

## Society Reports

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### NORWEGIAN SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

THE first meeting of 1959 was held on 19 March, when Professor Olav Torgersen, M.D., gave an address on Rudolf Virchow and the rise of cellular pathology. Professor Torgersen, who is himself a pathologist, gave a very interesting account of Virchow's life and of the significance of his work. The many-sided character of Virchow's genius was brought out in the subsequent discussion by Professor Axel Stroem, M.D., Professor E. Schjøtt-Rivers, M.D. and Prosector Bernhard Getz, M.D. These speakers dealt briefly with Virchow's achievements in hygiene, social medicine, bacteriology and anthropology respectively.

To conclude the meeting the Chairman, Professor Axel Stroem, M.D., gave a short account of the life of Norwegian district physicians in the middle of the nineteenth century.

At the next meeting of the society Professor Folke Henschen, M.D., the well known pathologist, will speak about 'Emanuel Swedenborg's Skull'.

BERNHARD GETZ

### SECTION OF MEDICAL HISTORY IN THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (Victorian Branch)

A MEETING of the Section held on 8 December 1958, was devoted to a talk by Mrs. R. G. Casey on the life of her father, Sir Charles Snodgrass Ryan, who was born on 20 September 1853, and became one of Melbourne's leading surgeons in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Mrs. Casey dealt with her father's background and education, the highlights of his career and some sidelights on the medical scene of his day. From her childhood memories Mrs. Casey was able to recall Ryan's life in his residence in Collins Street and his friendship with such men as Hamilton Russell, R. H. Stawell and Felix Meyer. A man of great personal courage, Ryan had served as a young man as a medical officer attached to the Turkish forces in the Russo-Turkish War. In after-life, he was fond of recounting anecdotes of his campaigns, wrote a book, *Under the Red Crescent*, about his experiences with the Turks. He also became Consul-General for Turkey in Melbourne. Before the federation of the Australian States, Ryan was, for a time, Principal Medical Officer to the Victorian Military Forces. From 1903 to 1924 he was Chief Medical Officer to the Victorian Railways. He served on the Honorary Medical Staff and was later consultant-surgeon to both the Melbourne Hospital and the Children's Hospital. At the age of sixty, Ryan served on General Birdwood's staff at Gallipoli opposite his old friends, the Turks, still wearing the Turkish decorations he had won at Plevna thirty-seven years before. His death on 23 October 1926, brought a colourful life to a close.

At a meeting of the Section held on 24 February 1959, the speaker was an overseas visitor, Dr. E. T. Renbourn, from the Physiological Establishment of the Ministry of Supply. The subject of Dr. Renbourn's paper was 'The Chills of Damp Cold, an Historical Survey'. In tracing the development of various concepts on the effects of