

Book Notices

Early years of the McLean Hospital. Recorded in the journal of George William Folsom, Apothecary at the Asylum in Charlestown, ed. by NINA FLETCHER LITTLE, Boston, Mass., Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, 1972, pp. viii, 176, illus., \$8.95.

The happy chance that allowed the papers of George William Folsom to fall into the hands of a well-known authority on American folk art atones in part for the tragic brevity of this earnest and likeable young man's life. Born in 1803 of solid New England tradesman stock and accepted for Harvard in 1821, he joined in 1825 the staff of the Asylum for the Insane at Charlestown, Massachusetts, now the McLean Hospital in Belmont. His diaries show him to have been diligent in his reading and daily work, often to late hours of the night, and constantly troubled by an undiagnosed digestive disorder which may perhaps have led to his early death at the age of 24 in 1827.

Mrs. Little's running commentary on the sparse and often cryptic entries, enlivened by her unusually detailed knowledge of the period and of the hospital archives, affords the modern reader a vivid glimpse into the working and social life of a rising and well-educated medical man in the early and formative years of the Republic. The bibliographical footnotes which fill out Folsom's rapid indications of his current reading are especially useful, though the reader may regret the absence of a list of the books he read and an index to the whole work, omissions dictated perhaps on grounds of expense. These would have been helpful.

That apart, the commentary does full justice to the man, the hospital, and the period. It is admirably provided with portraits, as well as with plates, facsimiles, maps and plans, indicating the appearance and position of the Hospital at all times from its first opening in 1818 to its demolition in 1895 on its removal to Belmont. Mrs Little has discharged her task with erudition, enthusiasm, balance and sympathy.

Surgeon to Soldiers: Diary and Records of the Surgical Consultant, Allied Force Headquarters, World War II, by E. D. CHURCHILL, Philadelphia and Toronto, J. B. Lippincott; Oxford, Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1972, pp. xv, 490, illus., £6.00.

The author, who is Professor Emeritus of Surgery at Harvard University, has recounted in this volume some of his experiences in World War II, especially during the period when he was Chief Surgical Consultant to the U.S. Army in North Africa and in Italy. The major surgical lessons of the campaigns are noted, and the author emerges as modest, highly intelligent and able, and pays generous tribute to others, including such R.A.M.C. officers as Weddell, d'Abreu, Buttle, J. D. MacLennan, and so on.

And yet when I put this book down I did so with a feeling of dissatisfaction and regret and with a wish to return it to the author for revision. For this reaction (which I feel will be shared by others) the author is wholly responsible, as with the wealth of experience and material at his disposal he has neither done justice to himself nor to his subject. The book as it stands has been compiled rather than written and lacks coherence, being a disjointed collection of extracts from diaries and reprints of orders, reports, and so on. What would be required is a straightforward account of the author's experiences in World War II supplemented as necessary by relevant extracts from his diary and with the majority of the reports, etc. relegated to appendices. In its present form the book is unlikely to appeal either to the general reader or to the historian. The absence of an index is also to be regretted.

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Colloque international Lamarck, edited by J. SCHILLER, Paris, A. Blanchard, 1971, pp. 263, no price stated.

On 1–3 July 1971, about twenty distinguished historians of natural sciences from various countries (France, Germany, Italy, Poland, United States) met in the Musée Nationale d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris to discuss various aspects of the work of Lamarck.

In this meeting sponsored by the Cercle d'Etude historique des Sciences de lay Vie, the accent was laid on Lamarck considered for himself and not only in the evolutionary context where he is too often opposed to Darwin. The present volume gives the texts of the papers read at this meeting and the short discussions which followed.

After an introduction by Prof. P. Grassé, P. Omodeo (Padova) discusses 'Classification et Phylogénie dans l'oeuvre de Lamarck', then M. J. S. Hodge (Berkeley) examines the notion of 'Species in Lamarck', whereas M. Guédès (Paris) considers 'Le botaniste Lamarck' in a very long and important paper (pp. 47–85) followed by that of J. Schiller, 'L'échelle des êtres et la série chez Lamarck' where he develops the history of the former notion expressed for the first time by Aristotle and the conception of the latter according to Lamarck. G. Gohau (Paris) then examines 'Le cadre minéral de l'évolution lamarckienne' and F. Bourdier (Paris), 'L'homme selon Lamarck'. Ph. Decourt (Coussac-Bonneval) considers the 'Rôle du système nerveux dans les conceptions de Lamarck' and Madame Legée (Paris) discusses 'Les conceptions de Luigi Rolando (1773–1831) et de J. B. Lamarck (1744–1829) sur le système nerveux'. Y. Laissus (Paris) gives a general report on 'Les manuscrits de Lamarck' and Miss B. Hoppe (Munich) studies 'Le concept de Biologie chez G. R. Treviranus' (this paper is completed by some remarks by J. Schiller). The last paper is by L. Szyfman (Warsaw) and deals with 'Remarques sur la méthodologie de J. B. Lamarck'.

This book constitutes a very coherent corpus which brings new ideas and interpretations on the scientific thought of the author of *Philosophie zoologique* which will interest all the historians of biology and medicine.

Head Injury from Antiquity to the Present, with Special Reference to Penetrating Head Wounds, by E. S. GURDJIAN, Springfield, C. C. Thomas, 1973, pp. vii, 139, illus., \$11.75.

The author, a distinguished American neurosurgeon, attempts to survey the history of the subject to which he has made important contributions. Unfortunately his account has so many errors of fact and misinterpretation that it cannot be recommended as a reliable source. Moreover, he makes scant reference to the excellent studies of Convillè and the Mettlers, and has a limited knowledge of medico-historical literature. The last chapter, which is a summary of recent studies, does, however, provide a useful review of contemporary opinion.

Geschichte der Kinderheilkunde, Physiologie und Pathologie der Entwicklung, by J. R. BIERICH *et al.*, Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, Springer-Verlag, 1971, pp. xxi, 904, illus., DM.345.

This lavishly produced textbook of paediatrics forms the first part of volume I of a *Handbuch der Kinderheilkunde* by H. Opitz and F. Schmid to be published in nine volumes. The historical part by A. Peiper comprises thirty pages. The rest is descriptive and includes up-to-date accounts of endocrinology, human genetics and pre-natal pathology.

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Bibliography to the Ancient Medical Authors, by HELMUT LEITNER, Berne, Huber, 1973, pp. 61, S. Fr. 26/DM. 24.

The experience and scholarship of writers of medical history can best be assessed by observing how they handle Graeco-Roman Antiquity. This period is strewn with pitfalls, not the least of which concerns the original literary sources. Dr. Leitner's bibliography, therefore, is most welcome, for it will help those with less knowledge in this area to seek out the primary sources rather than to rely invariably on secondary ones, with the inevitable hazard of transmitting errors and misinterpretations.

The authors' names are arranged alphabetically, but, apart from a few exceptions such as Galen and Hippocrates, only editions of their writings published since the end of the nineteenth century are listed. Not only are the standard texts included, but also translations into modern languages.

Without doubt this excellent little book will achieve the author's praiseworthy aims of raising the level of scholarship in the study of medicine of Classical Antiquity and of improving standards in the citation of its literature. It should be noted that there is also available, Joan S. Emmerson, *Translations of Medical Classics. A List*, Newcastle upon Tyne, University Library, 1965, which is not mentioned here.

Studien zur Geschichte der Mineralnamen in Pharmazie, Chemie und Medizin von den Anfängen bis auf Paracelsus, by DIETLINDE GOLTZ (*Sudhoffs Archiv*, Beiheft XIV), Wiesbaden, F. Steiner, 1972, pp. x, 455, DM.112.

The history of medicine and chemistry is to a considerable extent the history of medical and chemical nomenclature. Its study can implicitly reveal the ways in which these disciplines have wandered and developed from one cultural period to the other. This is well shown in the history of the terms used for minerals and metals. For here we find an unbroken tradition extending from the Sumero-Accadian (Babylonian) via the Hebrew, Syriac-Aramaic, Greek, Arabic to the medieval West and finally to Paracelsus and his iatrochemical successors. Nevertheless there are some civilizations in which little reliance on foreign terms can be found, for example the Greeks, whereas medieval chemistry, especially in the West, borrowed heavily from the Persian and Arabic. This work is the first attempt at a comprehensive study of this matter. It is a stupendous work of reference for the medical and chemical historian as well as the oriental, classical and medieval philologist. In addition to a detailed history of each mineral as mirrored in nomenclature, it offers illuminating chapters on the changing position of metals and stones against the background of ancient naturalist philosophies up to the first systematization through the combined naturalism and scholastic methodology of Albertus Magnus. Moreover there is the special concern of the humanist medical doctor with the correct rendering of Greek terms in order to escape the linguistic chaos brought about by the polygot multitude of terms for the same substance and the same term for different substances throughout the middle ages. This in the hands of the humanists became charged with responsibility for the health of mankind, as the Greek classics provided the works of reference for the practising doctor and surgeon as well as the experimenting and observing naturalist. All this is given exemplary treatment and documentation in the present work. (A more detailed review will be found in *History of Science*, 1973.)

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A List of the Works of Sir James Young Simpson, 1811–1870. A centenary Tribute, by K. F. RUSSELL and F. M. C. FORSTER, University of Melbourne. Department of Medical History, 1971 (Occasional Publications No. 1), pp. 57, \$5.50 (Aust.).

It is a brave act for someone based in the Antipodes to attempt a bibliography of Simpson the prolific. The authors have had the enterprise to do so, using the resources of libraries in Melbourne and Edinburgh and profiting from the advice of John Shepherd, Simpson's latest biographer.

Their list, the most nearly complete yet compiled, contains more than 250 entries chronologically arranged. By design it leaves out letters to periodicals (except those on acupuncture) and some reports to societies. It has a good biographical introduction of eleven pages and is produced in an edition of 250.

Bibliographies are peculiarly prone to imperfections and this one has its due share, as follows: (1) entries should have been numbered and laid out with more of an eye to ease of consultation (and economy of space); (2) chronology would be better served if articles had been entered as such rather than as separates followed by the note "reprinted from"; (3) one or two entries are under the wrong year, e.g. "Etherization in surgery. Pts. I and II", 1848 (should be 1847); (4) some mistakes in volume numbering for the *Monthly Journal* have crept into pp. 39 and 41; (5) several items have been missed, some of them in journals as important as the *Lancet*, including: (i) ten papers on diseases of the uterus and ovary, in A. Tweedie's *Library of Medicine. Practical medicine*, vol. 4, 1840, pp. 322–61; (ii) "On the . . . placenta", *Trans. Edinb. Roy. Soc.*, 1861, 23, 349–54; (iii) *Sir D. Brewster: his last Days and Death. Remarks by Prof. L. Playfair, J.Y.S.*, etc., 1868; (6) there should be more cross-references between entries. For instance, we are not told that a series of articles on diseases of women first published in 1899 is identical with a book published in Philadelphia four years later; nor that an address to students in 1853 was reprinted in 1856 as part of a book.

It is also a pity that Simpson's first bibliographer, Prof. A. Gusserow (*Zur Erinnerung an Sir J. Y. Simpson*, Berlin, 1871), is not among the references listed as having been consulted by the compilers.

BOOKS ALSO RECEIVED

(The inclusion of a title in this list does not preclude the possibility of subsequent review.)

Nordisk Medicinhistorisk Årsbok, 1973, ed. by W. KOCK, Stockholm, Museum of Medical History, 1973, pp. 248, illus., [no price stated].

SAUNDERS, J. B. DE C. M. and O'MALLEY, C. D., *The Illustrations from the Works of Andreas Vesalius of Brussels*, New York, Dover Publications (London, Constable), 1973 (reprint of 1950 ed.), pp. 252, illus., £2.00.

SCHMIDT, GERARD, *Das geistige Vermächtnis von Gustav von Bunge*, Zürich, Juris Verlag, 1974, pp. 88, S.Fr. 18.

John Smedley of Matlock and the Water Cure, facsimile of 1888 ed., with introduction by David A. Barton, Matlock, Derbyshire, The Arkwright Society, 1973, pp. x + facsimile, [no price stated].