “Moskvityanin” 1849;

“Professor’s Philomafitskiy obituary” – “Moscow Medical Journal” 1849, p.185;

“Meeting’s report of Physics-Medical Society in Moscow” 1850 – 1854 – “Moscow Medical Journal”;

“Annual reports of the same Society during 1854 – 1858”, “Moscow Medical Journal” 1855 – 1858 issued “Moscow Medical Journal” 1851 – 1859., Moscow;

“Analysis of Gubbeneth observations under cholera epidemic in Kiev military hospital 1848” – “Moscow Medical Journal” 1851, p.43;

“Notices about cholera” – “Moscow Medical Journal” 1851, part 1, p.137;

“Report about research of died in hospital University clinic” – “Moscow Medical Journal” 1851.;

“About blood of healthy and a sick man and about cachexy” – “Moscow Medical Journal” 1851. III, 118, IV, 157;

“About medicine attitude to natural sciences; about modern direction of pathology; about appointment of scientific medical societies; about aim and direction of Moscow

Physics Medical Society”, speaking of 8-th of January 1851 in Physics Medical Society – “Moscow Medical Journal” 1851, IV, 16