Ludvig Hektoen
1863-1951
Dr. Ludvig Hektoen at the age of 88 died on July 5, 1951. He was born in Westby, Wisconsin in a community of Norwegian settlers and in his early boyhood years the Norwegian language was spoken except for the irregular periods in public schools where English was used. The mother tongue was apparent in his speech throughout his life. He attended Luther College, Decorah, Iowa and the University of Wisconsin. In 1887 he graduated from the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Chicago following which he served as an apothecary in the Illinois Eastern Hospital for the Insane. He made first place in the examination for Internship at Cook County Hospital. He held several positions in the Chicago area and in 1901 became professor and head of the department of Pathology at the University of Chicago from which he became professor emeritus in 1933.

Dr. Hektoen was President of the Society of American Bacteriologists in 1929. He has published more papers in the fields of immunology and pathology than in bacteriology but his influence was not limited to a narrow field. His publications, offices held in different scientific organizations, honors and lectureships are detailed in “A Biography and an Appreciation” written by Dr. Morris Fishbein and published in the Archives of Pathology 1938, 26, pp. 1–31. In this necrology only the microbiological aspects of Dr. Hektoen’s career are considered. Of his more than three hundred publications microbiological subjects appeared more frequently in the earlier periods of his professional life and included such subjects as tuberculosis, amebic dysentery, ulcerative endocarditis due to gonococci, lobar pneumonia, typhoid fever, diphtheria, blastomycosis, sporotrichosis, actinomycosis, scarlet fever, measles, whooping cough, and poliomyelitis.

Dr. Hektoen was editor of the Journal of Infectious Diseases from its establishment in 1904 until 1941. He also edited The Archives of Pathology and at various times edited the Proceedings of the Institute of Medicine of Chicago and the Transactions of the Chicago Pathological Society. As editor of these journals his influence was felt by all contributors to these publications. He abhorred superfluous words, phrases, tables and illustrations, and was most helpful and kindly, particularly to young scientists in helping them organize and present their researches in a simple and direct style always with a condensed summary.

Dr. Hektoen in addition to being a coeditor of the Journal of Infectious Diseases with Dr. E. O. Jordan was a close personal friend. Both men had lived in the formative period of microbiology and were well versed in the historical aspects of the subject. On many occasions Dr. Hektoen appeared before Dr. Jordan’s students to present historical aspects of some of the great discoveries of infectious agents in disease. Students left these meetings inspired and with the thrill of having been taken through an era with one whose life and friendships covered that period.

Dr. Hektoen was a calm, kindly and unselfish man whose life was devoted to
medical science. His patience with young people, his good humor and his objectivity not only with the researches of others but also his own mark him as a great teacher and scholar. The Society of American Bacteriologists owes much to Dr. Hektoen not only for his efforts in the Society and his researches, but also for the help and stimulation he has so unselfishly given to young men in the field.

G. M. Dack