

### Book Reviews

those who would like to acquire a copy, but it is hoped that an English edition will be available before long.

S. W. A. GUNN

*The Common Scientist in the Seventeenth Century. A Study of the Dublin Philosophical Society 1683–1708*, by K. THEODORE HOPPEN, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970, pp. xiv, 297, £2.75.

The foundation of the Royal Society in London in 1660 reflected the presence of a sizeable group of talented and active scientific men living in London or coming to the city frequently, who wanted a centre and focus for their deep scientific interests. The foundation of the Dublin Philosophical Society in 1683 reflects the wistful hope of a few moderately competent scientifically-oriented men that a formal society would necessarily generate more interest in science than was then known to exist in that very provincial city. The moving spirit was William Molyneux, subsequently author of two books on optics; both he and his brother Thomas, a successful Dublin physician, were to be elected F.R.S. and have several papers published in the *Philosophical Transactions*. The most distinguished member was Sir William Petty, still fitfully occupied with technological and scientific matters. Other members were theologians, there was one Professor of Mathematics (St. George Ashe), and (almost one third of the whole) there were eight physicians and one surgeon in 1684. The Society flourished only intermittently, never quite regaining its first impetus after its collapse in 1687, but struggling on until 1708.

Dr. Hoppen has presented a most scholarly study, solidly based on manuscript sources and wide reading. His work is full of useful information upon two or three dozen men who kept up an interest in scientific activity under difficult conditions. But even William Molyneux regarded Ireland as unsuitable for scientific work, and his son Samuel, after serving as the moving spirit in reviving the Society in 1707 (at the age of eighteen!) left for London a few years later. It is clear that there was not a sufficiently large group to sustain a scientific society, and indeed many members would have preferred a literary and theological debating society. The whole effect is somehow a trifle pathetic, showing how difficult it was at the end of the seventeenth century to stimulate an interest in science. The Molyneux family did best when its members sought stimulation by corresponding with members of the Royal Society, and were unconsciously fortunate when the disturbances of 1688 sent them and others of the Dublin Society to England and above all London.

MARIE BOAS HALL

*Bibliography of Mediaeval Arabic and Jewish Medicine and Allied Sciences*, by R. Y. EBIED, London, Wellcome Institute of the History of Medicine, 1971, pp. 150, £2.00.

Historians will welcome this bibliography which covers the literature relating to Jewish and Arabian physicians of the Middle Ages and their contributions to medicine and medical sciences. The 2,000 entries are arranged in two main sections. The second (pp. 75–136) records not only the works of the medieval physicians but also critical writings about them; the first (pp. 27–74) lists contributions by modern authors which are relevant to the main theme. Original titles, if in Arabic or Hebrew,