

Book Reviews

Wildberger became a renowned local figure and received an honorary medical doctorate from Jena and many foreign honours. In later life he moved his institute to Forchheim, where he had the assistance of his medically-qualified son before the latter emigrated to America. His writings on the proper training of orthopaedic surgeons, with their insistence on early specialist education in methods and appliances based on the orthopaedic institute and clinic, are surprisingly modern.

DAVID LE VAY

Semmelweis: his Life and Work, by G. GORTVAY and I. ZOLTAN (Eng. trans. by Eva Rona and R. Bonnerjea), Budapest, Akadémiai Kaidó, 1968, pp. 288, illus., no price stated.

This book is a translation of the Hungarian edition 'Semmelweis elete es munkassaga' which was originally brought out by the same publishers in 1966.

It is an interesting account of the life of Semmelweis with particular emphasis on the Hungarian aspects of his life story. The discovery of the mode of transmission of puerperal fever is well presented and there is a detailed account of his last illness. Several of the later chapters of the book are devoted to a discussion of the initial resistance to his doctrine and the subsequent dispute over the priority for his discovery. The arguments made in relation to these points are often diffuse and unconvincing but it remains a valuable document for the student of Semmelweis as it is well illustrated and well annotated. A major drawback is the lack of an index and cross reference is therefore a difficult problem.

This volume was presented to foreign delegates attending a Conference in 1968 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Semmelweis. The book is not available outside Hungary, but it can be obtained from the Bookshop for Foreign Trade, Kultura, Budapest I.Fö U.32.

NEIL MCINTYRE

Extinct Medical Schools of Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia, by HAROLD J. ABRAHAMS, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press; London, Oxford University Press, 1966, pp. 580, £4.80.

This is a large, encyclopaedic book which could have been smaller, and better, if it had been arranged on rather different lines. As it is, the narrative flow is disturbed continually by lists of graduates and names of teachers, all of which really ought to be in small type in an appendix. But we must accept the book on its own terms and be grateful for the facts unearthed by Dr. Abrahams.

He tells, in somewhat disjointed prose, of eight short-lived medical schools in Philadelphia between 1840 and 1880. This was competition run riot. In fact it typified some of the most potent forces active in nineteenth-century American society, such as a faith in laissez-faire principles and an urge to innovate, and it thus constitutes a most important area for study as much by historians of human behaviour as by the chronicler of medical events. Eventually, of course, America woke up to the danger and clamped down on these medical degree factories. It is interesting to read of the vital part played by the Press in exposing the greatest scandal of all, i.e. the Eclectic Medical College/American University of Philadelphia, where forgery was practised

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side by side with a particular brand of medicine. Englishmen might take note that not a few of the graduates listed by Dr. Abrahams came from this country.

E. GASKELL

Psychiatry and its History, ed. by GEORGE MORA and JEANNE L. BRAND, Springfield, Illinois, C. C. Thomas, 1970, pp. xviii, 283, \$9.00.

In 1967 a workshop was held at Yale University on the Methodological Problems involved in the study of the History of Psychiatry. Despite the immediate suspicion aroused by any meeting concerned with Methodology, a subject which all too often conceals a total ignorance of the discipline itself, the workshop proved a valuable experience by nature of the contributions which a number of distinguished medical historians presented to the participants. Now these deliberations are presented to a wider audience in a book form. Two attitudes may be taken to a discussion of methodology, first, that medical history is a living subject, without a knowledge of which the daily practice of medicine is no more than an arid, technical procedure. As such, the human, individual approach of the doctor to the history of his subject may be more rewarding than if too much attention is paid to the historiographical elements of the craft. The second attitude is that without a vigorous attention to the historical methods of today much of what is written by the amateur is of little value, and what is almost implicit in this view, is that a training in such methods is necessary or even essential for the writing of medical history. In perhaps the wisest of all the communications in this book, Ilza Veith sympathetically deals with this dilemma, and with her broad-ranging intelligence and lack of intellectual arrogance, provides in a few pages encouragement to all those amateur historians who might so easily be deterred from ever putting pen to paper. There is room for both approaches, she argues, for the specialist such as herself, who has perforce to deal with primary sources only, written in a language with which the historian must be conversant, and also for the physician psychiatrist who brings to the subject his own knowledge of his speciality. All the contributors agree that facts must be the basis of historical research, and that means referral to primary sources; that judgment of the facts must be sound and well based, and that inter-disciplinary co-operation in such a wide-ranging subject as psychiatry is perhaps more necessary than in some other fields of medical history. As with all such co-operative efforts, the individual contributions are of differing value for the individual reader; the overall message of the book is one that Francis Braceland, in his wise and gentle foreward, sums up as the provision of the necessary guideposts to the writing of medical history.

DENIS LEIGH

- (1) *Physiologie, der Wandel ihrer Konzepte, Probleme und Methoden vom 16. bis 20. Jahrhundert*, by K. E. ROTHSCUH (Orbis Academicus, Band II/15), Freiburg/München, Verlag Karl Alber, 1968, pp. 407, DM. 58.
- (2) *Physiologie im Werden*, by K. E. ROTHSCUH (Medizin in Geschichte und Kultur, Band 9), Stuttgart, G. Fischer Verlag, 1969, pp. xi, 188, DM. 34.
- (1) This book is one of a series entitled 'Orbis Academicus', dealing with various problems of science. It discusses the changes in physiological concepts that took place