

Book Notices

societies throughout the world. Among them was the Københavnske Mediciniske Selskab in 1772 and the Medical Society of London in 1773. Each has preserved more or less its original form and purposes and now they each celebrate their bicentenary with a commemorative volume. The differences between the two books are considerable.

J. Genner, a young Danish historian of medicine, has compiled a history of the Copenhagen Society and provides not only an excellent survey of its evolution, but in addition an important addition to the historiography of Danish medicine. He provides information on comparable and contemporary events in other countries and so avoids the tiresome parochialism so characteristic of exercises of this nature. His data is almost exclusively from the records of the society, many of which previously have been only in manuscript. Dr. Genner wisely avoids detailed biographical accounts of the more outstanding members of the society, there being other readily available sources for these. Documentation is good and name and subject indexes are adequate. The translation is, on the whole, commendable, although there are a few errors here and there. This book can be recommended as a praiseworthy contribution to the history of medical communication and one that authors accepting a similar challenge would do well to peruse.

The Medical Society of London 1773–1973 is in a different vein. For, on the whole, it is more biographical and parochial. Chapters deal with the society's founder, John Coakley Lettsom (1744–1815), and its medical background, its influence on medicine and the community, some of its presidents and orators, its Library, *Transactions*, finances, and future. The chapters are uneven in quality and when we read that "There is no doubt that the French Revolution brought the pre-eminence of French medicine to an end . . ." when, in fact, the reverse was the case, our confidence in the essayist as an historian falters. There are only a few references and a lot of the material is very well known. However, it is a pleasant little book well printed and nicely illustrated, which commemorates a distinguished and renowned society, whose first law was ". . . the Advancement of the Science of Medicine and Surgery Exclusively". Two hundred years later this is still its praiseworthy, primary objective.

BOOKS ALSO RECEIVED

(The inclusion of a title in this list does not preclude the possibility of subsequent review.)

Bibliography of the history of medicine, no. 7, 1971, Bethesda, Md., National Library of Medicine, 1974, pp. 263, [no price stated].

COMENGE Y FERRER, L., *La medicina en el reino de Aragón (siglo XIV)*, Universidad de Valladolid, Seminario de Historia de la Medicina (Acta Historico-Medica Vallisoletana, no. 3), 1974, pp. 91, illus., [no price stated].

GERSTNER, P. A., *The care and exhibition of medical history museum objects*, Cleveland, Ohio, Howard Dittrick Museum of Historical Medicine (Health Sciences Information Series, vol. 1, no. 6), 1974, pp. ix, 47, \$1.75.

KÖHL, M., *The morality of killing. Sanctity of life, abortion, and euthanasia*, London, Peter Owen, 1974, pp. xiv, 112, £3.25.