

Book Reviews

Essays in Eponymy: Obstetric and Gynecologic Milestones. HAROLD SPEERT, M.D.
New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958; pp. ix, 700. Illustrated. \$15.

To read this book is to realize quickly that it is one which we have been waiting for, and one which we might have liked to write ourselves. Few would have done as well as Dr. Speert. Only a gynaecologist could have made the book so instructive, and only a medical historian with a literary gift could have combined an enjoyable narrative with a reliable work of reference. The author has taken 101 gynaecologists who have given their names to some technique or aspect of gynaecology; most of these are familiar names, a few are perhaps not very well known outside their own country. Each name prompts an essay giving the historical and clinical background to the man's work with extensive quotations from his original description (translated into English where necessary) and a concise biography of the man himself.

The book is composed of seventy-nine independent chapters (some tell of more than one eponym); these are grouped in twelve parts each dealing with a different aspect of gynaecology—instruments, positions, operations and so on. It is very well illustrated. Library researchers will congratulate Dr. Speert on his success in finding ninety-four portraits, so that only seven are missing. Some of these may still come to light. Several of the seven are relatively less famous, and all were probably more modest than the other ninety-four. It is surprising if Champetier de Ribes (1848–1935) has not left a photograph behind; and Dr. Emma Louise Call (1847–1937), the only woman to be included and the joint discoverer of the Call-Exner bodies among ovarian granulosa cells, obviously belonged to the photographic age. Little is known of Martin Naboth of Leipzig (1675–1721) and his portrait has not been found. The only other unportrayed German is H. L. F. Robert (1814–78) who described the very rare double Naegele pelvis. Neither of the eponymous Douglasses left behind a picture that could be copied. James Douglas (1675–1742) was 'Queen Charlotte's personal physician' who gave his name to the cul-de-sac of the pelvic peritoneum, while John C. Douglas (1775–1850) of Dublin described spontaneous evolution of the foetus to correct shoulder presentation. Hermann T. Gärtner of Copenhagen (1785–1827) who recognized and described the primitive urogenital duct previously noted by Malpighi, has also no portrait.

Readers in various parts of the world may regret the absence of some of their national names. Fergusson's speculum, Wrigley's forceps, the Coombs' anti-globulin test, Auvard's speculum and Aveling's repositor perhaps deserved inclusion; but for all that, the book is a valuable one for quick reference for both medical historians and gynaecologists, and a most readable companion for an odd hour by the fireside.

ALISTAIR GUNN

John Wesley among the Physicians: A Study of Eighteenth-century Medicine. A. WESLEY HILL.
London: Epworth Press, 1958; pp. 135. 10s. 6d. net.

John Wesley was one of the greatest, and certainly one of the most discussed, figures of the eighteenth century. Everyone knows of his enormously successful and long-continued campaign as an evangelist, and many appreciate the hardship under which he worked in his daily progress from one town to another. But it is less well known that Wesley, although he had no medical training, wrote a book which had a great influence on the health of the people.

In 1747 Wesley published a little book called *Primitive Physick*. It went through twenty-three editions in his lifetime, and nine further editions after his death. It was