

Society Report

Since the *Annals* of the College contain no record of an approach having been made to the College for this purpose, and since Palmer may have been relying on hearsay, I am wondering what foundation there is in fact for this story.

I should be interested to hear from any of your readers if they have any other evidence to produce in its support.

Yours faithfully,

E. C. DODDS

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON'S ACCOUNT OF A SCHIZOPHRENIC ILLNESS IN *RASSELAS*: A POSTSCRIPT

As further proof of Samuel Johnson's influence on nineteenth-century psychiatry (*Med. Hist.*, 1962, 6, 162–8) chapter thirteen of Oliver Wendell Holmes's *A Mortal Antipathy* (1885) deserves attention. The physician Dr. Butts, who is interested equally in the mind and the body, reads a paper for the improvement of all young people who are thinking of pursuing the study of medicine. In this paper he recommends *Rasselas* to his audience and cites a lengthy passage from the astronomer episode. The subject is introduced thus:

But if you ask me what reading I would commend to the medical student of a philosophical habit of mind, you may be surprised to hear me say it would be certain passages in *Rasselas*. They are the ones where the astronomer gives an account to Imlac of his management of the elements. . . . Let me read you a few sentences from this story. . . .

Begin your medical studies, then, by reading the fortieth and the following four chapters of *Rasselas*. Your first lesson will teach you modesty and caution in the pursuit of the most deceptive of all practical branches of knowledge. Faith will come later. . . .

KATHLEEN M. GRANGE

Society Report

FACULTY OF THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE AND PHARMACY

THE Faculty's Third Annual Report was presented to the Annual General Meeting held at Apothecaries' Hall on Wednesday, 18 April 1962. Dr. W. S. C. Copeman, the Chairman, said that it was a record of gratifying progress, with increasing membership, a number of successful meetings, and an extension of the Faculty's influence in the medical schools. Enrolments for the Second British Congress on the History of Medicine and Pharmacy held in September 1961 showed a fifty per cent increase on those for the first congress. The congress theme—Chemistry in the Service of Medicine—had stimulated a number of thoughtful and informative papers from the distinguished contributors and these would shortly be available in volume form. The Congress Dinner given at Apothecaries' Hall had been graced by the presence of the President of The Royal Society, Sir Howard Florey, as guest of honour, and Sir Alexander Todd (now Lord Todd), the President of The Chemical Society (which

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co-operated in the organization of the Congress), delivered an address which was a most persuasive plea for the support of research in the universities.

Owing to an unfortunate and belated change of the dates for the International Pharmaceutical Federation meeting in Vienna in September 1962, it had been necessary to change the venue and the theme for the third congress. This had already been arranged for Nottingham, the subject being the History of Pharmacy in Britain. The third congress would now be held in London, from 26 to 28 September, and the subject would be The Evolution of British Hospitals. The Chairman was pleased to be able to announce that the Lord Mayor of London and his Sheriffs had already accepted an invitation to attend the Congress Dinner. Enrolment forms and further details may be obtained from the Honorary Secretary, Dr. Poynter.

The Chairman was also pleased to report the remarkable developments whereby, on the Faculty's initiative, no less than seven of the leading medical schools had now formally appointed 'Society of Apothecaries Lecturers in the History of Medicine'.

After the report had been received without discussion, the Chairman admitted Dr. Walter Pagel to the Faculty's Honorary Fellowship and presented special commemorative medals to Founder-Members of the Faculty.

Lord Cohen of Birkenhead then delivered the annual Gideon de Laune Lecture, his subject being the little-known but most interesting nineteenth-century pathologist, James Carson of Liverpool, who challenged Harvey's thesis on the *causes* of the circulation of the blood. This lecture will be published in full in the next issue of *Medical History*.

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Georg Ernst Stahl, Über der mannigfaltigen Einfluss von Gemütsbewegungen auf den menschlichen Körper (Halle 1695) und drei weitere Arbeiten, translated with introduction and notes by B. J. GOTTLIEB, and genealogical appendix on the Stahl Family by R. ZAUNICK, *Sudhoff's Klassiker der Medizin*, vol. xxxvi, Leipzig, J. A. Barth, 1961, 88 pp., illus., DM6.30.

GEORG ERNST STAHL (1659–1734) is remembered today for the introduction of the *Soul* into Medicine—whereby he countered the somewhat crude and naïve interpretations of vital processes offered by the Iatro chemists and Iatro physicists. He is also remembered for the *Phlogiston* theory. In this combustion is attributed to an inflammable component of the burning substance which is released into the air—the *Sulphur* of the alchemists. In neither of these concepts was Stahl fortunate. His *Soul* was imagined to enter, enliven, sustain, and command an otherwise lifeless body. It was an undefinable metaphysical being endowed with totalitarian power and even embraced the rational soul. Stahl thus harked back to Cartesian Dualism with all its remoteness from biological reality—instead of developing the sound biological idea of the stratification and mutual integration of 'vital' and 'physical' processes. Through this Van Helmont had arrived at the concept of a unified organism with psychic and physical aspects. Yet like the *Phlogiston* theory Stahl's speculations on the Soul were fruitful and influential. They helped to establish our knowledge con-