

some understanding of the considerations upon which that judgment rested. There was evidence from the ancient world that it was possible to achieve such a philosophy and to live by it. During the late fifth and fourth centuries B.C. the problem confronting Greek thinkers was in many respects similar to our own—namely, the impact of a scientific view of life on accepted values. Plato asked: What is good? In what kind of State can the good life be lived? And these were questions to which we too must attempt to provide an answer. Referring to Aristotle's view of the good life as the exercise of man's highest functions, the life of reason, Sir Richard recognized both the value of this view and its limitations. Its weakness was the weakness of Greek thought: so defined, the good life could be lived only by a minority. A corrective was necessary, and could be found in the Christian view of the good life as the life of love.

Sir Richard finally referred to the need for a book on ethics which would be both modern and practical. The author of such a book would have to take the Aristotelian approach, and until the book was written we could usefully turn once again to Aristotle. He had at least asked the pertinent questions, and his emphasis on the use of reason pointed to a philosophy. Without such a philosophy we should find that:

"The centre cannot hold; things fall apart.
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world."

WESTMINSTER MEDICAL SCHOOL

Address by Master of Balliol

The inaugural ceremony at Westminster Medical School took place at Church House, Westminster, on October 4. The chair was taken by Mr. H. M. CLOWES, chairman of the School Council, and an address was delivered by Sir DAVID LINDSAY-KEIR, Master of Balliol.

Sir David Lindsay-Keir said that he happened to be chairman of governors of the most recently established teaching hospital in the kingdom. They in Oxford had long been accustomed to the teaching of preclinical subjects; moreover, in more recent years they had through the munificence of Lord Nuffield the opportunity of becoming associated with the advancement of medical research. But in the teaching of clinical medicine they were still beginners, and it was very heartening to him that day to be associated with the traditions established by one of the great hospitals and medical schools of London.

He proceeded to speak of the conquests of medicine during the last two hundred years—during, in fact, the history of Westminster Hospital—particularly in the field of tropical medicine. For many centuries in large parts of the world human development and sometimes the very possibility of human life had been restricted, halted, driven into retreat by environmental factors which man had been unable to influence or to control. During the last 200 years there had arisen an entirely new situation. Man was no longer on the defensive. Armed with the discoveries of medical science, a revolution in human affairs had come about for which western medicine was primarily responsible. But even more important than the knowledge, the technology, and the equipment which western medicine had brought to the elimination of disease was the dedication, the wisdom, the character, the sympathy of the men and women who, trained in their art, had brought the benefits of medicine to the masses of mankind.

The Dean, Mr. H. E. HARDING, in his report, said that the Academic Board would shortly have before it the question of the development policy for the next quinquennium. Plans for the clinical departments had had to be altered for lack of space. In the department of pathology alone had building development been possible. A new pathology department had been built in Vincent Square which would also provide routine pathological services for the Children's and the Gordon Hospitals. The purchase of 28 acres of land in Surrey—15 acres of which were now in full use—had given the School admirable playing-fields.

Reports of Societies

MIDLAND MEDICAL SOCIETY CENTENARY

On October 13 the Midland Medical Society, one of the oldest medical societies in the country, celebrated the centenary of the election of its first president, Dr. James Johnstone, who assumed office in 1854. Dr. Johnstone was the son of Dr. Edward Johnstone, the first president of the Provincial Medical Association at Worcester, the forerunner of the B.M.A., and was himself elected to the presidency of the Association in 1856, when it assumed its present name. The Midland Medical Society's celebration took the form of a dinner at the Grand Hotel, Birmingham, which was attended by representatives of the City, the Church, the Law, and the University.

The origins of the Society appear to go back to 1841, when a group of local doctors formed the Queen's College Debating Society with the avowed object of advancing the knowledge of medicine and surgery. Later the name of the Society was changed to the Midland Medical Society. The history of the early days has been recorded by Professor A. P. Thomson, dean of the medical faculty at Birmingham, in an article published 30 years ago in the *Midland Medical Journal*, when Dr. Thomson, as he then was, was the Society's honorary secretary. The Society had difficulty in finding a permanent abode: it met at various times at Queen's College, in a room at the Birmingham Library, and at the Midland Institute, until in 1880 it finally settled at the Birmingham Medical Institute, its present headquarters.

In 1868 there was a crisis in the Society's affairs. Some members wished to open negotiations with the B.M.A. with a view to amalgamation. Opinions were sharply divided, but after a series of heated discussions the opponents of amalgamation won the day and the Society retained its identity. One of the notable features of the Society has been the long list of distinguished guest speakers who have delivered the inaugural address at each session. The list goes back unbroken, except for the two world wars, to 1870. Among the famous names are Lister, Jenner, Clifford Allbutt, Spencer Wells, Sidney Ringer, and Victor Horsley.

To-day, the Midland Medical Society under its president, Professor H. F. Humphreys, the Vice-Chancellor of Birmingham University, is as active as ever. It meets fortnightly, when the programme may be a clinical session or a lecture by a well-known medical man. To mark the centenary a presidential badge has been made, and is here illustrated. It is devised in four colours of gold, and incorporates, with the traditional rod and serpent of Aesculapius, two sprays of the foxglove in honour of Dr. William Withering, the eighteenth-century Midland medical practitioner who first applied digitalis to the treatment of heart disease.



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