

### Book Reviews

back-cloth to the brilliant labours of William Harvey whose work, cogently summarized in thirteen pages, is rounded off with a fine coda from Dr. Singer on scientific nomenclature and method.

This design of using the discovery of the circulation to illustrate the successful application of the scientific method is as logically successful now as it was in 1922. Since then, however, the work of Harvey's precursors has come to be more appreciated as shedding light on this process. Ibn an-Nafis's thirteenth century description of the pulmonary circulation was reached by speculation on the work of Galen combined with religious refusal to perform dissections of the human body—a fact that endorses Harvey's laudatory remarks on Galen in this regard. Leonardo da Vinci's obsessional efforts to comprehend the movement of the heart and blood, and his descriptions of its 'circulation', are now more recognized as efforts of scientific thought, premature in that contemporary knowledge of the sciences was insufficient to bear them. Cesalpino's successful speculations have been shown to rest on a combination of observation and intense Aristotelianism very close to Harvey's own attitude.

And so it is that one closes this little book of Dr. Singer's grateful for what has been received but, understandably enough, asking for more.

KENNETH D. KEELE

*The Life, Work and Times of Charles Turner Thackrah, Surgeon and Apothecary of Leeds (1795–1833)*. A. MEIKLEJOHN. Edinburgh and London, E. & S. Livingstone Ltd., 1957. Pp. vii+50+238. 7 plates. 25s.

Medical historians and all workers in industrial health and in preventive medicine owe a great debt to Dr. Andrew Meiklejohn, Senior Lecturer on Industrial Health in the University of Glasgow, for making available to them in so pleasant a form a reprint of Thackrah's now rare classic, and for prefacing it with so scholarly and so delightful a biographical essay, based on extensive researches into original documents. They are indebted also to the Wellcome Trust and to Messrs. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd., for financing the publication. Anatomist, experimental physiologist, clinician, teacher, founder of the Leeds Medical School, pioneer in preventive medicine, and humanitarian, Charles Turner Thackrah died of pulmonary tuberculosis on the day following his 38th birthday. A shrewd observer, a painstaking recorder, and a warmhearted man with imagination and vision, he published his famous tract of 124 pages in 1831. It is the second edition, entitled 'The effects of the arts, trades, and professions, and of civic states and habits of living, on health and longevity: with suggestions for the removal of many of the agents which produce disease, and shorten the duration of life' (1832) which as an exact facsimile has here been reproduced by photo-lithography

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125 years after its original publication. Written in a leisurely style, it makes fascinating reading with its wide experience, its careful observation, its critical analysis, its objective assessment, and its emphasis on prevention. It is interesting to note the author's advocacy of periodic health examinations, his views on intemperance, 'the great bane of civilized life', and his reactions among others to commercial travellers and to *bons vivants*. The book includes aphorisms from Thackrah's writings and a selected bibliography in which we miss a reference to F. F. Hellier's paper, 'Charles Turner Thackrah and industrial dermatosis', *Trans. St. John's Hosp. Derm. Soc.*, 1956, No. 36, 1-2.

W. R. BETT

*A Short History of Public Health.* C. FRASER BROCKINGTON, M.A., M.D., D.P.H. London, J. & A. Churchill Ltd., 1956. Pp. vii+235. 15s.

Apart from the first chapter, which deals with the eighteenth century, the period covered by this little book is only from about 1800 to the present day, and, except for a few occasional references by way of comparison, it is confined to the history of English public health.

The first part, about a third of the book, is devoted to a necessarily very brief sketch of the development of the organization of public health in this country from the early attempts to control cholera, poor law reform, factory legislation, and the registration of births and deaths, through the reforms of Chadwick and the growth of local government, to the modern period since the formation of the Ministry of Health. This part is concluded by a forecast of the future.

The second part of the book deals in detail with different aspects of public health in the latter part of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. In this way the growth of housing, maternal and child welfare, care for neglected children, mental hygiene, control of tuberculosis and venereal diseases, and care for the aged, are surveyed one after the other. In an attempt to make the book a work of reference for students the author has perhaps crowded into the small space at his disposal more detail than its scope really warrants. The result is not as readable as a broader treatment of the essentials of the subject would have been.

C. C. BARNARD

*A History of the Therapy of Tuberculosis and the Case of Frédéric Chopin.* (Sixth Series: Logan Clendening Lectures on the History and Philosophy of Medicine.) ESMOND R. LONG, M.D. Lawrence, University of Kansas Press, 1956. Pp. 71. \$2.

Chopin lived his adult life with illness. For fourteen years from 1835 until his death at the age of thirty-nine, cough, sputum and haemorrhage were