

Book Reviews

VERN BULLOUGH, BONNIE BULLOUGH, and MARIETTA P. STANTON (eds), *Florence Nightingale and her era: a collection of new scholarship*, New York and London, Garland, 1990, 8vo, pp. xvi. 365, \$50.00.

This volume, by established and new writers on the history of nursing, is the result of a conference held at the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1989. The editors are to be congratulated for the conference itself, and for speedily reproducing a number of papers presented at it. The central theme of the conference and the volume is the life and times of Florence Nightingale, with particular reference to the way her ideas and values were taken up and translated by other nursing leaders and organizations. The final contribution to the volume (a Nightingale bibliography by Bonnie Bullough, Vern Bullough, and Lilli Sentz) illustrates the vast and growing literature on Nightingale and her role in the development of nursing.

The volume is divided into sections, each dealing with an aspect of the concerns and interests that Nightingale scholars have developed. Monica Baly, the foremost Nightingale scholar, examines the usefulness of the Nightingale myths to nursing reformers and to hospital administrators. That theme finds an echo in an important new contribution by Martha Vicinus on Nightingale's use as a role-model for nineteenth century girls, through the many popular "biographies" of Florence Nightingale.

Other contributions link Nightingale scholarship and "nightingaleism" to important contemporary social and political issues, including a reappraisal of the suffrage movement and the attitude of some of the nursing leadership to women's issues. Roberta Tierney identifies the significance of the American Civil War to the development of modern nursing in the USA. Unfortunately, the volume does not contain a similar piece on the impact of war on British nursing, although Anne Summers (1989) has made this an important area of study. It is also gratifying to see that nursing history deals with psychiatric as well as general nursing and with education as much as with professionalization.

The volume is, at \$50.00, badly produced and poorly proof-read (one chapter misspells "nursing" throughout the page headings). The typeface and typesetting are not conducive to easy reading. These are minor irritations, given the overall satisfaction of seeing a volume devoted to Nightingale scholarship breaking out of the conventional biographical, or hagiographical, approach.

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W. J. O'CONNOR, *British physiologists 1885–1914: a biographical dictionary*, Manchester University Press, 1991, pp. xviii, 582, £55.00 (0-7190-3282-2).

The second volume of physiological biographies follows the same pattern as the first (see *Med. Hist.*, 1989, 33: 390). Details of the subjects have been extracted mainly from obituary notices in the *British Medical Journal* and similar sources and presented in a very readable, almost conversational, manner. As before, the biographies are grouped geographically (Oxford, Cambridge, London etc.), according to the subject's main affiliation, with subdivisions for the various institutions within each area. There is good cross-referencing to take in moves during a career and the index allows any subject to be found easily. The date 1914 means only that the subject had been identified as a physiologist by that year; thus the careers, and the lives, of the younger ones continued for many years after; for example, Nathan Mutch of Guy's, elected to the Physiological Society in 1912, lived until 1982. In addition to the biographies there are introductory paragraphs outlining the state of physiology at the time and place so that the whole adds up to more than "dictionary" might suggest; it amounts to a summary (but nothing more) of British physiology of the period.

A comparison of this volume with the first shows that physiology had clearly come of age. Although covering only 30 years, compared with the 65 of the previous volume, there are now about 350 subjects compared with only 135, and more of them were full-time physiologists, rather than medical graduates awaiting a clinical appointment. Although the author often refers to "the men", six women merit a biographical entry, compared with only one previously.