

Book Reviews

book is divided into five 'Units', the first being devoted to the history of nursing. This historical Unit, after an introduction, is subdivided into several chapters, as are all the remaining four Units. The period covered by Unit I is from primitive times to the end of the Second World War and includes, amongst much of interest, valuable sections on such diverse subjects as early American hospitals, the Red Cross, nursing organizations and ethical codes for nurses. The emphasis is throughout on American nursing and hospitals, so there is, inevitably, little space for detail regarding other countries. The remaining four Units are entitled: II—Orientation of the Graduate Nurse; III—Opportunities and Preparation; IV—Organizations, national and international and V—Professional Relationships. Each chapter in every Unit has at the end, following the usual American practice, a long and comprehensive list of references, mostly to American textbooks or to articles in American professional medical and nursing magazines. It would be impossible to enumerate the subjects of each subsection in each Unit, but a few chapter titles such as: 'Registration and Interstate Licensure'; 'General Fields of Nursing'; 'American Nurses' Association and its divisions'; 'Legal Problems' and 'Nursing Publications', will serve to demonstrate the valuable content and wide range of the book. The extent of Mrs. Dietz's meticulous research is evident from the many subjects covered, but the earlier part is marred by avoidable mistakes, perhaps due to hasty revision or careless proof-reading. Although an interesting book, it seems doubtful whether it will have much appeal outside America.

LUCY SEYMER

A History of Nursing From Ancient to Modern Times. A world view, 5th edition, by ISABEL M. STEWART and ANNE L. AUSTIN, New York, G. Putnam's, 1962, pp. 516, 56s. The publication of the fifth edition of this well-known textbook is itself an historical event. Originally written by the late Miss Lavinia L. Dock and Miss Isabel M. Stewart in the twenties and entitled *A Short History of Nursing*, it has been widely read and admired. This new edition has as the co-authoress Miss Anne L. Austin whose *History of Nursing Source Book* came out in 1957. In the earliest chapters of the present book the same subjects have been covered as in previous editions, although perhaps unnecessarily amplified. The later portions are full of new material and the sub-title 'A World View' is fully justified. The pre-1945 history of nursing in many countries has likewise already been chronicled in former editions, but the present book breaks fresh ground. Interesting accounts are given of the present-day nursing situation in such widely separated countries as China, the U.S.S.R., the Latin American republics and the new countries in Africa. This latest and particularly valuable portion has obviously involved extensive and painstaking research. All nurses should be grateful to the authoresses, as the information would probably be impossible to obtain elsewhere. The book should have an honoured place in every nursing school library.

LUCY SEYMER

Avicenna's Poem on Medicine, ed. by HAVEN C. KRUEGER and R. H. MAJOR, Springfield, Ill., C. C. Thomas, 1963, pp. 112, \$5.00.

This translation of Avicenna's *Cantica* is the first in English and will therefore be a great help to English students of medical history. The translation is not a direct one but comes through a French effort, corroborated carefully with the German and Latin

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texts. The translator has also made some Arabic studies in his effort to lose no verbal nuance in his book, although he has made no attempt like Fitzgerald to copy the poetry of this medical Omar Khayyam.

Brooding over all Avicenna's work and strangling his common sense is the devotion to the medicine of Galen. When clinical observation struggles to the surface one appreciates the wisdom of Avicenna; the mental dullness and migraine from over-sleeping, the craggy hardness of cancer, the white motions of obstructive jaundice, the description of coma vigil and carphologia, the importance of melaena, herpes as a sign of recovery in pneumonia etc. These are some among many of his wise observations.

There are plenty of health hints, some a little hard to understand, such as promise of gout to those who cohabit after meals, and sadness as a cure for obesity. The surgical advice is sound on everything from ophthalmology to orthopaedics, and from gynaecology to the guinea worm.

A review of Avicenna's life and achievements precedes the translation. It is an amazing story of political intrigue, philosophy, medicine and travel. Dante said that he had the greatest mind of all his age. He seems to have had the poetry and genius of Goethe and the inventive powers of Leonardo da Vinci.

Avicenna met his fate in his colon where an obstructing cancer defied all his complicated clysters, and he died after a very full life at the age of fifty-seven.

A. DICKSON-WRIGHT

Medical Department, United States Army, Surgery in World War II: Thoracic Surgery, vol. 1, Editor in Chief, Colonel JOHN BOYD COATES, JR., MC., Editor for Thoracic Surgery, F. B. BERRY, Washington, D.C., Office of the Surgeon General, 1963, pp. 394, illus., \$4.25.

The Medical Department of the United States Army has now produced a most informative work on thoracic surgery as it developed and was practised in the Second World War. There is an interesting historical note giving facts and figures from various battles, and one realizes how much the development of modern thoracic surgery has owed to surgery of wartime trauma. In wartime surgery administrative considerations predominate, and questions of transport and delivery of a live patient to an active medical centre remain the paramount tasks. It is in dealing with this aspect that this book makes most interesting reading, showing some of the problems that war involves, and indicating how policies in the treatment of certain types of injury developed. Presumably, on a battlefield the efficiency of emergency treatment determines many of the survivals, and it is often the multiplicity of injury that makes the choice of priorities so difficult. Appropriately the last section of the book discusses reconditioning and rehabilitation, without which even the most expert surgery will not achieve a great deal.

THOMAS HOLMES SELLORS

Der Systematische Katalog in Institutsbibliotheken am Beispiel der Medizinhistorik, by GUNTER MANN, Frankfurt, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Geschichte der Medizin, Naturwissenschaft und Technik e.V., 1962, pp. 24, illus., DM. 2.50.

Dr. Mann has written several contributions to medical history; he now turns his attention to the straightforward recording and speedy recovery of information in this field. He begins with an historical outline of subject-cataloguing in Germany noting