

Book Reviews

Doctors and Disease in Tudor Times. W. S. C. COPEMAN. London: Dawson's of Pall Mall, 1960; pp. 186. Illustrated. 42s.

Dr. Copeman's book is based upon the FitzPatrick Lectures which he delivered at the Royal College of Physicians of London in 1958 and 1959. In these he traces the evolution and status of Medicine as a profession in Tudor Times, and sketches the influence of the Royal College of Physicians, established by Thomas Linacre in 1518, the Barber Surgeons Company which received its charter in 1540, and the Society of Apothecaries which, though it had its earlier beginnings, was granted its charter of incorporation in 1617. He deals most informatively with the position in Tudor Times of medical education; of the 'scientific basis' of medicine, especially the status of the humoral theory; of herbals; of astrology, alchemy and other forms of occultism and magic; of the art of diagnosis, especially of the then prevalent infections; of the wide scope of treatment not by drugs alone, but also by diet, blood letting, enemas, blisters, surgery, etc.; and of the methods of preventive medicine.

There is evidence of very wide reading, and an admirable bibliography: indeed, like Dr. Johnson's man, he has 'turned over half a library to make one book'. But I was surprised to find omitted from his list Herbert Butterfield's *The Origins of Modern Science* (G. Bell & Sons, Ltd.), for there is no modern text which gives so striking and concise an account of the events leading to the downfall of Aristotelianism, and of the study of the heart before Harvey: and surely references to Charles Singer's texts should have been given.

Dr. Copeman's erudition shines through the text, and his felicitous style will delight the reader. He introduces revealing and often endearing anecdotes about many of the great figures of the time, and it was not without interest to learn that celibacy was the rule amongst the outstanding physicians of the time, including Boorde, Linacre, Caius and Gilbert. Perhaps it was this which led Francis Bacon to write that, 'He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune'.

Yet, despite the tale which Dr. Copeman unfolds with its flashes of urbane irony and wit, no reader will dispute with the author that, 'The measure of medical change which occurred during the century of Tudor rule was unimportant in terms of practical achievement.' Indeed, throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, despite the great work of Vesalius, medicine was fettered by the humoral theory and Hippocratic dogma as transmitted by Galen.

Since this book well merits a second edition, attention should be paid to several misprints, errors and incongruities. For example, Paul of Aegina is Paulus Aegineta on pp. 42 and 71 but Paulus Aeginetus on p. 68; the 'eleventh century Jew Isaac' on p. 64 has his dates given as 'A.D. 845-940' on p. 69. The proscription of priests from the private practise of medicine is attributed to Pope Innocent III on p. 44, and Pope Clement V on p. 49. On p. 87 there is attributed to Galen the statement that 'everything in the world is formed from the four basic elements—fire, air, earth and water'. Yet every historian knows that it was Empedocles of Agrigentum (504-443 B.C.) who initiated this hypothesis. There are also some irritating repetitions which might be deleted. Both on pp. 75 and 85, Calcar is referred to as 'Titian's favourite pupil' and Paracelsus, who is rightly referred to on several occasions, is on p. 95 called

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Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim which is permissible on one occasion, but unnecessary in its repetition on p. 111 as Phillipus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus Paracelsus von Hohenheim. Again Dr. Copeman quotes Simpson's recent book about the seven physicians whom Shakespeare introduces into his plays as 'learned, dignified and on occasion beneficent [*sic*] and generous characters'. Yet surely Dr. Caius in 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' cuts a very poor figure in the play—undignified, reviled and bullied.

Many other minor criticisms might be made, but these do not detract from the value of this book, which is a pleasure to read, and serves admirably to illustrate the medicine of the Tudor period.

COHEN OF BIRKENHEAD

Pages in the History of Chest Surgery. RUDOLF NISSEN, M.D., and ROGER H. L. WILSON, M.B., B.CHIR. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1960; pp. 166. Illustrated. (No price given.)

This small book is based on a lecture on 'The Romance of Thoracic Surgery' given by the senior author in 1953. In spite of its 166 pages it can be read comfortably within the hour usually allotted for a lecture. This is because the text is short and concise and the illustrations predominate; each section is also followed by abundant and important references.

The illustrations comprise photographs or portraits of many of the pioneers of thoracic surgery and reproductions of the title page or first pages of many of the important original articles. These alone constitute an additional and separate text and are interesting, informative and valuable for reference.

Inevitably, in such a short work, the subject is treated briefly even though the abundant illustrations pack more into it. The presentation of the historical development of thoracic surgery is well done and it is of special interest in that Professor Nissen himself has played such an important part in this study: partly through his earlier associations with the Sauerbruch School of Surgery at the Charité in Berlin and partly because of his own practical contributions, chief among which is the first pneumonectomy, done as a two-stage procedure in 1931.

Particularly interesting is his comment on page 13 that Sauerbruch actually delayed the development in Germany of thoracic surgical techniques that were coming into use in other countries. This, of course, was always one of the great dangers of the earlier organization of the German professorial system if the chief had fixed erroneous views. In this instance Sauerbruch erred in resisting the development of intratracheal anaesthesia when his own low pressure and positive pressure techniques failed. 'There was complete lack of any type of organization of anaesthesia. Sauerbruch opposed subspecialization within the main speciality of surgery.'

The story quickly embraces the basic problems such as open pneumothorax, anaesthesia and then the various sections such as pulmonary resection, surgery in pulmonary tuberculosis, surgery of the oesophagus and, of course, the very recent and dramatically swift development of the surgery of the heart; the authors allude to this as 'explosive' in its rapidity.

In addition to the straightforward presentation of the historic facts an attempt is made to present the philosophic and other features behind the rather late development of thoracic surgery and their relation to the basic approach to the whole of medicine and surgery. This in itself is an interesting presentation.