

The book is singularly free of charms and astrology, but even these creep in. In detailing the treatment of worms Dr. Pemell writes: 'Note also if one medicine do not bring away Worms, that you must use variety of medicines or continue one medicine for some time, at about the full of the Moon give your medicine at the least two or three dayes together.' And for the cure of the 'Falling Sickness and Convulsions' he advises: 'Hang about the neck of the childe a thin slice of Piony or white Briony roots as green as you can.'

Pemell is a friendly writer and addresses his book to the 'kind reader', submitting it 'to thy Charitable censure desiring my good will and affection may be accepted'.

WILLIAM BROCKBANK

## THE STUDY OF THE HISTORY OF PHARMACY IN GREAT BRITAIN

THE interest in drug jars, mortars and pill tiles for their merit as works of art has been heightened in late years by the increasing sale-room prices. This has tended to cause the study of pharmacy to be neglected in favour of the acquisition of collections of material deriving from the early apothecary's shop or pharmacy. So much has this overshadowed the main subject in this country that few important books relating to it have been published, and pharmacy has for the most part been overlooked in the many publications dealing with the broad stream of medical history.

The development of pharmacy as an art and science, distinct yet complementary to medicine, took many centuries. Some degree of specialization was worked out in the days of the monastic hospitals, but it was not until the introduction of chemical medicines, requiring for their preparation more expertise than the galenical apothecary possessed that manufacture became the domain of the chemist and druggist. The ancestry of the present-day pharmacist is, according to Cripps (*Pharm. J.*, 1955, cxxi, 444), the druggist and not the apothecary. The owners of the family wholesale drug businesses and the chemical manufacturers of the eighteenth century were largely responsible for the improvement in methods of manufacture on a large scale, leading to the establishment at the end of the nineteenth century of specialized research laboratories in which the active principles of crude drugs could be identified, new synthetic remedies discovered and their pharmacology determined. In this way the secret remedy gave place to the accurate medicament for specific treatment. All this opens up a wide field of inquiry for the historian of pharmacy.

Since the founding of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain in 1841 numerous similar societies have been formed in the Commonwealth, alike

concerned with the education and training of the pharmacist in the service of the public. The first major publication in the United Kingdom concerned with the historical aspects of pharmacy was Bell and Redwood's *Progress of Pharmacy* (1880). Then came C. J. S. Thompson's *Mystery and Romance of Alchemy and Pharmacy* (1897) to be followed by a related series, including the *Mystery and Art of the Apothecary* (1929). Wootton's *Chronicles of Pharmacy* (1910) recorded much information on early pharmacists, drugs and their vendors. In *Plough Court* (1917) E. C. Cripps gave the history of the two-century-old pharmacy of the firm of Allen and Hanburys, extending this by an account of the firm itself in *Through a City Archway* (Chapman-Huston and Cripps, 1954). Mention should be made of Grier's *History of Pharmacy* (1937) and of Geoffrey E. Howard's *Early English Drug Jars* (1931), which in addition to tracing the origin of decorated jars and pill tiles called attention to their merit as collectors' pieces and stimulated great interest in them as fine examples of delft.

Other important contributions have figured chiefly as occasional papers in the pharmaceutical Press, and here the special annual issues of the *Chemist and Druggist* have been noteworthy.

For something like thirty years the late William Kirkby and Howard Bayles were thoroughgoing in the search for authentic and out-of-the-way material, and their work, and that of E. Saville Peck on mortars, not only kept the subject alive but served as a considerable stimulus to the pharmaceutically minded. During World War II when the zest for destruction of material was at its height, attention was called to the loss that would result if documents of value to pharmacy were sent for pulping—fortunately many of importance were saved, some finding their way into county archives. The subject of pharmacy as an historical study grew, and suggestions began to reach the Pharmaceutical Society that a study group be formed—Britain was lagging behind. In 1952, therefore, the Society's Council invited a number of its members known to be interested to constitute a committee which was to concern itself with fostering the study of the subject, with the recording and preservation of objects of historical interest and with their acquisition where appropriate by the Society. In addition it was intended there should be participation in international activities.

The committee at once invited all members of the Society to report what material was available in their own pharmacies, in hospitals and in manufacturing houses, and the help of a number of correspondents throughout the country was enlisted to assist in recording local information. The results over the last few years have been rewarding—much information has been gathered, the existence of old-established pharmacies and businesses traced and many valuable documents and pieces of apparatus, some centuries old,

### *News, Notes and Queries*

have been unearthed. Local interest has been further stimulated by occasional local exhibitions of material and by contributions to the Press relating to pharmacy in the area. Important papers concerning the development of pharmacy in hospitals have appeared, as well as articles illustrating the changes in drug jar forms and decoration. Discussion meetings have been arranged and contact made with societies having similar interests in many countries, enhanced during the meeting in London in 1955 of the Union Mondiale and the Academie Internationale d'Histoire de la Pharmacie when papers from many countries were offered. Material so far acquired includes a notable collection of old proprietary medicines of the last two centuries, apothecaries' tokens of the seventeenth century, series of apothecaries' bills of the eighteenth century and many early prescription books. The records of a wholesale business from mid-eighteenth century, including what are believed to be the earliest extant shipping bills to Tobago in 1772, have been made available for study.

The first two numbers of a bulletin to keep correspondents in touch with the subject have been issued. Theses upon selected subjects have already been accepted for post-graduate degrees. Interest is steadily growing, and publications in Great Britain now deserve to rank alongside those of countries where the history of pharmacy has been long established as a discipline.

LESLIE G. MATTHEWS

### VIDUS VIDIUS (1508-69)

THOSE who went to hear Dr. William Brockbank's Thomas Vicary lecture on 'The Man who was Vidius' found themselves transported in spirit from Lincoln's Inn Fields to the Italy and France of the Renaissance. This was no dry recital of dates and titles, but a vivid word-picture of the life and work of a celebrated physician and anatomist set against the background of his time. The lecture has now been made generally available by its publication in the November 1956 issue of the *Annals of the Royal College of Surgeons of England* (Vol. 19, pp. 269-95). The name of Vidus Vidius (Guido Guidi) appears in the histories of medicine as that of the author of a beautifully illustrated book on surgery and as one of the innumerable anatomical eponyms.

Guido Guidi was born in Florence on 10 February 1508, as Dr. Brockbank has for the first time established by his researches on the spot. His father was a physician and his mother was the daughter of the famous painter Domenico Ghirlandajo. He practised medicine and surgery in his native city and made such a reputation that he was in 1542 invited by Francis I,