

News, Notes and Queries

literary papers, of which Dr. Guthrie also gives a brief account, show how widespread were the activities of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in the earlier days of its existence. Purely 'scientific' papers are not dealt with, but Dr. Guthrie concludes his interesting survey by observing that 'a perusal of early volumes of the *Transactions* will repay any modern scientist, if only because of the clear and readable style in which the matter is presented'.

W. J. B.

THE WÜRZBURG POLYCLINIC

THE part played by historiography in the building up of tradition is well exemplified in the growing literature on the history of individual hospitals and medical schools. The latest to come to our notice is a well-documented and comprehensive history of the University Polyclinic at Würzburg.* The tradition of medical teaching in Würzburg is traced back, through Van Swieten in Vienna, to his master Boerhaave and the Leyden school, and its development in the nineteenth century is shown in the biographies of the leading medical men who were associated with it. The history of the hospital buildings is also given in detail with photographs and plans, and it is good to see that the delightful eighteenth-century pharmacy of the Juliusspital (illustrated on p. 4) is preserved so carefully today. The fine new hospital which was opened in 1954, of which there are many views, both internal and external, is likely to make British doctors envious.

F. N. L. POYNTER

AGOSTINO BASSI (1773-1856)

AGOSTINO BASSI (1773-1856) is remembered as a pioneer in bacteriology and the founder of medical mycology for his discovery that a disease of silkworms was caused by an invading plant parasite. When the centenary of his death was commemorated in 1956 one of the permanent results of the occasion was a sumptuously produced and illustrated volume entitled *Documenti Bassiani*. This was edited by Luigi Belloni and published for the 57th congress of the Italian Society of Internal Medicine by the Ciba Company in Italy. Among the admirable illustrations are two portraits of Bassi in full colour, facsimiles of letters and pages from MSS. as well as reproductions of the beautiful plates with which Bassi illustrated his original paper on silkworm disease. The quality of the production, like that of other recent Italian publications, is outstanding.

F. N. L. P.

THE TRENT LIBRARY

THE Rare Book Room is becoming a prized historical sanctuary in the medical libraries of America. In April 1956 I had the privilege of attending the moving and impressive ceremony which attended the opening of the Trent Library in the Medical School of Duke University at Durham, North Carolina. This extraordinary collection of 40,000 volumes, which included a first edition of Harvey's *De Motu Cordis* and other

* Die Würzburger Medizinische Universitäts-Poliklinik, 1807-1957. By H. Franke, E. Schröder and J. Schröder. Stuttgart, G. Thieme Verlag, 1957, pp. x, 123, 31 illus. 8vo. 15 DM.

News, Notes and Queries

treasures, was built up by a young thoracic surgeon who died before he was forty, and it was given to his university by his widow. News of a similar event, this time at the University of Alabama Medical Centre, has just reached me. Dr. Lawrence Reynolds, a native of Alabama but now living in Detroit, has just given to his alma mater a collection of rare books and other items of medical historical interest which is valued at half a million dollars. The new library was solemnly dedicated at the university on 2 February with over a thousand people present at the ceremony. The Reynolds Library, which includes original Pasteur letters among its treasures, is the first unit of a proposed new medical library. Here again is tradition in the making, a fascinating study in the migration of cultures, with the best of the old world being drawn upon to redress the balance of the new.

F. N. L. POYNTER

VICTOR ROBINSON LECTURE

GEORGE ROSEN, M.D., PH.D., Columbia University Faculty of Medicine, gave the First Annual Victor Robinson Lecture in History of Medicine at Temple University School of Medicine on 23 September 1958. His topic was: 'Victor Robinson—A Romantic Medical Historian'.

This lectureship, named in honour of Dr. Victor Robinson, Professor of History of Medicine at Temple University from 1929 until his death in 1947, was appropriately initiated by Dr. Rosen, who was a personal friend of Dr. Robinson.

Dr. Rosen is the author of *The History of Miners' Diseases* (1934), *A Short History of Public Health* (1958), and many other books. He is also editor of the *American Journal of Public Health*.

MEDICINE IN AUSTRALIA

INTEREST in the history of medicine in Australia is by no means a new phenomenon, but even those who are aware of it will be surprised that it has already produced a bibliography ample enough to fill a volume.* Dr. Bryan Gandevia, who is Honorary Curator of the Medical History Museum of the Medical Society of Victoria in Melbourne, took the opportunity offered by a prolonged stay in Britain to complete a task which he had begun at home and his classified and annotated bibliography of Australian medical history forms an admirable framework on which we hope the author will find time to erect a full-scale history. Even in its present form it is an indispensable reference book for any medical library which caters for its readers' historical interests. It contains information which can be found elsewhere only with difficulty and after long search. Sir Gordon Gordon-Taylor, whose Syme Oration in 1947 was on 'The debt of surgical science to Australasia', contributes a characteristically charming introduction. The completion of the work was assisted by a grant from the Wellcome Foundation, and it is published as the first of the monographs of the Federal Council of the British Medical Association in Australia.

F. N. L. P.

* An annotated bibliography of the history of medicine in Australia. By Bryan Gandevia, M.D. (Melbourne), M.R.A.C.P. Sydney, Australasian Medical Publishing Company Limited, 1957, pp. 140. £1 15s. 0d.