

Book Reviews

It is of interest that he compared Austria with 'more advanced countries including England', but if he had been able to visit England (there is no mention of his having done so) he might have found a rather different state of affairs. As Poynter has shown, although the second half of the eighteenth century saw a renaissance of surgery, it also saw long and bitter conflicts between the College of Physicians, the Barber Surgeons and the Apothecaries. The College of Physicians had for long contended on the basis of the Act of 1540 that major surgery should be performed only in the presence of a physician! When Parliament was asked to confirm this by legislation, the Barber Surgeons reacted strongly and the Physicians finally dropped the matter.

However, conditions in France were somewhat better. As Sherrington points out in his biography of Jean Fernel, the title 'Officier du Santé' was created by the Republic in 1794 to cover *both* physician and surgeon in one term. A portrait medal of Fernel and Paré in profile, after the woodcut of 1554, was struck to commemorate 'La Médecine rendu à son unité primitive'.

The medieval practice of taking an Arts course before starting medicine, meant that the student had perforce some grounding in grammar, dialectic and logic. In this way, medicine was prevented from being debased into a mere craft like surgery, which had to await the nineteenth century before achieving an equal status. Mederer was thus ahead of his time in holding this unitarian concept.

This small volume of seventy-two pages is another in the series of 'Sudhoffs Medical Classics', published by J. A. Barth of Leipzig. It is edited by E. T. Nauck, Professor of Medicine in Freiburg, as a tribute to his illustrious predecessor, who was also an early member of the Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina, under whose auspices the series is published.

The booklet also contains six illustrations including two of Mederer himself. There is a table of contents and notes on the text both throughout and at the end of the book. In 1774 Mederer married Maria Francisca Strobl, daughter of a colleague. He had eleven children, nine sons and two daughters, who are the subject of a most interesting family tree, compiled by a present-day descendant, Obersleutnant Konrad Mederer-Wuthwehr.

Altogether a most fascinating vignette and well worth a place in the library.

I. M. LIBRACH

The Origin of Medical Terms, by HENRY ALAN SKINNER, second edition, Baltimore, The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1961, pp. x, 437, illus., \$12.50.

Dr. Skinner, who is Professor of Anatomy at London, Ontario, has enlarged and improved his historical dictionary of medical terms, which first appeared in 1949 and made a notable impression then. Though its type is smaller and neater, the new edition is fifty pages longer. This is due to wider coverage, rather than revision of the original entries. In so far as it carries out the purpose of its title, to explain the origin and history of words used in the medical sciences, this book can be warmly welcomed. Anatomical terms and the names of diseases, instruments and operations are clearly discussed, where the history of both word and concept can be precise. For these classes of medical terms the book is directly informative and persuasively educative through the historic perspectives which it opens. Many such terms incorporate the personal name of a discoverer, and Dr. Skinner has included brief biographies of these eponymous pioneers and of other men important in the history of medicine. In this new edition his son, Mr. Paul Skinner, has provided excellent small portraits of many of these famous people, expressive line-drawings derived from contemporary likenesses,

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as well as other illustrations which considerably enhance the book. The articles on therapeutic terms are less satisfactory, being vaguer and not always up to date. Dr. Skinner has also included short essays on general subjects such as 'electricity' and 'glass' which are only indirectly apposite. Some of these would seem less intrusive, if they had been rigorously brought level with advances in modern medicine; the article 'microscope' for instance begins admirably but breaks off at 1856. Dr. Skinner's pleasantly discursive style presents his detailed learning in eminently readable form, and his book can in general be recommended for quick reference and for leisurely browsing.

W. R. LE FANU

Bibliography of Medico-Legal Works in English, ROBERT P. BRITAIN, London, Sweet and Maxwell, Ltd., 1962, pp. 252, £2 12s. 6d.

Forensic medicine has had only one serious bibliographer, Stamford Chaillé in 1876, and this new bibliography of medico-legal works in English must therefore expect a warm welcome from both academic experts in the subject and from medical historians: it well deserves a place on the shelves of each.

Britain has expended much patient labour in collecting the published works either written in the original in English or translated from the French of M. Orfila, the German of Mittermaier, the Italian of Enrico Ferri. The large Indian contribution to the literature in forensic medicine receives full notice.

Here the historian will quickly be able to locate the source of Christison's plea for a Chair in the University of Edinburgh, the fate of Chitty's treatise, read the original of Bucknill's classification of criminal lunatics or browse in the long and distinguished career of Taylor's *Principles and Practice of Medical Jurisprudence*. The difficulty of exclusion—mainly of pamphlets and lectures—often published privately by their proud authors—has not been overcome and much trivial matter of little or no literary or historical importance could have been evicted to make room for important figures like Mead, Blyth, Faulds, Herschel, or the leaders of current opinion like Williams, Race, Mourant or Dreisbach. But no major task like this is ever accomplished satisfactorily in a first writing. We hope to see 'Britain' in a second edition with both weeding and new plantings before long has elapsed. He has already produced a remarkably useful reference work: it only needs the pruning and polish that every good writer wishes he had given his work before handing in the manuscript. Sweet and Maxwell would do well to extend 'Britain's' commission—without strings.

KEITH SIMPSON

Medical Department, United States Army. Internal Medicine in World War II. Vol. I: Activities of Medical Consultants. Editor-in-Chief, COLONEL JOHN BOYD COATES, JR., M.C., Editor for Internal Medicine, W. PAUL HAVENS, JR., M.D. Washington, D.C., Office of the Surgeon General Department of the Army, 1961, pp. 880, illus., \$7.50.

This massive tome, the seventeenth to be published in the series concerned with the history of the U.S. Army Medical Department in the Second World War, deals with internal medicine, and is the first of three volumes upon the subject. Its nine chapters are written by thirteen physicians with wartime experience as consultants to the Army.

On 7 December 1941 the Japanese air force attacked Pearl Harbour and bombed the United States fleet which lay at anchor. Next day the United States was at war with the Axis Powers.