

Book Reviews

BERTEL VON BONSDORFF, *The history of medicine in Finland 1828–1918*, Helsinki, Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1975, 8vo, pp. 309, illus., [no price stated].

Finnish medicine, 1640–1827, has already been described (L. W. Fagerlund and R. Tigerstedt, *Medicens studium vid Åbo universitet*, Skrifter utg. af Svenska Litt. sällsk. i Finland XVI, Helsingfors, 1890) and like it, the present volume is part of a series; in this case the latter is, *The history of learning and science in Finland 1828–1918*. In 1828 the university moved from Turku to the new capital of Helsinki (Helsingfors), and it became Helsinki University in 1918 when Finland emerged as an independent republic.

The author is Emeritus Professor of Medicine, and in twenty-five chapters traces the history of each medical and para-medical subject, ranging from anatomy to veterinary medicine. On the whole these sections tend to be lists of contributions made by Finnish medical men and are rather like brief reviews of the literature. The detail makes reading tedious, and this is a book to refer to rather than to read completely.

However, it is important to have this record for we know little of medicine in nineteenth-century Finland, and of the various political factors that made advancement in medicine difficult to achieve. The documentation is excellent with a total of 695 references, and the book is well illustrated. It has been translated from Swedish and the style is stilted, but with few errors.

JACOB BAXA and GUNTWIN BRUHNS, *Zucker im Leben der Völker. Eine Kultur- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, Berlin, Verlag Dr. A. Bartens, 1967, 4to, pp. [6 11.], 402, illus., [no price stated].

In this remarkably comprehensive treatise all aspects of the history of sugar are considered. Beginning with the honey of pre-history and early cultures it traces the use of the sugar cane through the centuries and in all parts of the world, dealing in detail with the evolution of the sugar cane industry especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Then the commercial and economic issues, the table sugar dispenser, the etymology of the word and finally the occurrences of sugar in poetry are discussed. Throughout, there are many excellent illustrations, some in colour, and the documentation is adequate. There is also a chronological table ranging from 15,000 to 8,000 B.C. when sugar is claimed to have been present in New Guinea, to 1966 when the world's sugar production exceeded seventy million tons.

No other foodstuff has been given this type of treatment before so that Baxa and Bruhns' book is a unique contribution to the history of nutrition. It will remain for some decades the most important reference work for information on the history of sugar. It should be in every medical library.

GIAN-PAOLO BIASIN, *Literary diseases. Theme and metaphor in the Italian novel*, Austin and London, University of Texas Press, 1975, 8vo, pp. [5 11.], 178, £6.55.

The author is a professor of Italian and he analyses here the metaphorical and symbolic representation of disease in twentieth-century Italian prose, as represented by the works of Giovanni Verga, Italo Svevo, Luigi Pirandello, Carlo Emilio Gadda; of these, the most extensive discussion centres on Svevo. Disease is a theme employed