

Book Reviews

several of Galen's works into Latin from the original Greek, a gift to medical lore which earned him an encomium from Erasmus. Caius promoted the study of anatomy in Cambridge and London, wrote an admirable account of the English epidemic of sweating sickness of 1551, and other works including one of the natural history of the dog, written for the Swiss naturalist, Conrad Gesner.

Galen's name was venerated in England as well as on the Continent, for his teaching was imbedded in medieval texts. Chaucer's doctor of phisike, 'a veray parfite practisour,' well knew 'Gallien' with other classical authors, and both Linacre and Caius were staunch Galenists. Professor O'Malley observes that Linacre advocated Greek medicine because in his day it was genuinely superior. It was otherwise with Caius for in his time classical medicine, in some areas, notably at Padua, was being criticised and surpassed. Caius was unwilling to build upon and to progress beyond Galen as some continental physicians were doing. The book is well produced, well indexed and Professor O'Malley's erudite notes add to its interest.

ARTHUR S. MACNALT

Albrecht von Haller–Ignazio Somis. Briefwechsel 1754–1777, herausgegeben und erläutert von ERICH HINTZSCHE, Bern, Hans Huber Verlag, 1965, pp. 147. Haller (1708–77) is known to the general public in German speaking countries only through his epic poem *Die Alpen*, with its descriptions of scenery, an early precursor of German Romanticism. In his correspondence with Ignazio Somis (1718–93), a clinical physician from Turin, we meet Haller as the medical savant and naturalist. The reader becomes participant in the ups and downs, the doubts and triumphs accompanying his experiments on the sensitivity and 'irritability' of tissues, his successes and failures in inoculation, and countless other personal experiences. We hear his opinion on current medical questions and on the books of his contemporaries. Somis is instrumental in providing for him books and specimens of plants to help him with his botanical studies.

The letters have been collected from private and public sources in Italy. As Somis knew no German, Haller wrote in French while Somis replied in Italian. Somis' letters are going to be published separately. Here their main contents are given in German. The annotations are meticulous and there is a name index, but regrettably no subject index.

Accounts of personal life are restricted to those of medical interest, so that, for instance, Haller's last illness and its treatment by himself and others are described in great detail. Somis writes apprehensive warnings about Haller's constant use of opium but though it may have speeded his death we may be grateful as the findings were immortalised in his *Dissertation on the Effects of Opium in the Body* published by the editor of the present Correspondence. Current politics are mentioned in most letters, and it is comforting to read in a letter of 1761: 'Je crois . . . que plus elle [la guerre] durera, et plus long sera le repos qui la suivra, parceque les principales puissances seront épuisées. Tel fut le repos, en general, de l'Europe apres 1713, il dura vingt ans.'

MARIANNE WINDER