

## Book Reviews

demonstrated the immense natural powers of recovery by encasing the limb in plaster of Paris immediately after debridement of the wound. His successful results were convincing. In the war of 1939–45 early wound debridement and the use of one of the sulpha drugs or penicillin led to better results; and forward operating teams specially trained in neurological or thoracic surgery obtained astonishingly good results.

Chapters five to eleven are devoted to the history of surgical specialties. They are packed with interesting information and well repay reading. Urology and orthopaedics are combined in one chapter. Then follows plastic surgery (the surgery of repair) including hernia; abdominal surgery; surgery of the brain, lung and heart; and surgery of the eye, ear, nose and throat including thyroid surgery.

The final chapter on 'The Surgeon and his Operating Theatre' gives an excellent picture of the surgeon as he was years ago and as he is today, and describes the transformation of the old crude operating room into the modern up-to-date suite of rooms with every convenience handy. The author finally forecasts what may be the future development of surgery.

References, a bibliography, and an index of names and subjects are appended.

There are a few inaccuracies, mostly minor, in the text. Lawson Tait was the first to perform cholecystostomy for gallstones in Britain in 1879 but he had been fore-stalled by J. S. Bobbs in the U.S.A. in 1868. On page 65 Savory's name is spelt Savoury. On page 243, in the account of Blalock's operation for a 'Blue baby' the subclavian *vein* has been mistakenly printed instead of the subclavian *artery*. In the description of thyroid surgery there is not sufficient discrimination between ordinary goitre and exophthalmic goitre. The index of names is inadequate, e.g. the names of Thomas Dunhill, James Berry, James Hinton, Joseph Toynbee, Leonard Colebrook, William Savory and others are missing.

Finally, the subject of anaesthesia is of such vital importance to both surgeon and patient that we would plead for the whole subject to be dealt with in one chapter. In the present volume one has to refer to at least three chapters to piece the story together.

We hope and expect that a second edition will soon be needed.

ZACHARY COPE

*Geschichte der Pflege des kranken Menschen*, by EDUARD SEIDLER, Stuttgart, Kohlhammer Verlag, 1966, pp. 184, illus., DM. 7.80.

A happy result of the resurgence of medical history is the interest now being taken in the subject in schools. A few years ago, Poynter and Keele wrote an excellent short account primarily aimed at sixth formers. This German paperback is aimed at the same audience. It was therefore surprising to see that no reference appears to Poynter and Keele's book in an otherwise very comprehensive list of 246 references occupying ten pages.

The volume is pocket-sized and contains 184 pages. Despite this, its small closely-packed print, which is difficult to read, deals with the whole spectrum of the subject from ancient times until the nineteenth century. This is done in seven chapters. There are twenty-eight glossy prints at the back illustrating the text, together with a map showing the sources of Middle East and European medical thought. There is also a

### Book Reviews

glossary of technical terms, a series of extracts of famous medical texts from the Ebers Papyrus to Henri Dunant, a table of contents, an index and six line drawings.

The author goes out of his way to point out in his Foreword that the book is not for the expert. On the other hand, it seems to me much too detailed for the school child. The trouble with German scholars is their inability to be concise. Thus, although this book can be warmly recommended to the adult reader, I doubt whether the unfortunate school child will be able to digest its many facts, however well-intentioned the author might be to include them.

I. M. LIBRACH

*Carl Ludwig, Begründer der messenden Experimentalphysiologie 1816–1895*, by HEINZ SCHRÖER (Grosse Naturforscher Band 33), Stuttgart, Wissenschaftliche Verlagsgesellschaft M.B.H., 1967, pp. v, 340, illus., DM. 32.50.

Biography in the literal meaning of the word as perpetuated by tradition since Diogenes Laertius and Plutarch is subject to limitations since events and problems which transcend the life of the given individual are necessarily omitted. In the particular case of Ludwig's presentation by Schröer it means leaving aside aspects of actual interest to the historian: the analysis of his part in the development of the mechanistic movement which he initiated with his three celebrated companions, Brücke, Helmholtz and Du Bois-Reymond; the significance of quantitative physiology which he promoted as compared with qualitative physiology at a time when so much remained to be discovered; physics versus chemistry as analytical tools in the experimental method. Since the author's purpose is to narrate and not to interpret, he fulfils his aim and makes of Ludwig's biography a model of thoroughness and objectivity.

The first part describes the humane scientist and his wandering life from one university to another, still highly productive, until he settles in Leipzig where for thirty years he accomplishes fundamental work in the most famous institute of physiology of its time, created by him and so much envied by Claude Bernard. It became the 'United Nations' centre for physiologists from all over the world who came to work under him and spread his ideas and methods.

The second part is consecrated to his scientific discoveries which are related in great detail, the author stressing most rightly the relationship between techniques and biological progress, a much neglected aspect nowadays when the fashionable intellectual history is thought to hold the key to every historical problem.

Notes, indices, unpublished letters dealing with scientific matters and a rich bibliography complete this valuable book.

JOSEPH SCHILLER

*Our Ophthalmic Heritage*, by CHARLES SNYDER, London, J. & A. Churchill, 1967, pp. xii, 170, illus., £5.

Since 1961 the *Archives of Ophthalmology*, one of the special journals of the American Medical Association, has been carrying regularly short historical essays contributed by the distinguished librarian of the Lucien Howe Library of Ophthalmology at Harvard.

The publication of thirty-seven of these essays in book form is a measure of the appreciation which they gained. Highly readable, they deal with phases and persons of special interest to the practising oculist. The historical events drawn from the