

The Physician and Witchcraft in Restoration England

varying degrees of acceptance of a traditional view of divine or diabolic causation of disease, where disease was related to spiritual substance. As often seen historically in cases of demoniacal possession and mental illness, the physician frequently referred the problem entirely to the domain of the clergy. A disease model for the possessed, the deluded, and the melancholic often did not exist within the theoretical framework of the practice of medicine. Though not rejecting divine or diabolic causation, Webster did emphasize the need for viewing a large segment of witches in terms of a disease model related to passive delusions and melancholy. This re-emphasis on the earlier views of Weyer and Scot during this period of literary war regarding the reality of witchcraft led to a sound medical understanding of many of the phenomena of witchcraft, and to a final decline in its belief.

News, Notes and Queries

THE HARVEY FILM

The publication of Harvey's *De Motu Cordis* was an important event in the history of Medicine, so a silent black and white film was made by Sir Thomas Lewis and Sir Henry Dale for the Royal College of Physicians' celebration of its tercentenary in 1928. This was a success, and turned out to be such an excellent demonstration of scientific method, that Sir Henry Dale presented to the College, in 1957 (the third centenary of Harvey's death), a new version of the film, in sound and colour. Besides a great number of individual showings in medical schools and universities all over the world, over 150 copies of the film were sold to such institutions. By 1970 the master copy was worn out, and it was impossible to meet the continuing demand, so in view of subsequent historical researches which have led to a better understanding of the development of Harvey's thought, and of improvements in film technique, it was decided to make a new film.

The film begins with a description of Harvey's education and the teachers who influenced his views. It makes full use of historical documents and portraits, and of sequences specially filmed on location in Padua and England. Then follows an account of the theories of Galen, current in Harvey's time, on the movement of blood in the body: this is presented with animated diagrams. The film continues with the observations which led Harvey to the provisional hypothesis of the circulation, and the rest of the film is concerned with Harvey's experimental work in proof of this hypothesis. The actual experiments are repeated with meticulous care, and the commentary is derived from Harvey's own writings.

The film is in 16mm. colour, with optical soundtrack: it lasts forty minutes. Exhibition is restricted to medical and educational audiences. Copies are now available for hire or purchase, and modern production techniques make it possible to offer the new film at the advantageous price of £135 per copy, postage extra. Details can be obtained from the Harveian Librarian, Royal College of Physicians, London NW1.