

Society Reports

FACULTY OF THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE AND PHARMACY

THE Fourth Annual General Meeting of the Faculty was held at Apothecaries' Hall at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, 8 May 1963, and the Annual Report, which had already been circulated to all members, was approved. This showed a great increase in membership, seventy-seven enrolments having been made in the year, bringing the total to almost four hundred. As Dr. W. S. C. Copeman, the Chairman, reminded members, these figures made the Faculty one of the largest bodies in the world concerned with the history of medicine.

Among the interesting developments recorded in the Report is the establishment within the Faculty of a History of Hospitals Group and a Veterinary History Society. The former has grown out of the very successful third British Congress held in September 1962 with the theme 'The Evolution of British Hospitals', the proceedings of which are in press.

The proceedings of the second Congress, *Chemistry in the Service of Medicine*, again edited by the Honorary Secretary, Dr. F. N. L. Poynter, has been published by the Pitman Medical Publishing Company (25s.). The theme of the fourth Congress, to be held in the University of Nottingham from 20–23 September 1963, is 'The Evolution of Pharmacy in Britain'. This is to be a residential week-end meeting, the inclusive fee (covering board residence and the cost of the Congress Banquet) being 8 guineas. The number of enrolments already ensures the success of the Congress, but if it becomes necessary to restrict these (accommodation being limited to 180) Faculty members will be given priority.

After the Annual General Meeting, Dr. William Brockbank, M.D., F.R.C.P., of the University of Manchester, delivered the Gideon de Laune Lecture to a large and attentive audience. Entitled 'Sovereign Remedies: a critical devaluation of the 17th-century *London Pharmacopoeia*', it revealed the great proportion of ancient (and often irrational) remedies included in the *Pharmacopoeia*, and by reference to surviving drug-jars, prescriptions and case-books, showed how far these were still in daily use in the medical practice of the time.

After the annual Founder Members' Dinner which followed the Lecture a lively discussion arose on some of the points raised by Dr. Brockbank, reinforced by the report of his work given by Mr. R. S. Roberts, the Wellcome Research Fellow. This tended to show that the origins of the *Pharmacopoeia* could be found in the somewhat commercial arrangements between the Apothecaries and the College of Physicians and that the greatly enlarged second issue of the first edition sprang from the desire of the Apothecaries to make their monopoly of drugs as comprehensive as possible. Taking this as an example of the rather chastening facts sometimes revealed by the records, Mr. Roberts made a passing but controversial reference to Harvey's practice (as opposed to his scientific work) which aroused a great deal of earnest discussion, a sign of the growing maturity of the Faculty in its serious approach to historical problems.

Among the distinguished guests who joined in the discussion were Sir John Boyd, one of the Wellcome Trustees, Mr. Christopher Hill, Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, and University lecturer in 16th and 17th century history, Dr. Michael

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Hoskin, Reader in the History of Science at the University of Cambridge, Major-General R. E. Barnsley, Hon. Curator of the R.A.M.C. Museum, Dr. John Wilkinson, of the Manchester Royal Infirmary, and Mr. David Dickens, Managing Director of the Pitman Medical Publishing Company.

The 1963 Osler Lecture (being the fourth Annual Students' Lecture) was given at Apothecaries' Hall on Wednesday 5 June by Dr. Hugh Clegg, the Editor of the *British Medical Journal*. His theme was 'State Medicine in Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece', the antiquity of state supervision of medical care being amply demonstrated by many telling quotations from some of the earliest records. The lecture will be published in a forthcoming issue of this journal.

At the same meeting the Chairman of the Faculty, Dr. W. S. C. Copeman, awarded the 1963 Maccabaeus Prize (of 25 guineas) and Medal to Mr. Peter F. M. Wrigley, for his essay on 'Ischaemic Heart Disease in the Nineteenth Century', Mr. Wrigley, who is aged 24, took a B.Sc. in Anatomy at University College, London, in 1961 and is now a third year medical student at Oxford.

Entries for the 1964 Prize and Medal are now invited for an essay of 5000 to 7000 words on some aspect of the history of medicine or pharmacy. Intending candidates, who must be under thirty years of age on 15 March 1964, may apply for further particulars to the Hon. Secretary of the Faculty, Dr. F. N. L. Poynter, The Wellcome Historical Medical Library, The Wellcome Building, Euston Road, London, N.W.1.

SECTION OF MEDICAL HISTORY IN THE AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Victorian Branch

ON 10 September 1962, the meeting of the Section was devoted to paying tribute to the memory of the immediate past President, the late Sir William Johnston, whose death a fortnight before had come as a great shock to all who had known him. In addition to members of the Section, a large number of visitors were present representing the various bodies with which Sir William had been associated including members of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade of which he had been Chief Commissioner for Australia, The Melbourne Medical Post-Graduate Committee for which he had worked untiringly for many years, the Victorian Branch of the Australian Medical Association and the staff of the library of the Medical Society of Victoria.

Tributes were paid to Sir William by the President of the Section, Dr. Clive Fitts, by Sir Kingsley Norris, former Director General of Medical Services in the Australian Military Forces; by Dr. G. A. Birnie, and by Dr. Colin Macdonald, a Past President both of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria and of the Section.

At the conclusion of these tributes Dr. Bryan Gandevia, after a brief personal tribute to Sir William, read a paper entitled, 'Dr. J. E. Neild and the Origins of the St. John Ambulance Association in Victoria', which Sir William had prepared shortly before his death with the intention of presenting at the meeting.

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On 26 November 1962, the meeting of the Section was held in conjunction with the Annual Dinner. The speaker was Dr. George Cole who gave a talk entitled 'Early Geelong Doctors' in which he discussed the medical pioneers of Victoria's leading provincial city.