

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 Minnie Wright Blogg's bibliography of 1919 was quickly superseded by Maude E. Abbott's *Classified and annotated bibliography* of 1926 (second edition 1939) and this is now revised and updated in the present handsome volume.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some opportunities have been missed, the book still makes an auspicious debut for its publisher and is unlikely to be superseded.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

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Freud misunderstood Schreber's delusions, and that he was guided by his theory rather than the text. Whatever the interpretation, Schreber's memoirs provide a unique insight into the language, speech, delusions, and behaviour of a paranoid schizophrenic.

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M. ANNE CROWTHER and BRENDA WHITE, *On soul and conscience: the medical expert and crime. 150 years of forensic medicine in Glasgow*, Aberdeen University Press, 1988, 8vo, pp. xviii, 169, illus., £14.50, £7.95, (paperback).

Though Edinburgh was, albeit most reluctantly, the first Scottish (or, indeed, British) university to recognize medical jurisprudence as an academic subject, with the establishment of a Regius Professorship in 1806, the Department of Forensic Medicine in the University of Glasgow is effectively the oldest—and largest—such department still in existence in Britain today. Despite its inauspicious beginnings as a plaything of university and national politics, and despite the mediocrity of its first incumbents, under the two Professors John Glaister, father and son, who between them held the Glasgow Chair from 1898 to 1962, the Glasgow Department came not only to dominate criminal medico-legal practice in Scotland but also to serve as Scotland's principal national and international centre for post-graduate training and research in forensic medicine.

The timely appearance of *On soul and conscience* on the 150th anniversary of the creation of the Glasgow Regius Professorship highlights the role of the Glaisters and their successors in building up the Glasgow Department into one of the leading centres of modern British forensic medicine, and thus helps to offset the marked London-Edinburgh bias apparent in most existing historical accounts of the development of English (and Scottish) forensic medicine. It was in Glasgow, rather than in Edinburgh or London, that forensic medicine first became institutionalized in Britain as a modern medical specialty, while many of the non-medical methods of scientific crime investigation and toxicological analysis which in England have long been the almost exclusive preserve of the Home Office Forensic Science Service were first developed and practised in Scotland by the Glasgow Department of Forensic Medicine.

In accordance with its primarily departmental orientation and affiliation, the authors have chosen to cast their study in a largely chronological and prosopographical mould, tracing the origins and growth of the Department through the lives and work of successive Regius Professors, and general-historical readers may well feel that this has the effect of unduly narrowing the historical frame of reference in which the Department's work is situated. And whereas the earlier sections abound in fascinating insights into (for example) nineteenth-century Scottish university medical politics, and the close connections between forensic medicine, public health administration, and hygiene in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Scotland, in the later chapters these more general contextual aspects tend increasingly to be crowded out by a mass of purely technical and institutional details of limited interest to non-specialist readers. Nevertheless, *On soul and conscience* provides an excellent introduction to the history of forensic medicine not only in Glasgow but in Scotland as a whole, while it also serves to highlight the possibility of using local or area studies of medico-legal practice to transcend some of the limitations of more purely institutional or disciplinary histories of forensic medicine.

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JUDITH MOORE, *A zeal for responsibility: the struggle for professional nursing in Victorian England, 1868–1883*, Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1988, 8vo, pp. xvii, 214, \$23.00.

The title of this book is somewhat misleading as in fact it presents the introduction of professional nursing into two London hospitals rather than an overview. It is to be