

Book Reviews

related laboratory sciences, who turned to psychiatry relatively late in his career. Like Meyer, too, he adopted a broad, holistic standpoint and exercised his influence as much by his personal qualities as by his work and voluminous publications.

Benjamin White's biography is clearly an act of reverend devotion, complete with a family tree, Cobb's full bibliography, photographs, the transcript of taped reminiscences of a former student, a list of sources, and extensive notes. The profusion of anecdotes and professional detail, however, tend to obscure the essential lineaments of the man and the essentials of his achievement. A more concise, evaluative account in a larger historical perspective would have served him better in the long run.

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TH. W. ENGELMANN, *Some papers and his bibliography*, with introduction by Frits L. Meijler and foreword (in Dutch) by Dirk Durrer, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1984, 8vo, pp. xvii, 264 [facsimile], xl, illus., Dfl.70.00 (paperback).

Engelmann (1843–1909) was born in Leipzig; he studied medicine there and in other German universities. After obtaining his PhD in 1867 with a thesis on the cornea, he went to Utrecht where he worked with Donders, a prominent physiologist and pioneer in ophthalmology. In 1871, Engelmann was appointed professor of histology and clinical biology and succeeded Donders in the chair of physiology after the latter's death in 1889. In 1897, Engelmann left for Berlin, where he replaced du Bois-Reymond.

The facsimile reprints of some of his papers (mostly in German, a few either in Dutch, French, or English) are of great interest; not only because of their contents but also because these papers were taken from Wenckebach's personal library (now in the University Library of Utrecht). They show Wenckebach's marking of interesting paragraphs. Engelmann's bibliography (245 papers) covers the period from 1859 to the end of 1907: those reproduced in Meijler's book are all from the significant decade 1893–1903. This period started with the discovery of the AV bundle by His and ended when Einthoven published his first electrocardiograms, made with his new string galvanometer; it also yielded most of the scientific work performed by Mackenzie and Wenckebach when they were still busy practitioners.

Durrer in his foreword and Meijler in his introduction, which contains a short but informative biographical notice, emphasize two of Engelmann's "firsts", which are now proving valuable for cardiology: the use of provoked extrasystoles to study the rhythmic properties of heart muscle, and the phenomenon of concealed conduction, as it was called by its rediscoverer Langedorff fifty years later. They give Charles Fish credit for "clearing the dust from Engelmann's work". On the other hand, Durrer also quotes Wenckebach, who, in his book on cardiac arrhythmia which was published in 1903 at Leipzig by the firm of Engelmann's father, gratefully acknowledged his debt to Engelmann's theory of myogenic activity. This indeed appears to be the crucial contribution by Engelmann to cardiac physiology. It was at variance with the time-honoured neurogenic theory but in accordance with the work of Gaskell and with several findings by others. Virtually all other cardiac research by Engelmann was connected with or could be considered a consequence of that fundamental issue.

In conclusion: a facsimile edition of authentic texts such as the present one surely deserves praise. Comprehension could have been facilitated by adding a comment and/or summary in English to individual papers, especially because only one paper of the series was written in that language. However, the book will serve well to focus attention on Engelmann as a prominent but now somewhat neglected pioneer of cardiac physiology.

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