

Book Reviews

history. Cowen has already identified himself with New Jersey's medical interests in many publications, notably his *Medicine and Health in New Jersey: A History* (Vol. 16 of the New Jersey Historical Series, 1964) and the present volume is only one more manifestation of his wide-ranging interests in pharmaceutical history.

Out of an ill-assorted group of pharmacy practitioners, whose varying degrees of competence stimulated New Jersey medical men in 1869 to form a 'Committee on Dispensers of Medicine', came a determination by Newark (N.J.) pharmacists to organize themselves for the advancement of their profession. This they did first by forming a State Pharmaceutical Association, next by seeking legislation that would protect the public until the Association's own rules should guarantee safety in medicines. How successful were the founding members in attaining their objectives proves a fascinating story. The pharmacists' professional relationships with doctors, and with the public, increased their confidence in themselves and within seven years of their formation they secured legislation to form a New Jersey Board of Pharmacy. In subsequent nation-wide movements for the betterment of pharmacy this Association was always to the fore.

Inevitably it was individuals who carried the major burden, notably the presidents and secretaries. The author particularly summarizes two leaders in New Jersey pharmacy—G. M. Beringer, Sr., a Remington medallist, known as 'The Glycerin Man' for his new processes relating to glycerates, and F. B. Kilner, writer on scientific topics, who became a Director of the Scientific Laboratories of Johnson & Johnson in 1889.

The scope and direction of the Association increased: its members made important contributions to the revising of the U.S. Pharmacopoeia and, as the author shows, added weight to all legislative proposals for the good of pharmacy and for the greater protection of the public. They made no mean advance when they set up the New Jersey College of Pharmacy and a 'University of the State of New Jersey', later to become known as 'The College of Jersey City'.

The author's compilation of a Biographical Register of members of the Association throughout the whole century of its activities is a task few would undertake. Fortunately the records are reasonably complete but the byeways have had to be well searched. Illustrations of the leaders of the Association and vignettes of personalities and of the practice of pharmacy over the period add point and purpose to this narrative. In a Foreword, Glenn Sonnedecker, Director of the American Institute of the History of Pharmacy, Wisconsin, rightly notes: 'The author tells us much that we did not know about the evolution of pharmacy in one of our oldest States'. In the opinion of the reviewer this history will serve as a model for any other State Pharmaceutical Association intending to have its history written and it will indeed be fortunate if it can find another Professor Cowen to undertake it with the success and scholarship that the author has brought to the present volume.

LESLIE G. MATTHEWS

The Changing Scene in General Practice, by LAURENCE DOPSON, London, Johnson Publications, 1971, pp. 248, £2.50.

The general practitioner has had much with which to contend during the last twenty years. State medicine came and brought with it all the difficulties that changes in customs which had existed for centuries were bound to create. At the same time the

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advances in medical science brought other no less important changes. The kind of disease which the doctor meets today is vastly different from that which he was seeing before the second world war. Hospital care is easier to obtain, acute illness such as pneumonia is quickly cured, even the common measles has lost much of its sting. Many more family doctors practise in groups and in so doing have ceased to some extent to be the guides, philosophers and friends of their patients that their predecessors were. The isolated doctor of the past, tied to his surgery with only the help of his wife may not have had so bad a time as has been pictured by such writers as Francis Brett Young, for there were fewer distractions and the telephone was not in those days a universal method of communication. The doctor had to be summoned by messenger, roads were not good, and horses might have to be saddled before he could be fetched. When he saw his patient he had little to offer in the way of cure: diagnosis and prognosis were his forte, comforting words and dietetic precepts, reinforced by galenicals were his *modus operandi*. Today he can prescribe potent remedies for most of the serious diseases which he meets, but he still remains powerless to deal with the lesser ills which beset mankind and truth to say he little understands them. To hedge himself off from the necessity of meeting with this embarrassment he has surrounded himself with a team of helpers graced with the title of ancillary staff.

The book under review is written by a journalist who has specialized in medical politics and has watched from the side-lines the development of this revolution in medical practice. It is the struggles for better remuneration and conditions of service that especially interest him for it is these struggles that are newsworthy. During most of the time covered by his book another movement was developing; an attempt to bring the patient better service, and to the doctor greater satisfaction in his work. On this aspect of the revolution in practice the author is weak. He mentions the Royal College of General Practitioners more or less in passing and gives the wrong date for its foundation, yet the effect of the college on the future of medical practice in this country has been great and is continuing.

One of the most valuable features of the book is the very complete list of references.

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