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laboratories, and although he does not find a precise evaluation possible, he indicates that they brought some unity and standardization into the military materia medica, generally produced drugs of good quality, watched over the quality of bulk drugs bought on the market, and did so relatively economically. This is not to say the laboratories were not above criticism, especially from the rivals of the Surgeon General, and from the pharmaceutical industry, which, had it not been too busy, might have taken stronger objection to this experiment in 'state socialism' than it did.

If there is a hero to this story it is John M. Maisch, a pharmacist who was brought in as civilian Chief Chemist of the Philadelphia Laboratory. Maisch is well known for his post-war role in organized pharmacy; here Professor Smith adds to his stature by attributing to him the success of the chemical and pharmaceutical operations of the laboratory. (Other pharmacists worked in these laboratories, and many trained pharmacists served as hospital stewards in the field, but as the author points out, any suggestion of developing a pharmacy corps in the Army evoked no response in official circles.)

The book also contains a running account of the medicines in use during the war, and the appendices give in detail an official medicinal Supply Table of 1862, and lists of the contents of an Autenrieth Medicine Wagon and of a Squibb pannier. Informative and well-written, this book is a valuable contribution to the medical and pharmaceutical history of the Civil War.

DAVID L. COWEN

Commentaries on the History and Cure of Diseases, by WILLIAM HEBERDEN, M.D., facsimile of London 1802 edition, with preface by Paul Klemperer (History of Medicine series, no. 18), New York, Hafner Publishing Co., 1962, pp. 483, \$3.00.

It would be an act of gross historical impertinence to criticise William Heberden's classical treatise on clinical medicine, which is here reproduced in facsimile in its English (1802) edition. In spite of his small literary output Heberden's name has retained until the present day the esteem in which it was held during the eighteenth century. His distinguished contemporary, Dr. W. C. Wells, physician to St. Thomas's Hospital, who first described the nodules of rheumatic fever, wrote to Lord Kenyon in 1799: 'No other person I believe either in this or any other country has ever exercised the art of medicine with the same dignity, or has contributed so much to raise it in the estimation of mankind'. Dr. Samuel Johnson, whom he attended in his last illness, called him 'Ultimus Romanorum; the last of our learned physicians'. Owing to Heberden's reluctance to employ the drastic treatments demanded by his patient, however, Dr. Johnson changed his appellation on this occasion to 'Dr. Timidorum Timidissimus' but retained his affection for him.

The vast clinical experience he accumulated over more than forty years 'in the chambers of the sick' he carefully recorded, and it was on the basis of these notes that he composed the *Commentaries* in 1782 for the use of his doctor son, William Heberden the younger, who published it in the year after his father's death. In this volume will be found his famous account of angina pectoris: 'A disorder of the breast', based upon a study of an hundred cases. In its concise brevity this account of an hitherto unrecognized malady has never been bettered. Chapter 28 consists of his famous account of 'those little hard knobs about the size of a small pea which are frequently seen upon the fingers', which now bear his name.

This beautifully written volume, replete with wisdom and commonsense, is now

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available for all at a modest price. The New York Academy of Medicine is to be congratulated on reproducing this work through its Library Publications Committee, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Bronsen S. Ray, in paperback edition; and it is much to be hoped that still further classics of the medical literature of times past will in due course also appear in this handy form.

W. S. C. COPEMAN

A Short History of the Royal Society Club of Edinburgh, 1820 to 1962, by DOUGLAS GUTHRIE, Edinburgh, published privately for the Royal Society Club, 1963, pp. 40, illus., 10s. (obtainable from the Secretary, Royal Society of Edinburgh, 22 George Street, Edinburgh).

The Royal Society of Edinburgh was founded in 1783, and in 1820 there was established a dining club of limited membership, 'with the view of promoting the objects of the Royal Society'.

The Minutes of the Club constitute an interesting record, and the Club has now printed privately some account of the 662 meetings which have been held up to the present time when it is flourishing as vigorously as ever. The story of this important adjunct to the Royal Society has been written by Dr. Douglas Guthrie, who has for many years been a Fellow of the Society and a member of the Club. He has been curator of the library and museum, and later, a vice-president of the Society.

He refers to the earliest days of the Club, when Sir Walter Scott was the third President of the Society, at a time when there were two classes of Fellows (then called Members). The two categories were Physical and Literary, and Sir Walter was the only 'Literary' President. The literary class came to an end last century, but the tradition is preserved to this day by the election of a very small minority of Fellows not directly engaged in scientific work. Among other noteworthy figures closely linked with the Society, and the Club, were Sir David Brewster, Sir T. Macdougall-Brisbane, who succeeded Sir Walter Scott as President, and gave his name to the Australian city, Sir Archibald Geikie, Lord Kelvin, Baron Playfair of St. Andrews and Sir D'Arcy Thompson.

The Royal Society of Edinburgh was at first closely connected with medicine as well as science, and the Club was warmly supported by Sir Robert Christison and Sir Douglas Maclagan, who were in great demand at the dinners as singers of their own verses, alone or as a duet. Other medical contributors to many a lively evening were Professor Crum Brown, the brother of 'Rab', Dr. George Gibson and Dr. Alexander Bruce.

In recent years there was Sir Robert Muir who in his eighty-ninth year, in 1953, attended a dinner at which he told the story of a salmon which had jumped unaided into his boat on a Highland loch. Many a dinner was enlivened by the presence of Professor John Stuart Blackie, who, it was said, taught various subjects at the University, including a little Greek, of which he was Professor. Another performer was Lord Neaves, a noted judge and wit of last century, who sang songs of his own composition.

Early Secretaries of the Club who held office in turn were Henry Stephens, an authority on Agriculture whose classic work, *The Book of the Farm*, had an immense circulation, Dr. Alexander Buchan the meteorologist and Professor R. A. Sampson, who was Astronomer-Royal for Scotland.

The little book gives a fascinating picture of a bygone age, and an insight into the lighter moments of scientific endeavour during the reign of Queen Victoria.