

Book Reviews

so popular that Wesley could afford to stand above criticism. When a critic castigated it, Wesley wrote him a polite note to tell him that since the review appeared more copies had been sold than ever, and to invite him to write something further in the same vein. It would of course be foolish to read Wesley's prescriptions apart from the medical background of his time, and when we do so we find that many are not so ridiculous as they might appear at first sight. His book starts with a series of six rules for the preservation of health, and it can hardly be doubted that these had a considerable effect on the personal hygiene of the people. The ailments for which Wesley gave prescriptions were mainly of nervous type.

Wesley was one of the first to use electricity for the treatment of disease. In 1756 he procured an electrical apparatus and started to treat patients. Within three years patients were so numerous that he had to divide them into four groups, treated in different parts of London. He also wrote a book—*The Desideratum*—on this subject. Published in 1760, it presents many points of great interest.

Dr. Wesley Hill has written an interesting and accurate description of these two works, and has discussed sympathetically the medical background from which they rose. He is to be commended on a very interesting little book.

E. ASHWORTH UNDERWOOD

Chronik der Kinderheilkunde. ALBRECHT PEIPER. Leipzig: Georg Thieme, 1958; pp. 527. Illustrated. D.M. 51.20.

This is the third edition of a well-known history of paediatrics. It is beautifully produced with good illustrations, several of which are in colour. The first sections of the book are concerned with child care in the ancient world, next comes a discussion in such subjects as the physiology of children, vitamin deficiencies, feeding, and children's hospitals. Lastly there are short histories of various diseases; the subsection on erythema nodosum, for instance, occupies one and a half pages and is followed by eight references, the most recent being dated 1939. At the end of the book there is a bibliography of paediatric histories and a list of all the authors quoted, in number about 1,300.

The book is written in German, and obviously the writer's sources of reference have been mainly German. For this reason it contains the same sort of errors as would an English history of German medicine. For instance, the author says that the first writers to condemn swaddling were Rosen (1764), Frank (1780), and Rousseau (1762). He fails to mention, however, that Rousseau remarked that 'in England, senseless and barbarous swaddling clothes have become almost obsolete'. This reform was mainly due to William Cadogan, who is referred to in another context elsewhere in the book. (The date given for the first edition of Cadogan's book is wrong.) The other great English advocate for the cessation of swaddling was William Buchan whose important works *Domestic Medicine* (1769) and *Advice to Mothers* (1803) are nowhere mentioned. There are other surprising omissions such as Hurlock's book (1742), *A Practical Treatise on Dentition*, and Cheadle's paper on 'Three cases of scurvy supervening on rickets in young children', which appeared five years before Barlow's classic on scurvy.

It is, of course, impossible for a work of this size to cover such a vast subject adequately. If perhaps the book is a little disappointing when viewed through English eyes, it has at least been produced in 1958, whereas the only book on the same subject from this country was published in 1931 and has long been out of print.

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