

Recently it was moved to its sixth and present site adjoining the Walter Reed Medical Centre.

In its early days the present National Library of Medicine was closely associated with the Army Medical Museum which adds to the importance of both institutions in medical history.

In spite of many difficulties and vicissitudes the Museum continued to develop and expand its various activities. An example of change in scientific disciplines is that until 1900 much of the work was devoted to physical anthropology. When comparatively recently the large collection of Indian skeletal remains was transferred to the Smithsonian Institution, only consultative work in paleo-pathology was still undertaken.

Many famous men have filled the office of Curator, for example, Walter Reed and Frederick F. Russell whose achievements will always be associated with the institution. Joseph J. Woodward, an original member of the staff became the leading photomicrographer of his time. When in 1865, President Lincoln was assassinated, the museum artist sketched the scene at his death bed and other members of the staff performed the autopsy. Later the Museum occupied for twenty-one years the theatre in which the assassination took place.

Originally planned for military purposes the Museum has been able to meet the needs of peace and war. As its successor the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology has increased the scope of its activities until it now covers a wide range of subjects, including epidemiology, preventive medicine, public health and medical research. Today the education and training of medical officers is an important part of its work. Museum techniques and medical illustration are among the developments it has pioneered with success. At the present time the Institute is the home of the American Registry of Pathology and of twenty-six similar registries in more specialized branches of the science.

This account of the development of the Institute also reflects the growth of American Pathology generally and gives due credit to contributions from other parts of the world. This informative and well illustrated work sets a high standard in book production.

ROBERT DREW

Histoire de la Médecine, by MAURICE BARIÉTY and CHARLES COURY, Paris, Fayard, 1963, pp. 1217, Fr. 49.50.

This book is the first comprehensive French history of medicine since Laignel-Lavastine. The authors are well-known physicians and medical writers; Dr. Coury has also written a volume of poems, which may account for the easy literary style of the narrative. Their close acquaintance with current medicine is no doubt responsible for their frequent references to recent events, such as the 1962 smallpox outbreak in England and the activities of the United Nations in world health. It is a great compliment to the book's text that one never feels the need for light relief in the form of illustrations.

The sections proceed in an orthodox manner through the great ages of history, each one bearing a resounding title—'siècle d'obscurité', 'de clarté', 'de pénombre', 'de renouveau', 'de raison', and, rather arrogantly, 'de vérité'. Over 100 pages follow, given over to potted histories of forty-two specialities, carrying us usually from the eighteenth century to the present day. An unusual and helpful feature is the synoptic chronology through which one is enabled to place medical events in their

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political, artistic and social background. The book is completed by a glossary, biographical index and 'restricted bibliography' mainly made up of French publications.

If a book sets out, as this one does, to describe the history of medicine *in toto* then it will inevitably be charged with having neglected X in favour of Y. The English reader, for instance, will notice that some names well known to him are only fleetingly or not at all referred to (Geminus, Linacre, Cullen). On the other hand national bias sometimes pays dividends when it is supported by facts, and this is the case when we come to the great French period of 1800–50 which receives twenty-seven pages as against three for the rest of the world. Unfortunate errors which must be mentioned, but which are not characteristic of the book, are statements that the Second Basle edition of the *Fabrica* is 'dépourvue d'illustrations', that Harvey was an alumnus of Canterbury University and an occupant of the Chair of Anatomy and Surgery at 'Lumley's Medical School', and that William Cobbett was an American doctor! There are very few errors in transcription, even of non-French titles, and the freshness of style throughout the book will make it a suitable one to put in the hands of students hesitant about the value of medical history.

E. GASKELL

Le Cours d'Anatomie Pathologique de Bichat: un Nouveau Manuscrit, by JEAN MONTEIL, Grenoble, Imprimerie Guirimand, 1964, pp. 47, plates, no price stated.

The manuscript described by M. Monteil in this pamphlet was presented to the Grenoble Medical School Library in 1902. In spite of the frequent mention of Bichat's name in its pages no-one has attributed it to the great anatomist, or even compared it with the 1825 edition published by Boisseau from a manuscript transcribed by Béclard. It has always been significant that a close acquaintance of Bichat, Cruveilhier, never accepted the Boisseau text as anything but a mutilated version of Bichat's ideas, totally lacking in style and liable at any time through excessive condensation to be misleading. In 1931 Professor Sabrazès described an 'unpublished manuscript' on Bichat's Pathological Course and transcribed the section on cancer. Geneviève Genty was able to examine this when preparing her 1943 thesis on Bichat, and, although it has since disappeared, we have her word that it bore a striking resemblance to the Boisseau text.

M. Monteil claims that the Grenoble manuscript represents the purest version we have of Bichat's Course. He has found that the order of the lectures follows that laid out in Bichat's preliminary lecture notes which are in the Faculty of Medicine in Paris. Some of the obscurities in the Boisseau text, about which Cruveilhier had complained, are here (in the Grenoble MS.) cleared up by slight changes in emphasis or by the addition of qualifying clauses. The style is much more expressive and alive, in keeping with what we find in Bichat's other books. The Grenoble manuscript has an additional section on the pancreas (foreshadowed in Bichat's MS. notes) and is significantly richer in detail in the passages dealing with the peritoneum, wound-scarring, fistula, and the liver.

Esmond Long, in his *History of Pathology* (1925) has this to say about the Boisseau text—'woefully incomplete in detail', 'impressive as they [the lectures] are as written down they do not represent Bichat'. Perhaps one day historians of pathological anatomy will be able to read the real thing in print.

E. GASKELL