

Book Reviews

400 publications on these vessels published since 1708. Mettenleiter's text is saturated with scores of biographical and general medico-historical notes and is enlarged by various appendices containing source material on Thebesius, selected English translations and several excerpts of texts mentioned.

It is the author's declared aim to compile and present all the material necessary to enable a discussion of the history of the discovery and of the function of the *vasa cordis minima*. His book is thus an interesting attempt to write history which is of immediate interest to modern research. The bibliographical records seem to be only of little help for medical scientists who are concerned with numerous methodological and technical details. But they might provide a good take-off point for a case study in the theory and sociology of modern science. As such, a study could focus on a well-defined and controversial research topic which is studied by scientists from various disciplines (physiology, heart surgery, embryology, etc.) which might furnish some new insights into the methods and cultures of medical research—and thus be of interest to the scientists themselves.

Mettenleiter's book could therefore be a first small step towards a study of modern science. Unfortunately, it is also only a small step towards a historical study in its own right. The author confines himself to a description of the notions of various authors from the epic of Gilgamesh to the present time, enriched by the enumeration of countless "facts". He thus reveals a positivistic conception of history which is, for example, visible in his characterization of Vieussens who, as a physiologist, was subject to the errors of his time but who nevertheless was a pioneering anatomist (p. 204). Such seeming contradictions should have encouraged the author to ask the questions which are at the core of modern historical research: how are discoveries integrated into the concepts of their time, why are they accepted or rejected, and which mechanisms within the scientific and other communities control these developments? Whoever would like to study the discovery of the Thebesian veins in such a manner will have to go back to the

sources and Mettenleiter's book will be of only limited help.

The first section of the book is devoted to the biography of Thebesius who is portrayed as a representative Silesian physician of his time. We do not, however, know much more about him than about many physicians of the period and therefore have only some general information about his family, studies and medical career; we get to know his few medical publications and poems, but we hear almost nothing about his patients, his professional contacts and his daily life and work as a physician.

It has to be noted that this book is the dissertation of a medical student and therefore should be judged as such and be welcomed as a solid and reliable work that has, despite its shortcomings, a value as a collection and description of material pertaining to a minor discovery in the history of medicine.

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Malcolm Parsons, *Yorkshire and the history of medicine*, York, William Sessions, 2002, pp. viii, 111, illus., £6.50 (+£1.20 p&p UK; +£2.00 p&p overseas), (paperback 1-85072-273-0). Orders to: William Sessions Ltd, Huntington Road, York YO31 9HS, UK.

Yorkshire is known for the bluntness of its sons, as well as for its interest in such sports as cricket and Rugby League football. A county with as many acres as there are words in the Bible, it boasts not only the coalmines and smoke of its industrial heartland, but also the beauty of its north sea coast and the lovely valleys of its northern dales. Less known, perhaps, is its relationship with medicine.

Malcolm Parsons is an erudite neurologist who has spent much of his life in consultant practice in Leeds. In *Yorkshire and the history of medicine*, he describes the many remarkable medical men who either came from Yorkshire or pursued their careers there. Many are familiar figures, John Fothergill the Quaker from Wensleydale, John Coakley Lettsom, his protégé and fellow

Quaker, the Tukes of York who released the insane from bondage, and the neurologist Hughlings Jackson. Clifford Allbutt, future Regius Professor at the University of Cambridge, was physician to the Leeds Infirmary, whilst Berkeley Moynihan, who forever did away with the idea that the surgeon was no more than a rough and ready sawbones, became the first and virtually the only provincial to become President of the Royal College of Surgeons. William Pickles of Wensleydale became the first President of the Royal College of General Practitioners. But this book tells us so much more. It is not generally appreciated that Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* was written whilst he was practising in Halifax nor that David Ferrier had so great an influence on the recognition of the importance of cerebral localization whilst working at the West Riding Lunatic Asylum. There was also the important work of medical artists. John Burton, portrayed as Dr Slop in *Tristram Shandy*, was a remarkable anatomical illustrator, as was his friend, George Stubbs, much of whose early work was carried out in Yorkshire. Not content with the modern era, Dr Parsons is an expert on the stained glass windows of York Minister which portray medical events. This engaging volume is to be recommended to all who appreciate the importance of local history. It is well written. Sadly, however, there is no index.

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Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra and Hilary Marland, *Cultures of child health in Britain and the Netherlands in the twentieth century*, *Clio Medica* 71, The Wellcome Series in the History of Medicine, Amsterdam and New York, Rodopi, 2003, pp. vi, 317 (hardback 90-420-1054-1), (paperback 90-420-1044-4).

In 1999 a group of Dutch and British historians working in child health gathered at Warwick University for a workshop on 'Child health and national fitness in the twentieth century'. National fitness emerged as a less important

unifying theme to the workshop than had been anticipated. As the editors wrote in the introduction to the volume which emerged from the workshop, the dominance of "national efficiency" was challenged. National efficiency was still viewed as a central motivating factor for child welfare and health in early-twentieth-century Britain by those who wrote on that subject; for example in his chapter on mental deficiency, Mark Jackson cited an early-twentieth-century doctor who proclaimed: "The hand that *wrecks* the cradle *wrecks* the nation" (p. 157). Yet it was also shown to be time and place specific. The Dutch historians argued that national fitness was less important in discourses of child health than the "pillared" denominational society of early-twentieth-century Netherlands. Other papers focusing on post-Second World War societies showed that concerns of national fitness had given way to other considerations based on social changes and the new child psychology (such as the "separation anxiety" discussed by Harry Hendrick, the sexual revolution discussed by Hugo Röling, and the anti-psychiatry movement and youth culture discussed by Gemma Blok). This collection of essays highlights the importance of viewing the history of child health in its broader social and cultural context, and the value of comparative history in the unravelling of those contextual constructions.

The history of children's health covers a multiplicity of subject areas and this volume is no exception. The subjects range from physical education in schools, the school medical service and educational reform, infant care advice and consumerism, mental deficiency, children's and adolescent residential institutions, corporal punishment, hospital visiting, and sex education. The editors define "the child" as being school aged, between the ages of four and fourteen, and note that most of the essays focus on this age group. However, three deal with infants, and two with adolescents (defined as between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five). In his overview chapter, Roger Cooter laments the continued "adultist" approach to the historical study of children and the lack of children's voice, though he sees Hendrick's essay on hospital visiting as