

News, Notes and Queries

very much in accord with the one I have given. I think it is true to say that although Sigerist did not himself pursue this line of enquiry he recognized its possibilities and was wholly sympathetic to it.

REFERENCES

1. This subject is discussed more fully in T. McKeown, 'A historical appraisal of the medical task', *Medical History and Medical Care*, (ed. G. McLachlan and T. McKeown), London, Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 27.
2. For a fuller discussion the reader is referred to T. McKeown, R. G. Brown and R. G. Record, 'An interpretation of the modern rise of population in Europe', *Population Studies*, 1972, 27, No. 3, p. 345.
3. Dr. Hutchinson suggests that this approach will erect 'philosophical and methodological barriers which could separate social historians of medicine from those who should be their closest colleagues.'

The Editor has received the following letter, commenting on 'The Struggle to Reform the Royal College of Physicians, 1767-1771: A Sociological Analysis' (Medical History, 1973, 17, 107-26).

In your April number, Ivan Waddington has discussed the edicts which prevented fellows of the Royal College of Physicians of London, from practising surgery and other manual disciplines. He has pointed out the important role played by Scottish graduates in the revolt against these rulings and has related this to the broader training received by Scottish, and especially Edinburgh, graduates. I agree entirely with all that he has written but I must point out that the situation was not peculiar to London. Certainly, Glasgow had the combined Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons, but in Edinburgh graduates faced the same circumstances as in London and at an earlier date. In 1707, the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, passed a resolution forbidding fellows to practise surgery and in 1750 pharmacy was likewise banned for fellows.¹ The ban even included dispensing medicines for one's own patients. These restrictions were extended in 1763 to include licentiates as well as fellows, so in this respect the situation was worse than in London. Perhaps it was the existence of these restrictions at a time when they had not been introduced in London which encouraged some Edinburgh graduates to migrate south and thus promoted the struggle which ensued in London.

Midwifery was added to the banned list for Edinburgh physicians in 1765 but this aspect was repealed in 1788 after a bitter struggle. It was not until 1823 that surgery and dispensing for one's own patients were permitted. Similar restrictions existed in Dublin where, in 1756, Sir Fielding Ould, was refused a licence to practise medicine because he was already licensed to practise midwifery.²

R. E. WRIGHT-ST. CLAIR

1. *Historical Sketch and Laws of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1925).
2. WIDDESS, J. D. H. *A History of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland*, Edinburgh, Livingstone, 1963.