

Book Reviews

side by side with a particular brand of medicine. Englishmen might take note that not a few of the graduates listed by Dr. Abrahams came from this country.

E. GASKELL

Psychiatry and its History, ed. by GEORGE MORA and JEANNE L. BRAND, Springfield, Illinois, C. C. Thomas, 1970, pp. xviii, 283, \$9.00.

In 1967 a workshop was held at Yale University on the Methodological Problems involved in the study of the History of Psychiatry. Despite the immediate suspicion aroused by any meeting concerned with Methodology, a subject which all too often conceals a total ignorance of the discipline itself, the workshop proved a valuable experience by nature of the contributions which a number of distinguished medical historians presented to the participants. Now these deliberations are presented to a wider audience in a book form. Two attitudes may be taken to a discussion of methodology, first, that medical history is a living subject, without a knowledge of which the daily practice of medicine is no more than an arid, technical procedure. As such, the human, individual approach of the doctor to the history of his subject may be more rewarding than if too much attention is paid to the historiographical elements of the craft. The second attitude is that without a vigorous attention to the historical methods of today much of what is written by the amateur is of little value, and what is almost implicit in this view, is that a training in such methods is necessary or even essential for the writing of medical history. In perhaps the wisest of all the communications in this book, Ilza Veith sympathetically deals with this dilemma, and with her broad-ranging intelligence and lack of intellectual arrogance, provides in a few pages encouragement to all those amateur historians who might so easily be deterred from ever putting pen to paper. There is room for both approaches, she argues, for the specialist such as herself, who has perforce to deal with primary sources only, written in a language with which the historian must be conversant, and also for the physician psychiatrist who brings to the subject his own knowledge of his speciality. All the contributors agree that facts must be the basis of historical research, and that means referral to primary sources; that judgment of the facts must be sound and well based, and that inter-disciplinary co-operation in such a wide-ranging subject as psychiatry is perhaps more necessary than in some other fields of medical history. As with all such co-operative efforts, the individual contributions are of differing value for the individual reader; the overall message of the book is one that Francis Braceland, in his wise and gentle foreward, sums up as the provision of the necessary guideposts to the writing of medical history.

DENIS LEIGH

- (1) *Physiologie, der Wandel ihrer Konzepte, Probleme und Methoden vom 16. bis 20. Jahrhundert*, by K. E. ROTHSCUH (Orbis Academicus, Band II/15), Freiburg/München, Verlag Karl Alber, 1968, pp. 407, DM. 58.
- (2) *Physiologie im Werden*, by K. E. ROTHSCUH (Medizin in Geschichte und Kultur, Band 9), Stuttgart, G. Fischer Verlag, 1969, pp. xi, 188, DM. 34.
- (1) This book is one of a series entitled 'Orbis Academicus', dealing with various problems of science. It discusses the changes in physiological concepts that took place

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between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries and is complementary to a small paperback on the same subject also written by Professor Rothschuh.

The first three chapters are on general aspects of physiology, the remainder covering special topics. There are notes on each chapter, an extensive bibliography, an index of proper names, and a series of pocket biographies arranged in alphabetical order. There are also twelve illustrations.

Professor Rothschuh has tried to relate the contributions of the major discoverers to their historical background and to give new meaning to the interpretation of their various physiological discoveries. A superficial reading is insufficient to determine whether he has succeeded or not. However it would well repay physiologists and others with similar interests to decide this for themselves.

(2) The second book is really a collection of Professor Rothschuh's own articles, gathered together from various leading journals, and united under the title 'The Rise of Physiology', a task which the author had long wished to undertake.

In the first contribution he asks the vital question—what is important and meaningful in the history of science? This is followed by a discussion on ideas and methods and their significance for physiology and the influence of this on the development of science. The achievements of Fernel, Harvey, Riolan, Schlegel and Descartes are then detailed in relation to these themes. The final three chapters deal with the role of the *spiritus animalis*, the notion of animal electricity and the origins of nineteenth-century physiological thinking.

In addition to fifteen illustrations, there is an index of proper names and each chapter ends with notes and references. This is indeed a well-produced paperback but the print is small and closely set and this makes reading and concentration difficult.

I. M. LIBRACH

Karl Ernst von Baer, 1792-1896. Sein Leben und sein Werk, by BORIS EVGEN'EVICRAIKOV, (Acta Historica Leopoldina, Nr. 5), Leipzig, J. A. Barth, 1968, pp. 516, illus., M.DN 68.—

'It is sheer superstition to imagine that a scientist can *explain* any phenomenon' (p. 79). These are the words of Karl Ernst von Baer, one of the most important biologists of the nineteenth century. This insight did not prevent him from putting forth the most daring hypotheses and abandoning them when found faulty. With his *De ovi mammalium et hominis genesi* of 1827 he became the founder of modern embryology. As an early evolutionist Baer was a precursor of Darwin. He was also an anthropologist and naturalist and travelled as an explorer in Russia, Finland and the Arctic region.

Baer was born in Estonia and lived and taught during the latter half of his life in St. Petersburg. The present extensive biography based on manuscript material in Estonian archives, apart from Baer's published autobiography, was first published by Raikov in Russian in 1961. But as Baer wrote his works in Latin and German it is fitting that this biography was first of all translated into German in the present form by H. von Knorre and was thus made available to a wider circle of readers. A translation into English would be justified, especially if combined with a translation of the more important works of Baer himself.

MARIANNE WINDER