

### *Society Reports*

casually mentioned his own pioneer contributions. A vote of thanks to Sir Russell was proposed by Sir Henry Souttar and seconded by Sir Zachary Cope.

## ROYAL SOCIETY OF MEDICINE

### Section of the History of Medicine

AT a meeting of the Section held on 6 March, Professor F. G. Young, F.R.S., of the Department of Biochemistry, University of Cambridge, spoke on 'Glycogen, 1857-1957'.

The observations which led Claude Bernard to the discovery that sugar is liberated in the liver (the glycogenic function of the liver) were discussed. The subsequent discovery that the immediate source of the sugar was glycogen in the liver was then considered. Criticisms, in part justified, of Claude Bernard's methods led Pavy and others to reject the idea of the glycogenic function of the liver, and assert that the liver stores carbohydrate in the form of glycogen as a protection against the harmful effects of large amounts of sugar in the blood. That Bernard was right and Pavy was wrong was only finally proved by hepatectomy, first carried out by F. C. Mann and his colleagues in 1920.

Claude Bernard's doubts as to whether sugar in the blood was converted directly to glycogen in the liver were discussed, and the confusing effect of the views of Pflüger and others was brought out.

During the past twenty-five years, the chemistry of the glycogen molecule has been completely elucidated, and as the result of the work of Cori and her colleagues, the metabolic inhomogeneity of the molecule revealed. Enzymic methods of dissecting the glycogen molecule have led to the differentiation of glycogen storage disease into a number of forms, and has revealed the enzymic basis of some of them.

AT a meeting held on 3 April, Mr. T. B. Layton read a paper on 'Horace Walpole's Quinsey'. This episode occurred when Walpole was making the grand tour of Europe in company with Thomas Gray, the future poet. In the early summer of 1741, when the two friends were at Reggio, some misunderstanding arose and they parted company. Shortly after this Walpole suffered from a severe attack of 'quinsey'—or rather, as Mr. Layton thought, from a pharyngitis arising from bad sanitation and from mental depression owing to his quarrel with Gray. For some hours his life was considered to be in danger, but he recovered under the care of a physician who was summoned from Florence by Joseph Spence.

At the same meeting Dr. T. J. Rendle-Short read a paper on 'Worms in History with special reference to Children'.

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The concept that worms cause disease goes back to antiquity. It probably arose partly from fear of serpents, partly because maggots could be found in dead or putrifying material and partly because worms were known to inhabit the gut of man and animals.

Owing to poor sanitation worm infestation was far commoner in the past than it is in civilized communities today. Many medical symptoms, including fevers, were ascribed to ascariasis in children. Intestinal obstruction with perforation was not uncommon when large numbers of worms were present. Treatment was crude, consisting mainly of bitters to drive the worms to the lower intestine, or sometimes sweet enemas to encourage them there. It was hoped that they would then be easily voided.

## THE SCOTTISH SOCIETY OF THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

THE twenty-eighth meeting of the Society was held on Friday, 1 March 1957, in the Hall of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, Mr. A. L. Goodall, F.R.C.S., the president, in the chair. Papers were read by Drs. R. A. Krause and A. T. Wallace respectively.

In his paper dealing with 'Healing as represented on Stamps' Dr. Krause discussed mythology and its medical associations, doctors' portraits, including literary doctors, physician-explorers and others, the contributions of scientists to healing, diseases, hospitals, sanatoria and congresses, illustrating his remarks by showing specimens from his own collection. In addition to these representative specimens, Dr. Krause also displayed his full collection of stamps with medical associations. This display was augmented by contributions made by a philatelist who was a guest at the meeting.

The second paper was given by Dr. Wallace who reviewed the life and work of Sir Robert Philip (1857-1939). Describing Philip's early discouraging experiences at the hands of the elder physicians, he showed how Philip, convinced that his outlook was the right one, evolved the dispensary system, the hospital for advanced cases of tuberculosis, the sanatorium for curable cases, and the farm colony for the rehabilitation of the convalescent. Philip's views on the notification of tuberculosis were also discussed. Finally, Dr. Wallace gave a delightful and sympathetic account of Philip as a man.

H. P. TAIT