

Book Reviews

After the War Maclure continued his career as a surgeon at the Alfred Hospital and became renowned both for his diagnostic judgment and surgical skill as well as for his outstanding qualities as a teacher. From 1929 to 1936 he was Medical Representative on the Dental Board of Victoria and was for a time Chairman of the Dental Post-Graduate Teaching Committee.

Although due for retirement in 1943 he continued on the Alfred Hospital Staff until the end of World War II. He suffered a stroke in 1947 and died in 1956.

M. L. VERSO

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FORMATION OF THE AUSTRALASIAN MEDICAL PUBLISHING COMPANY

On 22 November 1963 the Australasian Medical Publishing Company celebrated its fiftieth anniversary with a Ceremony of Commemoration in Sydney. The occasion also marked the fiftieth year of publication of the *Medical Journal of Australia*, a title suggested fifty years ago by Sir Henry Newland, C.B.E., D.S.O. who happily was able to attend the meeting and presented to Sir Cecil Colville of the Australian Medical Association the Gold Key to the Headquarters of the Association. A full report of the celebrations has been published in the *Medical Journal of Australia*.

Book Reviews

Sir John Simon 1816–1904 and English Social Administration, by ROYSTON LAMBERT, London, MacGibbon and Kee, 1963, pp. 669, frontis., 63s.

Although a legendary figure to most doctors in any field of medicine and to everyone in the field of public health, Sir John Simon had not, until the publication of Royston Lambert's magnificent treatise, been the subject of detailed examination. In one way, this curious deficiency has been disastrously unfortunate, since much that was vital to such a study has been lost or destroyed—some as recently as the Second World War. It is sad to read that the official papers covering Simon's years of office at the Privy Council and Local Government Board as well as his own private papers at St. Thomas's Hospital suffered or were destroyed in the blitz. In another way, however, the delay has been more than usually fortunate, since it has meant that a scholar of outstanding ability has sifted the surviving documents, 'pitifully few' as they have proved to be, with remarkable skill, presenting not only the life of a man spent selflessly in public service, but much more—although the author largely disclaims this—a history of public health from 1848 to 1876.

The objectivity of Lambert's treatment of so much that was controversial in Simon's life is equalled only by the perspicacity with which he has discovered the origins of his greatness and his undoing. In the inexorable syllogism of Lambert's writings John Simon is even greater than legendary accounts have made him out to be; for the reader sees him playing new and hitherto relatively unexplored roles in local government, State medicine and the development of social administration.

With so little to work upon, Lambert paints a most vivid and convincing picture of Simon's personality—his almost maniacal devotion to duty, his versatility, scholarship, love of children and humanity at large, his honesty and openness of mind, and

Book Reviews

the depth of his friendships. What more remarkable than that a civil servant should continue to operate weekly at one of London's great teaching hospitals and to lecture students on pathology year in year out; to repeat himself the work of Villemin on the transmissibility of tuberculosis; to take his annual leave in France at the time of the Franco-German war in order to establish a field hospital 'on perfect hygienic principles' and himself to play the part of a surgeon in caring for battle casualties. How infinitely moving it is to read of the father's exhortation to the young John (as he leaves his home in 1832 for the continental finish to his education) 'to arm himself with self control'; and then for the reader to follow this 'impulsive quick-tempered temperament' through so many vicissitudes and emotionally charged situations of public life to the final dramatic scene of resignation from high authority some forty years later. At the moment so fateful for the immediate development of the public health services of this country, Louis Michael was still alive, for he lived until the age of ninety-seven; did he, one wonders—and certainly the biographer cannot tell us—feel that his son had failed to heed his advice?

Simon was prepared to battle on almost any field where the issue might affect the health of the human race; thus he fought for local health government almost as strongly as he did for central medical superintendence of health; for the control of the pharmaceutical profession; the qualification and registration of the doctor and midwife; for medical research; for the proper use of vital and health statistics; for government based upon scientific knowledge; for the establishment and perpetuation of the officer of health. In these battles—often wordy and prolonged—he had the constant support of the press, both lay and medical; no man surely can have had more public adulation and yet have remained so unassuming, undogmatic and open-minded almost to the end. All this Lambert brings out in an account rendered more enthralling by the extraordinary extent of the detail and the closely reasoned argument, based upon a critical examination of every available document and upon a lot of other data which must have required much painstaking inquiry and research to discover.

Lambert has gone deeply into the growth of scientific knowledge during the nineteenth century; he handles impeccably the tangled hypotheses and theories about the infectious process so that he is able to show Simon's conversion—gradual as it was—to the germ theory in the proper light of scientific unbelief. He is equally versed in the sanitary law of the nineteenth century; no work exists in fact which sets out so clearly the muddle of legislative activity and the way in which it was nevertheless used to considerable purpose during the third quarter of the last century. From this point of view, if no other, the book is without any doubt whatsoever a textbook of public health. But most clearly Lambert shows the birth of social administration and the somewhat unwitting part played by Simon in the cyclical 'self-expanding administrative process' which was to result in extensions of government more by the apathy and neglect of parliament than through its support.

Among so much that is novel and fascinating it is not easy to point to anything of more particular moment than anything else; but most readers I think will find Lambert's disclosures about the almost malignant distaste shown by those two remarkable Victorians Florence Nightingale and Edwin Chadwick for the 'scientific approach to disease prevention' which was one of Simon's major contributions; and still more dramatic the part played by them in Simon's ultimate downfall.

There is an excellent summary and critical appraisal of Simon's achievements and a not inconsiderable refutation of the widely expressed view that public health ceased with the fall of Chadwick; no medical epidemiologist could have handled with

Book Reviews

greater skill the rather slender evidence of mortality data in the appraisal of nineteenth-century public health. The book is well documented. It is a great masterpiece of biographical writing.

FRASER BROCKINGTON

Richard Lower 'De Catarrhis', 1672, reproduced in facsimile and . . . translated, with a bibliographical analysis, by RICHARD HUNTER and IDA MACALPINE, London, Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1963, pp. xi [16], 29, 35s.

If a man correctly explained a natural phenomenon, are we justified in applauding him if he did so by using arguments and experiments which we now know to be mostly erroneous? If in addition he was not the first to make this discovery and must certainly have read the earlier work, one begins to wonder if he has made any contribution at all. This seems to be the case with Lower, whose essay on catarrh is here elegantly presented in facsimile and in translation.

The idea that the nasal passages connected directly with the intra-cranial cavity is to be found in the Hippocratic Writings* and it is elaborated by Galen, who also describes the excretion of cerebral phlegm (pituitary) into the naso-pharynx by way of the pituitary gland.† This theory was occasionally attacked in the seventeenth century. In his treatise *Catarrhi deliramenta* (Amsterdam, 1646, English translation by Walter Charlton, London) van Helmont denies the existence of catarrh, especially from the brain, as a disease concept. He does not go so far, however, as to refute the presence of the cranio-nasal and -pharyngeal channels nor the 'muccus' that flows through them from the brain. The first effective challenge which led to its overthrow came from Karl V. Schneider‡ in 1655 and in 1660–2 when his more important, yet very tedious work, *De catarrhis*, Wittebergae, appeared.§

Having decided to publish this very rare monograph it would perhaps have been more appropriate for the authors to have dealt in a little more detail with the earlier history of cerebral excretion so as to create a better background and perspective for it. One feels that the emphasis should have been placed upon the concept, which after all was one of the fundamental tenets of classical medicine and which lasted over 2,000 years, rather than on the bibliographical details which occupy about a quarter of the book.

EDWIN CLARKE

Preventive Medicine in World War II, vol. vi. Communicable Diseases: Malaria, prepared and published under the direction of Lt.-Gen. Leonard D. Heaton, Surgeon-General, U.S. Army. Editor in Chief, Col. John B. Coates, Jr., M.C., Washington, Office of the Surgeon-General, 1963, pp. xxv, 642, \$6.25.

During the Second World War the most notable, practical advance in control of endemic disease was made in respect of malaria, numerically still the most important disease in the world. This volume of the United States Official Medical History shows how the infection was kept in check among the Allied troops, even in hyper-endemic areas, where it might have been a potent military deterrent and decided the issue between victory and defeat.

The optimum dosage of the drug 'Atebrin' was ascertained and its method of administration improved. It was manufactured in Britain in 1940 under the non-proprietary name of 'mepacrine', as was also another pre-war German drug,

* *On the Sacred Disease*, IX.

† *The Use of the Parts*, VIII, vi.

‡ *Dissertatio de Osse Cribriforme*, Wittebergae.

§ See K. F. H. Marx, *Konrad Victor Schneider und die Katarrh*, Gottingen, 1873.