

Book Reviews

part of it deals with Poor Law Reform and with the Public Health Movement. Part IX (pp. 683–747) contains documents relating to the Poor Law; Part X (pp. 751–826) is devoted to Public Health; and Part XII (pp. 919–1008) to Industrial Conditions and Legislation. In each part the documents themselves are preceded by an illuminating introduction and a select bibliography. This is the great period of Parliamentary Papers or Blue Books and, as Sir John Charles pointed out in the first issue of this journal (*Med. Hist.*, 1957, 1, 1), Blue Books are to be regarded as amongst the basic historical documents. Long excerpts from many of those cited by Sir John Charles are given in this volume, together with others of a like nature. The names of the editors are a sufficient guarantee of the learning and the care that have gone to the making of this very substantial volume, which will be indispensable to all serious students of the history of public health and social medicine.

W. J. B.

W. W. Francis: Tributes from his Friends on the Occasion of the Thirty-fifth Anniversary of the Osler Society of McGill University. Montreal, published by the Society, 1956. Edition limited to 500 copies. xv+123 pp. Illustrated.

We have all heard the comparison of a Festschrift to a first-class funeral but if this volume can be called a Festschrift then it is to an Irish wake or a cocktail party that we must look for a simile. And what a wonderful party it is, with the guest of honour taking a part (by quotation) in every conversation. Those who had been fortunate enough to know Dr. Francis and to enjoy his friendship will know what to expect; others will pick up this volume and, as they browse through its pages, be enchanted by its wealth of good stories, its freshness and its sincerity. Oslerians will enjoy meeting their idol once more in his lighter moments, as when he got his friend Ruth Draper to give some of her sketches on the high table at Balliol after a dinner with the Master, an incident recalled by that great actress in her own tribute to Osler's nephew.

The chief value of the book for those who dismiss all this as mere anecdote will lie in the story which it tells of the compilation of the wonderful catalogue of Osler's library, the *Bibliotheca Osleriana* and of the great role played in this work by Dr. Francis and Reginald Hill, now the Librarian of the National Central Library but then a young assistant in the Bodleian Library. It is one of the most personal of all library catalogues, and from the portrait of Francis which emerges from these tributes we can judge how firmly he left his mark on that bibliographical classic. That a man of his calibre has presided over the Osler Library for so long has been the great good fortune of McGill and its students. Human nature being what it is, all those students may not have appreciated the privilege of knowing such a man, but they

Book Reviews

will, and it will then be the turn of another generation to go in search of times past and produce yet another volume of tributes such as these.

F. N. L. POYNTER

Arbeitsmedizin im 18. Jahrhundert. Werksarzt und Arbeiter im Quecksilberbergwerk Idria. ERNA LESKY. Vienna, Osterreichische Gesellschaft für Arbeitsmedizin, 1956. Pp. 79, illus. 19.80 Austrian shillings; or 10 AS direct from the Society (Kinderspitalgasse 15, Wien IX).

This important contribution to the history of industrial medicine is the first of a new monograph series on 'Safety and Health at Work' published by the Austrian Society for Industrial Medicine. The topic is specifically the measures taken to protect the health of workers in the celebrated mercury mines of Idria (a town in the province of Carniola) during the past two hundred years, but the solution of the problems found there are of much wider application. Dr. Lesky is a medical historian and her scholarly account of the early attempts to reduce the hazards inseparable from the miners' work and of their subsequent development is of topical significance, a fact which is emphasized by its publication as the first volume of the series. The acts (dating from 1754) which set up an industrial health service in the mines of Idria are reprinted, and the illustrations of the technical processes help greatly to illuminate the text.

F. N. L. POYNTER