125 YEARS OLD IS THE HUNGARIAN MEDICAL WEEKLY:  
ORVOSI HETILAP  
The oldest, still functioning product of the Hungarian press

The Orvosi Hetilap (Medical Weekly) is the only weekly paper of the Hungarian medical review-literature; the forum of Hungarian medical bellettrists and researchers. It is published in 17,000 copies, in an extent close to 60 pages. Apart from scientific topics, it contains about 50 reports and reviews from the best known periodicals of medical world literature. Furthermore each edition features two or three scientific or health-related debates. It gives account on foreign congresses and study-tours and publishes documents on medical public life and medical history.

In the first half of the past century the medical university education in Hungary was continued in Latin and German languages at the University of Pest (Budapest). The first medical journal, Orvosi Tar (Medical Magazine), written in Hungarian language was started in 1831 by Pál Bugát, doctor, professor of theoretical medicine, national head physician, who was the excellent initiator of medical terminology — ans by Ferenc Toldy (Schedel), the latter historian of literature. The Orvosi Tar (Medical Magazine) is the projection of the Hungarian intellectual development taking place in the field of medicine after 1825. The publication of the journal ceased after the oppression of the war of independence in 1848.

In 1857, at a higher standard, a new Hungarian medical periodical appeared: the Orvosi Hetilap (Medical Weekly), edited by Lajos Markusovszky. This periodical published weekly appears without break since then (with the exception of three years following World War II). The Orvosi Hetilap (Medical Weekly), is one of the earliest products of the international medical review-literature, being at the same time the most ancien, still living product of the Hungarian press.

On the 4th June, 1857, not only a medical weekly was published as the result of the troublings of Lajos Markusovszky and his keen co-workers — first of all János Balassa — but such a periodical, organ, which immediately expanded its frames, interfering in a revolutionary manner with the revival of the stagnant Hungarian medicine of the depressed country; congregating the best; calling the attention of the physicians to the vital questions of their vocation; propagating a fight for the cessation of the underdeveloped health and educational conditions. It also stimulated the renascence of the Hungarian medical public education and with its good example it also showed effect beyond the medical circles, because it helped to vivify the intellectual life which was petrified at the time of the era of Alexander Bach and the provisional state.

In the middle of the last century the surgeon János Balassa and his friends thought of publishing a medical journal to bring forth a stirring effect on the underdeveloped and stagnating medical and health conditions. The highly respected
Lajos Markusovszky was elected by common consent as the editor of the journal. With the help of Markusovszky, János Balassa gathered around the journal the best Hungarian physicians of the era: Ignác Semmelweis, Ignác Sauer, János Rupp, Kálmán Balogh, Frigyes Korányi, Sándor Lumniczé, Ignác Hirschler and others.

Preceding his era, in Hungary Markusovszky sharply recognized the role of the conceptions and people in history; he ended his first publicistic article with the following lines — which bear evidence for deep ideological consistence: «The spirit of uniting is the most productive spirit of our age. Let us unite so that we could act.»

Lajos Markusovszky, one of the most outstanding figures of Hungarian medicine and health, was born in 1815, in Csorba in Liptó county — which now belongs to Czehoslovakia. His father was an evangelic priest. He studied law in Pozsony (today Bratislava), then he contracted as educator in Pest. In the meantime he finished his studies at the Medical Faculty of the University. János Balassa recognized his talent and granted a fellowship for him. In 1844 he continued his studies in Vienna, where he got acquainted with Ignác Semmelweis, the discoverer of the etiology of puerperal fever, the «saviour of mothers» — with whom Markusovszky became good friends for a lifetime. From 1847 he worked as demonstrator beside János Balassa, in 1848 at the time of the Hungarian war of independence he was the instructor of military surgery, then head surgeon and medical officer in the army of Hungarian soldiers commanded by the great Hungarian cominander, Gőrgy. After the suppression of the Hungarian war of independence he was unable to return to the university. He worked as private assistant beside Balassa, helping and following him in his conceptions. Being a Protestant, his application for qualification as private docent was refused by the medical faculty. In 1857 he founded the Orvosi Hetilap (Medical Weekly), leading it for 32 years. In 1863 he founded the Hungarian Medical Publishing Corporation. Under joint editorship he published a nomenclature of medical pharmacology. From 1867, from the year of the compromise with the Vienna court, he was the clerk of medical training affairs, and later, of all the university affairs at the Ministry of Religion and Education till 1892, when he retired. In 1893 he was awarded as honorary professor by the medical faculty of the Budapest University. The modernization of medical training, the establishment of the institute of public hygiene, the development of the clinics, the launching of postgraduate medical training are all linked with the name of Markusovszky. The progressive Hungarian physicians centred around Balassa and Markusovszky. He principally urged on the health reforms, and in 1886 he founded the National Society of Hygiene. His publicistic activities were also significant. He died in 1893 in Abbazia — today called Opatia — which lies in the coast of the Adriatic Sea, now belonging to Yugoslavia. He was buried in Vaségerez, which is in Western Hungary. He is respected as one of the most outstanding Hungarian organizers of health and research.

The succeeding generations keep his memory with reverence. In the first half of our century the Markusovszky Society of the physicians was established. On the 150th anniversary of his birth he was given a square and a statue in a public square in Budapest. Several institutions (hospital, college, etc.) were named after him and one of our country hospitals bearing his name has established a Markusovszky medallion. Every year since the past decades the editorial board of the Orvosi Hetilap (Medical Weekly) awards the Markusovszky prize founded in honour of its former editor to the authors of the best articles.

At the turn of the century the Orvosi Hetilap (Medical Weekly) was edited by Professor Endre Hogyes for a period of nearly two decades. Hogyes was one of the most eminent Hungarian medical scientists, the professor of pathology-
pathophysiology and medicine as well as bacteriology first at the University in Kolozsvár (today Cluj belonging to Romania), later at the Budapest University. His scientific activities were manifold. It is owing to him that he modified the antihydrophobic vaccination of Pasteur by using dilution instead of the original desiccation method for moderating the virus.

At the beginning of our century for nearly two decades the Orvosi Hetilap (Medical Weekly) was edited by Professor Mihály Lenhossek, anatomist, the last member of the great Hungarian doctor and scientist Lenhossek dynasty. His researches on the nervous system were outstanding. He proved the justness of the neuron theory. He was an internationally known scientist, firstly due to his scientific relationships with the Spanish Ramon y Cajal.

Between the two World Wars Zoltán Vámossy, professor of pharmacology was the editor of the Orvosi Hetilap (Medical Weekly).

The journal started to be published again after World War II, on March 15, 1948 — the centenary of the Hungarian bourgeois-democratic revolution. Since then — that is for almost three and a half decades — Tibor Trencsényi, honorary professor, internal specialist and public health organizer, is the editor of the Orvosi Hetilap (Medical Weekly). Tibor Trencsényi finished his university studies in Vienna and Pécs, in South Hungary. He worked in the Clinic of Internal Medicine of the University in Pécs; in a General Hospital in Budapest and worked as leading internist in the Hungarian army for nearly a quarter of a century. From his clinical medical activities it gained international reaction that he was the first to recognize hemorrhagic fever accompanying renal disease apart from the endemic focus of the Far East and that he identified epidemic nephropathy with nephroso-nephritis hemorrhagic infection.

Naturally, during the 125 years' glorious and internationally unique course of the Orvosi Hetilap (Medical Weekly), it also reported on the most significant results of Hungarian medicine. Among these results I should only like to mention two: the journal reported on the world-wide known discovery of Ignác Semmelweis on the etiology of puerperal fever, furthermore, on the discovery of Albert Szent-Györgyi concerning Vitamin C, who received the Nobel prize for his discovery in 1937.