

Society Reports

Twentieth Century. He showed how the pattern of medical education has been profoundly influenced by the social and economic changes produced by two world wars and the rapid increase in scientific knowledge. After the Second World War the Goodenough Report set the pattern for medical schools and their association with the National Health Service. In the succeeding twenty years new problems have arisen calling for a new flexibility.

After the Dinner held on Friday 18th the Chairman, Lord Cohen, spoke on the subject of 'The Philosophy of History'.

THE SCOTTISH SOCIETY OF THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS, 1963-4

THE Report records that the Society has had a highly successful and profitable session, the usual three meetings being held. The Society suffered a severe loss during the session in the death of its President, Mr. Charles H. Kembell, F.D.S., who was the first dental surgeon to occupy the chair. A fitting tribute to him was paid by the Vice-President, Professor Norman M. Dott, at the summer meeting. The personal notes, medico-historical and book notices, well-known regular features of the Report, maintain their usual interest and standard. Of the papers delivered before the Society the first on Manuscripts and Medicine given by Professor L. R. C. Agnew at the Fifteenth Annual General Meeting is briefly reported, while the others, Sir Patrick Heron Watson (1832-1907), the well-known Victorian surgeon, Shakespeare and Medicine, and Dr. John Leyden (1775-1811), the Scottish Border physician, poet and linguist, by Drs. Boog Watson, Armstrong Davison and Douglas Guthrie respectively are reported more fully. Altogether the Report reveals that the Society is indeed an active and energetic outpost of medical history in the northern kingdom.

H. P. TAIT

THE NORWEGIAN SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

DURING the last season the Norwegian Society for the History of Medicine have held five ordinary meetings. In September 1963 Lily Aal, Ph.D., gave a most interesting account of congenital malformations as they are known in Norwegian folk-lore. In November our Finnish guest, Professor Gunnar Soininen, M.D., talked about the old academy for surgeons in Finland.

Carl Rosendahl, M.D., in February 1964 conducted the audience on some short, charming, and interesting excursions in the history of medicine; and in May Professor Olav Hanssen, M.D., talked about Brillat-Savarin and his famous book on the physiology of taste. Also in May our guest, Professor Norman Dott, M.D., gave a greatly appreciated lecture on 'Medical aspects of Robert Burns'.

It has been a year of progress. The number of members is steadily increasing. Contact has been established between the society and the international foundation of Cos. The Society is also co-operating with the Norwegian Folk-lore Museum to save what is still left of old medical instruments.

Book Reviews

Finally some progress has been made towards the establishment of a chair for medical history at the University of Oslo.

BERNHARD GETZ (*Secretary*)

SECTION OF THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY OF MEDICINE

DURING the session 1963-4 Mr. T. G. Wilson delivered a Presidential Address, 'Swift and the Doctors'.* Mr. J. McAuliffe Curtin read a paper on *James Quinlan, formerly Surgeon General to the Czar of Russia 1812-1846*. A guest speaker, Mr. W. R. Lefanu, read a paper on *Two Irish Doctors in England in the Seventeenth Century*.

J. B. LYONS

Book Reviews

A History of Chemistry, vol. IV, by J. R. PARTINGTON, London, Macmillan, 1964, pp. xxxii, 1007, illus. £10 10s.

In the narration and documentation of its history, chemistry has been one of the more fortunate sciences. Many of its most able practitioners have displayed an intense interest in the origins of their subject, and the history of science has often been enriched by their contributions. Few of them, however, have attempted to paint on so vast a canvas as Professor Partington has done in his *History of Chemistry*. This magnificent work has been ambitiously conceived, and executed with the meticulous care that chemists have come to expect from the author. Although new ground is broken in several ways it stands in the great tradition of Gmelin, Kopp, and other masters of chemical historiography.

The fourth and latest volume of this work deals with the history of chemistry in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Recent developments receive only brief treatment as information on these is freely available elsewhere. There are five parts. The first part is untitled and by far the longest, comprising over half the book. It deals, in roughly chronological order, with the development of general chemical theory from 1800 to the time of Kekulé. The remaining parts are the histories of, respectively, Physical, Organic, and Inorganic Chemistry, and Radioactivity and Atomic Structure. Broadly speaking, they cover the growth of the subject after the period in Part I, though there is inevitably a good deal of reference to earlier work.

The method of treatment in the first Part is to group a series of related developments into a chapter entitled with the name of the worker chiefly associated with them. This plan involves inclusion of much incidental biographical material which is of great interest but is sometimes a distraction from the main theme. It works well with a giant like Berzelius (Ch. V) but is less successful with others, Laurent for example (Ch. XII). The dangers of the 'great man' approach to the history of science are accentuated by this method of treatment, but the author is clearly aware of this, and does his best to avoid them. Chapters on early electrochemistry, atomic weights, early organic chemistry and the theory of types enable these topics to be discussed more

* Published in *Medical History*, 1964, 8, 199-216.