

## Book Reviews

The undoubted hero of the piece emerges as George III himself. Beside him, the royal physicians all seem small men. Francis Willis, known as the 'duplicate doctor' because of his double qualification in divinity and medicine, got the credit for the cure because he and his son Dr. John were in residence when nature triumphed over art and spontaneous recovery restored the patient. Another son, the sinister Reverend Thomas Willis, also somehow managed to insinuate himself into the Royal family's confidence. Sir George Baker represented eighteenth-century medical practice at its dull, respectable and solid best, while Dr. Richard Warren's clinical acumen was blunted by his allegiance to the party of the Prince of Wales, whose physician he also was, as well as by his squabbles with the Lincolnshire mad-doctors and their methods.

But it is easy to be critical of the actors in that great drama of human, psychiatric and national history, in which confusion extended far beyond the mind of the patient. Yet Warren's pronouncement in the jargon of the time, that the King was suffering from 'seizures upon his brain'—that is a physical, not a mental illness—seems to fit the clinical features far better than the diagnosis of pathological mood change due to frustration, inhibition and conflict which we are offered here.

RICHARD HUNTER

*Das Viererschema in der antiken Humoralpathologie*, by ERICH SCHÖNER with introduction by ROBERT HERRLINGER, Wiesbaden, F. Steiner, 1964, (*Arch. Gesch. Med.*, Suppl. 4), pp. x, 114, 1 folding plate. DM.24

We all too easily identify ancient medicine as a whole and in all its strata with humoralism and in particular with the idea that four humours correspond to four elements and four qualities. In the book under notice a convincing case is made against this 'vulgar error', under the aegis of a medical historian (Herrlinger) and a classical scholar (Fridolf Kudlien). The genesis of the four-humour theory has really a complicated history up to its final development by Galen. Though recognizable in the Hippocratic Corpus, notably the treatise *On the Nature of Man*, it is by no means binding, let alone pre-eminent, even in Hippocratic medicine and a similar position emerges with regard to Aristotle, although it is the latter who is responsible for the first deliberate coordination of the four qualities with the four—Empedoclean—elements. Even Galen who came closest to a full development of the fourfold scheme of humoral pathology does not give it in a strictly systematic form; it still remained flexible. Only in the Middle Ages and through invasion by Astrology was the rigidity accomplished which has often been wrongly associated with the ancient Greek tradition. Nevertheless the scheme remains an essential, though not all powerful, component of ancient medicine. This is well shown in the material given in the present book, mostly in the form of tables which increase still further its great value. Perhaps more could have been said and made of the Pythagorean *Tetraktys* and its probable influence on the first creation of the scheme—but this is a wide field into which, we hope, the author will extend his researches at the proper time.

WALTER PAGEL

*Schiller. Sein Leben und die Medizin im 18. Jahrhundert*, by WILHELM THEOPOLD, Stuttgart, Gustav Fischer Verlag, (Reihe Medizin in Geschichte und Kultur, Band 6), 1964, pp. 251, DM. 24.90 boards, DM. 21.50 paper back.

Medicine played a part in several departments of Friedrich Schiller's life. His father was an army surgeon who was ordered to have his son educated at the local cadet school where the son was compelled, against his will, to take up the study of medicine.