

Book Reviews

discursive fields in which a text can be placed and from whence it stems must be considered; ideas which derive from Michel Foucault—are sound and to be highly commended. It deserves to become a standard reference work when considering the fantastic life and work of Otto Weininger.

Ivan Crozier,
The Wellcome Trust Centre for the
History of Medicine at UCL

Robert Richardson, *Larrey: surgeon to Napoleon's Imperial Guard*, revised edition, London, Quiller Press, 2000 (first published 1974), pp. x, 269, illus., £16.95 (hardback 1-899163-60-3).

Dominique Jean Larrey (1766–1842) was the chief surgeon in Napoleon's Imperial Guard, a dedicated doctor and soldier, a loyal subject in awe of his nation at the most ambitious moment in its imperialistic history, a devoted husband and father, and—to the end of his life—a sworn devotee of his emperor, Napoleon. If Larrey was not particularly distinguished for surgical invention or theoretical medical writing, he nevertheless served his country as loyally as any other doctor in France's history. Especially in the great Russian military campaigns he continually placed his own life on the line. He is remembered as a soldier in the service of other soldiers, for his healing treatment through daily reliability, flying ambulances and other types of inventive make-shift hospitals. His treks through the snow across northern Europe, and the letters he wrote from outposts to his beloved wife Charlotte, document a dominant theme about East European wasteland based on the frozen tundra around Eylau, south of the Vistula in Poland. Larrey's military memoirs are no dramatic pieces of writing (he was no Tolstoy in miniature), but they provide a

sense of the soldier's life on the battlefield, the plagues and conditions to which he was exposed in appalling conditions removed from his family and region. Larrey knew well that most soldiers never return home; that the memory of love in the battlefield is one of the few sustaining emotions in the face of constant death.

Robert Richardson's biography, revised here, was first published in 1974 and has now been augmented. Even in 1974 Richardson, a medical practitioner with a flair for writing medical history pitched for the layman, had the use of the French biographer André Soubiran's more thorough analysis of 1966. But Soubiran had not seen the Larrey Collection in the Wellcome Library: a manuscript archive of unpublished material comprising Larrey's letters to his family and campaign journals, which Richardson has incorporated in this revised edition. The Wellcome Collection of Larrey, together with the significantly larger companion archive in the Bibliothèque Nationale, forms the largest repository of extant unpublished Larreyana. It constitutes a significant research tool for French military health and imperial history in the first half of the nineteenth century. If Richardson's revised life attracts students to consult the Wellcome Collection's rich and mostly untapped French archive, it will have served a second useful purpose.

G S Rousseau,
De Montfort University

David A Gerber (ed.), *Disabled veterans in history*, Corporealities: Discourses of Disability, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2000, pp. viii, 348, £31.00, \$49.50 (hardback 0-472-11033-0).

A good deal has been written recently about the pity of war, but its victims have seldom figured prominently in historical scholarship. There are, of course, some