

Book Reviews

naval hospital where he gained good general experience. Then his health became poor and he went on half pay for a time, during which he spent a year at Smyrna and Renkioi (in the Crimean War), and even began practice in London and gained an appointment at the Samaritan Hospital, which at that time was an insignificant place. He retired from the Navy in 1856 and concentrated on surgical work at the Samaritan, which he soon made famous by his operations for ovarian tumours. He did not equal the brilliance of Lawson Tait but he made a great impression on the surgical profession by keeping and publishing a full and faithful record of all the operations he performed. He gradually modified his technique, adopted the antiseptic methods, and proved to all impartial observers that ovariectomy was a justifiable life-saving operation. Moreover he showed that other operations within the abdomen could safely be performed and thus prepared the way for further advances.

Spencer Wells prospered, was elected to the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons and became President of that august body in 1883. He supported Sir Henry Thompson in his advocacy of cremation, bought an estate at Golders Green, and died in 1897. He won through, not by brilliance nor originality, but by determination and by the honesty with which he recorded all his work.

This book needed to be written and Mr. Shepherd has done his task well. The illustrations are numerous and excellent and the significant design on the book cover is by the author's wife.

ZACHARY COPE

The Evolution of Pharmacy in Britain, ed. by F. N. L. POYNTER, London, Pitman Medical Publishing Company, 1965, pp. 240, 37s. 6d.

This book is a collection of papers on the rise and development of British pharmacy, read at the Fourth British Congress on the History of Medicine and Pharmacy held at the University of Nottingham in September 1963. A masterly introduction by Professor G. E. Trease on how the trader in spices became the apothecary and medical practitioner, the druggist and the pharmacist, is followed by a paper from Dr. T. D. Whittet on his specialized knowledge of the important part that has been played by pharmacy in our hospitals since Roman times. We may hope that Miss G. M. Watson's 'Some trading accounts in the eighteenth century' will encourage more research on the little we know of provincial hospital pharmacy in that century. The history of the adulteration of drugs is dealt with by F. G. Stock of the Birmingham Analytical Laboratory, that of their presentation by C. Gunn of the Leicester University School of Pharmacy, and that of their standards by Dr. Betty Jackson of Sunderland Technical College. The origins of professional education are summarized by Dr. M. P. Earles; Dr. R. S. Roberts outlines his recent excellent study of the import of drugs, and Mrs. Margaret Stiles shows how the Quakers have maintained the reputation of pharmacists since the seventeenth century.

When we add to these studies, all written with the clarity of deep knowledge, the learned survey of herbals and formularies by L. G. Matthews, we have a volume that not only covers the technical aspects of the subject, but also throws valuable light on its place in our social history.

R. R. TRAIL