

Society Reports

thinking, had a bias towards romanticism. Despite the realization of the futility of the philosophical systems of the eighteenth century, the discoveries that had been made in the basic sciences had not yet influenced the practice of medicine. Diagnosis still depended on unaided observation while treatment was aimed at aiding the healing powers of Nature, for, to the romantic, nature was divine. Men spoke of the priesthood of medicine and a high value was placed on medical ethics.

In the *Interim Period* from 1840 to 1860 it became possible to express disease in terms of changes detectable by precise chemical and physical methods, but doctors reacted in various ways to the new discoveries. Some accepted them wholeheartedly and tended to regard practice as simply science carried to the bedside. Others, still influenced by the romantic movement, based their practice on a religiously tinted biology and pathology. Others again opposed both scientific and speculative approaches and relied on experience. On the whole, practising doctors realized that there was more to medicine than the mere application of science and that it was a personal art.

The trends in the *Scientific Period*, which extended from about 1860 to the turn of the century, were again a facet of the general cultural life of the country. Medicine was regarded as an applied science and measurable reproducible accuracy was demanded. Nevertheless the bulk of practising doctors appreciated the fact that the primary aim of medicine was not scientific investigation but the welfare of the patient. It still remained an art. Thus, throughout a century of revolutionary change, the Hippocratic tradition remained the backbone of medical practice in Germany.

NORWEGIAN SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

At a meeting of the Society held at the Damms Bokhus in Oslo on 3 November 1960, Professor Kristian Kristiansen was elected President of the Society in succession to Professor Axel Stroem, who had held that office since the foundation of the Society in 1956. The other members of the Committee are Drs. Nic. Aa. Sverre, Eiler H. Schiottz, Jan H. Solem and Bernhard Getz. The membership has just passed one hundred.

Hans Gabriel Dedichen gave a talk entitled 'Chlorosis and the Corset'. In the course of his fascinating lecture, he showed how chlorosis or the 'green-sickness' had been extremely common during the time that tight lacing was in fashion, and how it had disappeared with the adoption of more rational attire by young women.

Stian W. Erichsen spoke about 'Radesyken', a chronic skin disease occurring in Southern Norway in the latter part of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century. Radesyken seems to have been a manifestation of syphilis, but it was, until about 1850, regarded as being a form of leprosy. The speaker also gave some interesting information about the early development of Norwegian hospitals and health services.

Finally Dr. Kristiansen expressed the thanks of the members to Dr. Stroem for all that he had done for the Society during his term of office as President.

BERNHARD GETZ