

Book Reviews

RICHARD L. GOLDEN and CHARLES G. ROLAND (eds.), *Sir William Osler, an annotated bibliography with illustrations*, San Francisco, Norman Publishing, 1988, 4to, pp. xv, 214, \$100.00.

Sir William Osler's personality and writings exert a continuing fascination. Minnie Wright Blogg's bibliography of 1919 was quickly superseded by Maude E. Abbott's *Classified and annotated bibliography* of 1926 (second edition 1939) and this is now revised and updated in the present handsome volume.

Much new material has been added and there is now a special section for the humorous pieces published under the pseudonym E. Y. Davis, but Abbott's basic text is still recognizable. However, her utilitarian handlist has been transformed into a lavishly illustrated bio-bibliography, generously set out in an attractive typeface and a pleasure to handle. The well-chosen illustrations cover all periods of Osler's life and there is a selection of reprinted biographical articles, slanted towards his bibliophilic side—doubtless a reflection of the expected readership. (Incidentally, the preface credits Osler with the foundation of the Medical Library Association; as the text makes clear, this should read “the short-lived (British) Medical Library Association”.) An improvement on Abbott is that entries are numbered but it is a pity that the running-titles now appear in small type at the foot of the page.

Like its predecessors the book aims at a listing of Osler's writings and generally avoids such bibliographical niceties as transcribed titles and detailed collations. For *The principles and practice of medicine*, Richard J. Wolfe's meticulous bibliographical analysis is reproduced, with each entry separately numbered (though without a single title-transcription), but this is an exception; all the editions and translations of *Aequanimitas*, for example, appear in a single unwieldy paragraph. More might have been said about separate printings of periodical articles. The text barely hints at their existence but the title-pages of several are illustrated and demonstrate some claim to independent bibliographical status.

If some opportunities have been missed, the book still makes an auspicious debut for its publisher and is unlikely to be superseded.

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DANIEL PAUL SCHREBER, *Memoirs of my nervous illness*, ed. and trans. Ida Macalpine and Richard A. Hunter, with a new Introduction by Samuel M. Weber, Cambridge, Mass., and London, Harvard University Press, 1988, 8vo, pp. liv, 416, £10.50, (paperback).

Daniel Paul Schreber is probably the most frequently quoted patient in psychiatry. His memoirs are considered to be the classic text on paranoia. Freud called them “invaluable” and popularized Schreber's account of his illness in the 1911 essay, ‘Psycho-analytic notes on an autobiographical account of a case of paranoia (dementia paranoides)’. Until recently, the memoirs themselves were hard to find (Schreber's family purchased and destroyed most of the copies) and they were in German. This translation makes Schreber's account of his illness and delusions accessible. The comprehensive introduction and the analysis of Schreber by the translators also raise important questions about Freud's interpretation of the memoirs.

Schreber came from a prominent German family. He was trained as a lawyer, and then promoted to a judge at an early age. In mid-life, his paranoia reached a point where he had to be hospitalized for over nine years. The memoirs, which were written in an asylum, began as diary entries and notes on scraps of paper. One of Schreber's delusions was that his body was being transformed from a male to a female form. He saw the book as an invitation to the scientific community to examine his body and verify this miraculous change, thus giving credence to his religious beliefs and his understanding of God's divine plan. Schreber, unlike other patients who become overwhelmed and rendered mute by mental illness, was able, perhaps because of his intellect and legal training, to organize and systematize his delusions. Also unlike others, Schreber did not write for personal gain or to place blame on doctors, his family, or the asylum.

Freud never treated Schreber, but he read the memoirs. He interpreted Schreber's paranoia as arising from a conflict over unconscious homosexuality. Macalpine and Hunter argue that