

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

Four Centuries of Medical History in Canada, and a Sketch of the Medical History of Newfoundland.

BY JOHN J. HEAGERTY, M.D., D.P.H., with a preface by A. G. Doughty, C.M.G., F.R.S.C. 2 vols. 8°. Toronto, Macmillan Co. of Canada, Ltd., 1928.

As the Dominion archivist points out in his preface, the outstanding merit of this work is that the author, wherever possible, "allows contemporaries to tell their stories for themselves." It is a thoroughly documented history, based primarily upon findings in the Public Archives of Quebec, Ottawa and Montreal; while Jacques Cartier, Champlain and the Jesuit fathers tell, in their own language, of the effects of smallpox, yellow fever, plague, typhus fever, leprosy, cholera, influenza and other devastating diseases upon the immigrant population. For this purpose, the Canadian records are singularly complete, from the *Jesuit Records* and those of the sixteenth century explorers, down to the latest government documents. Although the author has modestly aimed to produce a reference work rather than a continuous story, his opening chapters on the outstanding diseases affecting the infant colony make very good reading, of particular value to the historian of the future. For it is just the effect of disease upon the course of history which has been most neglected by secular historians. Both Thucydides and Lucretius stress the social significance of the plague of Athens and Livy the effects of epidemic diseases upon Roman military campaigns; but the subject is ignored by Wells, nor does it receive any attention in the 20 large volumes of the "Cambridge History, Ancient and Modern." Dr. Heagerty's opening chapters show that communicable diseases kept down the immigrant population of the New World as effectively as in the older countries of sixteenth century Europe. His documentation of the theme is as thoroughgoing as that of Creighton ("History of Epidemics in Britain") and is a model for all future historians of medical developments in individual countries or nations. As Gjerset and Hektoen found in the Wisconsin records, the successive shiploads of immigrants were as a thin red line on the edge of battle until the arrival of a sufficient number of *bona fide* physicians to look after them. The pioneer physicians in the various provinces of Canada form the subject-matter of Part 2 of the first volume.

Of these Deschamps, Maître Estienne, Daniel Hay, Louis Hébert, Bonnerme, Duchesne, André Daniel, Robert Giffard, René Goupil, Jean Madry, Jourdain Lajus, Thimothée Roussel, Michael Sarrazin, the leading surgeon of seventeenth century Canada, and J. F. Gualthier, discoverer of the wintergreen plant (*Guaiacum procumbens*), are notable in the early history of Quebec; John Gilchrist, James MacAulay, Christopher Widmer, Grant

Powell, John Rolph, William Dunlop in Ontario; Abraham Gesner in Nova Scotia; Roderick MacDonald and Benjamin de St. Croix in Prince Edward Island; Desmarests, Curtis Bird and Sir John Schultz in the North West Territories; Tolmie and Helmcken in British Columbia; Jonathan Ogden, Francis Bradshaw and William Carson in Newfoundland.

The names of 22 French surgeons and apothecaries are found in the Quebec registers of 1629-63 and Heagerty lists the names of 42 French physicians practicing in Montreal during 1648-1760. As Carlyle said, Frederick's campaigns decided incidentally whether the upper half of the Western hemisphere was to be French or Anglo-Saxon. The first volume winds up with chapters on the earlier status of medical and surgical practice in Canada, the medical journals, the medical societies, the beginnings of military medicine and the development of public health departments in the different provinces. Bleeding, purging and sweating constituted the staples of medical practice; diphtheria was continuously epidemic up to the introduction of antitoxin (1894) and surgery was primitive prior to the discoveries of anesthesia (1847) and antiseptics (1867-77). Specialism began when Dr. Richard Andrews Reeve commenced practice in ophthalmology and otology in Toronto (1867). The first medical periodicals were the *Journal de médecine de Quebec* (January, 1826) and the *Montreal Medical Gazette* (1845). The first medical society was the Quebec Medical Society (1826). The earliest known Canadian medical publication is the *Direction pour la guérison du mal de la Baie St. Paul* (Quebec, 1785), a 16-page pamphlet in the Library of the Provincial Archives of Quebec.

The second volume is taken up with such public health developments as prevention of tuberculosis, nursing orders, Red Cross, mental and social hygiene, the Grenfell Mission, quarantine, vital statistics, legislation, with terminal chapters on the medical schools and hospitals. The first public health laws of Quebec were enacted in 1707. The first hospital was the Hôtel Dieu of Quebec (1639). Montreal General Hospital was founded in 1818, and around it grew up the earliest establishment for medical education, the Medical Faculty of McGill University (1822), the story of which has been told at length by Maude Abbott (1902). The first provision for organized care of the insane was the establishment of an asylum in a manor-house at Beaufort (1845). An appendix on the history of medicine in Newfoundland, an extensive bibliography and an index of contents close the work, which is profusely illustrated.

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