

### Book Reviews

A Professional Services Division had existed since 1925 in the Surgeon General's office, but its functions were chiefly administrative. The main portion of this book is devoted to describing how the consultant system was organized from 1942 onwards through the appointment of civilian physicians, how difficulties and errors arose, and how gradually these were overcome by co-operation between the medical administrators and clinicians both at home and overseas. The result was that by the end of the war the United States Army had a comprehensive and thoroughly efficient Consultant Service in medicine. Many lessons were learnt, and many recommendations are offered by consultants for the future as the result of experience. Interesting observations are made on the clinical nature of the wartime diseases encountered. Of special interest to neurologists is the account of Japanese B encephalitis in the Central Pacific area (pp. 673-7). Included among the illustrations are portraits of the chief army consultants, and pleasing reference is made to the help and information they received from their British colleagues. Editors and contributors alike are to be congratulated upon this informative volume in the series.

ARTHUR S. MACNALTY

*Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft of Early England, being a collection of documents, for the most part never before printed, illustrate the history of science in this country before the Norman Conquest, collected and edited by the REV. THOMAS OSWALD COCKAYNE, with a new Introduction by Charles Singer, 3 vols, London, The Holland Press, 1961, £16 16s.*

This important work, which contains almost the entire corpus of scientific writings from the Anglo-Saxon period of English history, was first published in the Rolls Series in the years 1864-6. Since that time it has gone out of print and become a scarce book, so that the Holland Press has done a service to many kinds of scholarship by republishing it. A great deal of research has been done in the language and the history of the period during the century since its first publication and Charles Singer came to the conclusion that both Cockayne's original introduction and the index-glossaries were too misleading in the present state of knowledge to merit reprinting. His own new introduction analyses the contents and traces the influences which are to be seen in them, paramount among them being the Apuleius Herbal, Dioscorides, and Sextus Placitus. In addition the local leechdoms show the influence of Roman and Teutonic magic, the former by way of versions of Pliny's *Natural History*, as well as vestiges of Byzantine astrology and theurgy. Compared with other expressions of our early culture such as the work of Alfred and the Venerable Bede, these writings show the darker side, representing, as Singer claims, not the 'earliest phase of modern medicine but the last fading traces of Greek medicine in the west before the scholastic revival'. Nevertheless, we do not turn to these volumes for scientific enlightenment but for the primary sources in the history of science in England. For this reason alone they are indispensable in every library with a claim to learning.

F. N. L. P.

*Louisiana Swamp Doctor; The Life and Writings of Henry Clay Lewis*, edited by JOHN Q. ANDERSON, Louisiana State University Press, 1962, pp. 296, 8 illus., \$5.00. During the decade 1840-50 readers of the weekly New York newspaper entitled, *Spirit of the Times* were entertained by a series of comical sketches which purported to be the work of Madison Tensas, M.D., the Louisiana Swamp Doctor. In 1850 the collected essays were published in book form, with the title, *Odd Leaves from the Life*

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of a *Louisiana Swamp Doctor*, and now, more than a hundred years later, the work has been edited and reprinted, together with a life of the author, hitherto unknown.

Very few of the amused readers of the original essays or book knew that the 'old' doctor, relating his adventures as Dr. Tensas, who, when ten years old, ran away from home to work as cabin boy on the river steamers, until, at the age of sixteen he became apprenticed to a doctor, and eventually graduated in medicine, was really Henry Clay Lewis, a young doctor for whom life was certainly no joke, and who, after only four years of strenuous practice, met his death by drowning in 1850 as he and his horse attempted to ford a swollen river on the way to attend a case of cholera. How he saw the amusing aspect of such a career is evidence of his heroism, and it is a story worth recalling. There is a strange antithesis between the real life of Henry Clay Lewis, so skilfully revealed by Professor John Q. Anderson, and the autobiography of Madison Tensas, who practised under such adverse conditions and yet was able to laugh at his own misfortunes.

Professor Anderson tells us that when, ten years ago, he set out to solve the mystery of the Louisiana Swamp Doctor, he imagined that he was on the trail of an elderly physician, so deceptive was the pose maintained by Tensas. Professor Anderson has not only solved the mystery, but has added new information regarding such pioneers as Daniel Drake, one of Tensas's teachers, with much else in the 356 Notes, indicating extensive and painstaking research. In the remainder of the book, Lewis is left to speak for himself, with a phraseology so vivid that it is not surprising to learn that he 'exerted a tremendous influence on Mark Twain'. We warmly commend the work to all who are interested in medical history and folk-lore.

DOUGLAS GUTHRIE

*History of Pharmacy in Britain*, by LESLIE G. MATTHEWS, Edinburgh and London, E. and S. Livingstone, 1962, pp. 427, 45s.

Since Bell and Redwood's book in 1880 on the history of pharmacy in Britain, there has been no serious attempt to deal fully with this large subject. Urdang has a brief account, and Barret, Wall and Thompson have all dealt with some aspects of pharmacy, notably the London Society of Apothecaries. Over the years, however, there has been published in various journals a large number of important articles which do add considerably to our knowledge. Mr. Matthews has now brought all this material together and presents, for the first time, a full and properly balanced assessment. Aided by sound documentation and elegant prose we can follow the evolution of the profession of pharmacy step by step, from apothecary-spicer of the fourteenth century to the chemist-druggist of the eighteenth century and the pharmaceutical chemist of today. Other chapters deal with the great changes in the pharmacopoeias, materia medica and the methods of dispensing. In such a vast field there may be some aspects not treated as fully as some readers would like—for example the present reviewer would have liked more on the evolution of the chemist-druggist and the trade in drugs in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and something on the P.A.T.A. and the growth of professional feeling in the twenties and thirties of this century; but such is the excellence of the book, and its bibliography, that it will stimulate and help others to follow up such specialized topics.

R. S. ROBERTS

*La Historia Clinica. Historia y Teoria del Relato Patografico*, by PEDRO LAIN ENTRALGO, Barcelona, Salvat Editores, S.A., 1961, pp. xvi, 668.

The second edition of this book in a decade is sufficient to emphasize the impact of