

Book Reviews

woman doctors, vivisection, vaccination, anaesthetics, prostitution control, birth control, face-lifting, psycho-analysis, and euthanasia. Questions of ethics occupy many of its pages. The two big pitched battles over socialized medicine—the first in opposition to Mr. Lloyd George's Bill, the second in opposition to Mr. Aneurin Bevan's—receive a chapter each, the author believing that the doctor's case was poorly handled.

The book is full of rich plums. Sir Richard Jebb was obliged by private practice to resign his hospital appointment. When a nobleman paid him only three guineas instead of the expected five, Sir Richard dropped the coins, as if accidentally, on the floor. A servant picked them up and Sir Richard said, 'There must be two still on the floor, for I have only three.' The deficiency was then remedied. A rather less subtle technique was that employed, at a later date, by John Bell, the surgeon, when a rich Lanarkshire laird paid him a too-modest fee of £10. As he was being shown out, Bell said to the butler, 'You have had considerable trouble opening the door to me. Here is a trifle for you,' and handed over the fee. In due course he received a draft for £150. Philip Thicknesse, an ex-apothecary's assistant, recommended that the best way to live long was by partaking of the breath of youthful persons.

The brisk and lively motions in the blood of young people is the cause of their health, vigour, and growth; and I see no reason to doubt but that the re-respiring their breath may arouse the sluggish circulation of men advanced in years.

Dr. James Barry entered the Army as a hospital assistant in 1813, and, by 1858, had become Inspector-General of the Army Medical Department. Not till one morning in 1865, when the Negro valet brought up his morning tea and found him dead, was it discovered that Dr. Barry was a woman. Dr. James Copland, F.R.C.P., told a meeting of the St. Pancras Anti-tobacco Society in 1861:

There is no vice that visits its sins upon the third and fourth generations more completely than smoking. . . . It is seldom that smokers have great-grandchildren or grandchildren.

Such characters crop up on nearly every page.

Other subjects discussed are the miserably poor pay of the Poor Law doctors, the stench arising from the vaults of the London churches in the 1840's, pre-anaesthetic operating with amputations in less than a minute, the shortcomings of the Royal Colleges, Harley Street, the efforts of the B.M.A. to obtain abolition of the insanitary custom of kissing the Bible in the witness box, and Lister's tactful reply to Queen Victoria's invitation that he should decry vivisection.

Medical men of all kinds will revel in this book. So will their patients, providing they are not too squeamish. Indeed they should be encouraged to read it so as to appreciate the times in which they live. Medical historians will be grateful for the references that are included unobtrusively.

WILLIAM BROCKBANK

Soldier in White: The Life of General George Miller Sternberg. JOHN M. GIBSON. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press; London: Cambridge University Press, 1958; pp. 277. Frontispiece. 51s.

Sir William Osler said of Sternberg's contribution to the conquest of yellow fever that it assured him a high place among the benefactors of his time. That Sternberg

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was responsible for organizing the Walter Reed Board, selecting its members, and authorizing its basic procedures is known to all medical historians, as is the fact that his failure to identify 'Bacillus A' with the disease aided the work of later investigators. Not everybody, however, knows that this great pioneer in American bacteriology discovered the pneumococcus in September 1880, a few months before Pasteur; that he stated the theory of phagocytosis two years before Metchnikoff; that he was, if not the very first, certainly one of the first, to demonstrate the tubercle bacillus in the United States, after its discovery by Koch; and that he first identified the Laveran organism in America. All this is told graphically and entertainingly by Mr. John M. Gibson, Librarian of the North Carolina State Board of Health, and author of *Physician to the World, the Life of General William C. Gorgas*, who has made extensive, but never pedantic, use of letters, contemporary newspapers, and other records. The reviewer has nothing but admiration for this scholarly, well-written, and human story of failures and triumphs, though he does not care for some of the chapter headings ('Doctor in Bed', 'Doctor on the Go', 'Bodies and Bacilli', 'Soldier at Rest'), nor for the frontispiece. On p. 121 Friedländer is persistently spelled 'Friedlander'. The book concludes with a bibliography (13 pp.) and an index (5 pp.).

W. R. BETT

The Sudan Medical Service. H. C. SQUIRES. London: William Heinemann—Medical Books Ltd., 1958; pp. xii, 138. 15s.

This little book is not easy to review as it is not at all clear just what the author intended it to be. He has divided what he has to say under seven heads: Early Pioneer Days; Epidemics; The First World War; and the Period of Expansion, etc. Each of these sections reads like a paper prepared for delivery at a public meeting and the style is free and easy, the author being fond of starting his sentences with 'and' or 'but' or 'so'. As a series of reflections and reminiscences by one with a long knowledge of parts of the Sudan and great interest in the affairs of that vast country the book has much of interest. It can be recommended to that large public who like to take their experience of hard work overseas from the ease of their own fireside. Dr. Squires certainly succeeds in whetting one's appetite for the full-scale history yet to come from some other source, of a Service and a period so important in the development of medical knowledge in regard to some of the major problems of health in hot climates.

C. A. BOZMAN

The History of the Birmingham Dental Hospital and Dental School, 1858-1958. R. A. COHEN.

Published by the Board of Governors of the United Birmingham Hospitals, 1958; pp. 40. Illustrated.

This brochure commemorates the centenary of the Birmingham Dental Hospital which was founded in January 1858 and is now the oldest institution of its kind in this country and perhaps in the world. The hospital, which was first called the Birmingham Dental Dispensary, had two short-lived forerunners—the Institution for the Diseases of the Teeth established by Saunders, Harrison, and Snell in Little Windmill Street, London, in 1839, and the London Dental Dispensary founded by C. J. Fox in 1855. The founder of the Birmingham Hospital was Samuel Adams Parker, son of the well-known Birmingham surgeon S. W. Langston Parker. It seems that there were arrangements for the admission of medical and dental students to the hospital as early as 1878, but the Dental School was not formally constituted until