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G. Rosen. Economic and Social Policy in Public Health, in Journal of the History of Medicine, 1953 [photocopie]

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- [\[anonyme ou collectif\] Journal of the history of medicine](#)
- [Rosen, Economic and Social Policy in Public Health, in Journal of the History of Medicine, 1953](#)

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trend was soon felt and paralleled outside London. By the end of the century, hospitals were to be found in most of the larger cities and towns of England, Scotland, and Ireland.²¹

But even while hospitals were being founded, it was realized that these institutions would have to be supplemented by some other kind of establishment. To fill this need the dispensary was developed. The dispensary idea may be traced to the seventeenth century, but it was not until 1769 that the first establishment of this type came into being. This was the Dispensary for the Infant Poor, opened by Dr. George Armstrong at a house in Red Lion Square, Holborn, London.²² The opening of Armstrong's dispensary was followed in 1770 by the founding of the General Dispensary by John Coakley Lettsom, a Quaker physician, and a group of associates.²³ Following the example set by Lettsom, dispensaries sprang up in London and the provinces. From 1770 through 1792, fifteen were founded in London, and from 1775 through 1798, thirteen in the provinces.

The causes of this expansive growth were varied, but they may be considered in two major categories: socio-economic and medical-scientific. These two elements are interdependent, but as some of the social and economic factors have already been mentioned, attention will be turned briefly to the changes in medicine that made knowledge available for use. The great scientific outburst of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had laid the foundation for the application of science to medicine. A basis for an accurate knowledge of the structure of the human body was created through simple, critical observation by Vesalius, his contemporaries, and his successors. From this knowledge both obstetrics and surgery were already able to benefit in the eighteenth century. Equally basic, though on a more complex level, was Harvey's discovery of the circulation, which provided a firm basis for consideration of the body as a functional system. Observation and classification also

²¹ M. C. Buer, *Health, wealth and population in the early days of the Industrial Revolution*. London, George Routledge & Sons, 1926, pp. 257-258; Connell, *op. cit.*, pp. 274-275.

²² Ernest Caulfield, *The infant welfare movement in the eighteenth century*. New York, Paul B. Hoeber, 1931, pp. 55-58, 146-176; Gray, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-134; A. M. Carr-Saunders and P. A. Wilson, *The professions*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1933, pp. 72-73; Harvey Cushing, Dr. Garth: The Kit-Kat Poet. *Bull. Johns Hopk. Hosp.* 1906, 17, 1-17. G. F. Still, *The history of pediatrics*. London, Oxford University Press, 1931, pp. 417-421.

²³ James Johnston Abraham, *Lettsom, his life, times, friends and descendants*. London, William Heinemann, 1933, pp. 109-110; Thomas Joseph Pettigrew, *Memoirs of the life and writings of the late John Coakley Lettsom . . . with a selection from his correspondence*. London, 1817, 3 vols., vol. I, pp. 36-38; J. C. Trent, John Coakley Lettsom. *Bull. Hist. Med.*, 1948, 22, pp. 528-542.

