

Book Reviews

the author of this biography obviously intended, to seek further and find out more of the man and his works.

PHILIP CLARK

The Boke of Chyldren. THOMAS PHAIRE. Edited by Prof. A. V. Neale, F.R.C.P., and H. R. E. Wallis, M.D. Edinburgh: E. and S. Livingstone, 1955. Pp. 76. 7s. 6d.

The purpose of Phaire's book on diseases of children was 'To doo theym good that haue moste nede, that is to saye, children', and to put forward remedies 'Whyche oughte not to be secrete for lucre of a fewe'.

The charm of his writing will be enjoyed by doctors and laymen alike, and the light he throws on social problems of the day will be valued by historians. The present-day children suffer from many of the disorders described by Phaire, and the advice on the management of measles, 'The best and moste sure helpe in this case, is not to meddle with anye kynde of medicines, but to let nature worke her operacio', might well be taken to heart in the age when patients demand antibiotics for trivialities. The choice of a wet-nurse must have presented a most difficult problem for the mother whose lactation failed, for she must be 'No dronkarde, vicious nor sluttysshe, for suche corrupteth the nature of the chyld', but she must be honest and chaste, 'Such as had a man childe last afore'. It is surprising that all mothers did not try to breast-feed their own babies since such catastrophes might result from a bad choice of wet-nurse.

George Frederick Still (1868–1941) published his famous *History of Paediatrics* in 1931, and in it he showed great interest in the first English book of Paediatrics which was written by Thomas Phaire (d. 1560), whose preface ends with the words 'Thus fare ye well gentyll readers.'

All interested in children, medicine and social history will be grateful to Professor Neale and Dr. Wallis for giving us Phaire's *Boke of Chyldren*.

URSULA JAMES

English Historical Documents, 1833–1874. Edited by G. M. YOUNG, M.A., D.LITT., and W. D. HANDCOCK, M.A., B.LITT. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1956. Pp. xxiii+1017. 95s.

This is vol. XII (1) in the series of *English Historical Documents* now in course of publication under the general editorship of Professor David Douglas. The purpose of the series is to make generally accessible a wide selection of the fundamental sources of English history. Nearly all the volumes published to date contain material of medical interest, but the present volume is of exceptional importance from this point of view because a great

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part of it deals with Poor Law Reform and with the Public Health Movement. Part IX (pp. 683–747) contains documents relating to the Poor Law; Part X (pp. 751–826) is devoted to Public Health; and Part XII (pp. 919–1008) to Industrial Conditions and Legislation. In each part the documents themselves are preceded by an illuminating introduction and a select bibliography. This is the great period of Parliamentary Papers or Blue Books and, as Sir John Charles pointed out in the first issue of this journal (*Med. Hist.*, 1957, 1, 1), Blue Books are to be regarded as amongst the basic historical documents. Long excerpts from many of those cited by Sir John Charles are given in this volume, together with others of a like nature. The names of the editors are a sufficient guarantee of the learning and the care that have gone to the making of this very substantial volume, which will be indispensable to all serious students of the history of public health and social medicine.

W. J. B.

W. W. Francis: Tributes from his Friends on the Occasion of the Thirty-fifth Anniversary of the Osler Society of McGill University. Montreal, published by the Society, 1956. Edition limited to 500 copies. xv+123 pp. Illustrated.

We have all heard the comparison of a Festschrift to a first-class funeral but if this volume can be called a Festschrift then it is to an Irish wake or a cocktail party that we must look for a simile. And what a wonderful party it is, with the guest of honour taking a part (by quotation) in every conversation. Those who had been fortunate enough to know Dr. Francis and to enjoy his friendship will know what to expect; others will pick up this volume and, as they browse through its pages, be enchanted by its wealth of good stories, its freshness and its sincerity. Oslerians will enjoy meeting their idol once more in his lighter moments, as when he got his friend Ruth Draper to give some of her sketches on the high table at Balliol after a dinner with the Master, an incident recalled by that great actress in her own tribute to Osler's nephew.

The chief value of the book for those who dismiss all this as mere anecdote will lie in the story which it tells of the compilation of the wonderful catalogue of Osler's library, the *Bibliotheca Osleriana* and of the great role played in this work by Dr. Francis and Reginald Hill, now the Librarian of the National Central Library but then a young assistant in the Bodleian Library. It is one of the most personal of all library catalogues, and from the portrait of Francis which emerges from these tributes we can judge how firmly he left his mark on that bibliographical classic. That a man of his calibre has presided over the Osler Library for so long has been the great good fortune of McGill and its students. Human nature being what it is, all those students may not have appreciated the privilege of knowing such a man, but they