

Book Reviews

Eine Geschichte der Anatomie und Physiologie von Albrecht von Haller, by CARLO ZANETTI and URSULA WIMMER-AESCHLIMANN (Berne Beiträge zur Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften, Band 1), Berne, Huber Verlag, 1968, pp. 157, S.Fr./DM.19.

This paperback is the first of a new collection of historical reviews published under the general title of 'Berne reviews on the history of Medicine and Science', a series which has been appearing for the past twenty-five years.

It seemed appropriate that the new series should start with Albrecht von Haller (1708–1777) who was one of Berne's foremost citizens and Professor at Göttingen for seventeen years. In his teaching he always stressed the essential unity of structure and function—Anatomy and Physiology.

As the Editors point out, he only once departed from this concept and then more by circumstance than design.

He was invited to contribute to a new edition of the major French scientific encyclopaedia *Dictionnaire raisonné des Sciences* which was first published in Paris in 1751. Thus it came about that his History of Anatomy written in 1770, first appeared in the First Supplement to the French work published in Amsterdam in 1776, whilst his History of Physiology being delayed for alphabetical reasons, although appearing in 1774, was published in the Fourth French Supplement also in Amsterdam in 1777.

Both parts contained interesting personal observations by Haller on various authors and their work. They were marred by numerous misprints and mistakes, which have been duly corrected by the present Editors.

Each section has notes on the text and a bibliography. There is also a full list of personal names. The format is up to the usual Huber standard, and the volume gives an interesting and instructive insight into Haller's opinions.

I. M. LIBRACH

Problemata Varia Anatomica: MS 1165 The University of Bologna, by J. R. LIND, University of Kansas Publications, Humanistic Studies no. 38, Lawrence, 1968, pp. 100, no price stated.

The text which is presented here contains a collection of questions known as the *Omnes homines*, which had a wide reading public from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, and in its translations was studied even later. It is a compilation covering more or less the same field as Aristotle's *De animalibus*, but confining itself to such simple subjects as the parts and members of the body and the processes of eating, drinking, sleeping, conception, birth, menstruation and abortion, with several questions about birds and animals thrown in for good measure. The whole of this literature has been comprehensively dealt with by Brian Lawn in his book *The Salernitan Questions*, in which the genesis, development and final phases were discussed for the first time. The main reason for editing this particular example of it appears to be that Mr. Lind has found a manuscript unknown to Brian Lawn, for though it contains some material missing from the printed versions it cannot be said that it enlightens us much further either on the scientific knowledge of the period or on the mentality of the people who read it. Mr. Lind has been to great pains to annotate the text, whose eighty pages receive no less than three hundred and fifty footnotes, and he is to be

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commended for making available a treatise which can be read only in incunabula and early printed editions. But the actual latin text could have been subjected to a little more rigorous revision, so that some of the sentences might give better sense. The list of errata by no means covers all the misreadings, particularly in the first part of the book, a surprising fact considering the people who are supposed to have helped the editor.

C. H. TALBOT

Ancient Medicine: Selected Papers of Ludwig Edelstein, ed. by OWSEI TEMKIN and C. LILIAN TEMKIN, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press; London, Oxford University Press, 1968, pp. xiv, 496, port. front., £5 19s. 0d.

Apart from the two-volume work on Asclepius, this volume contains the majority of the late Ludwig Edelstein's contributions to the history of ancient medicine, six of the papers appearing for the first time in English, and we must be grateful to the editors for making so much of Edelstein's work available in this form.

The first section of the volume is mainly Hippocratic, beginning with the well-known work on the Hippocratic Oath. Since this was first published as a supplement to the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* in 1943, the arguments which Edelstein put forward to support his theory of the Pythagorean origin of the Oath have been submitted to searching analysis by classical scholars (e.g. H. Diller, *Gnomon*, xxii, pp. 71 ff.) and now seem to rest on the interpretation of certain words and phrases which are not found in all versions of what is undoubtedly an extremely fluid text. Nevertheless, the theory is an attractive one since it seems to explain so many odd features of the Oath as it has come down to us. The essays which follow—on Hippocratic prognosis, Hippocratic wisdom, and the Hippocratic physician—are drawn in part from Edelstein's original doctoral dissertation. This was notable for its independent views and for demolishing the accepted picture of Hippocrates as the towering 'father of Greek medicine', the sole author of what is now called the Hippocratic corpus, the product of a whole school of physicians rather than of any single individual. This part of the book concludes with an illuminating essay on the school of physicians known as the Methodists, of whom the best-known member is Soranus.

The second part explores various aspects of Greek and Roman medicine, including anatomy, dietetics and the relations between medicine and religion and magic. Part III discusses the ethics of the Greek physician, ancient philosophy and medicine, and the Hellenism of Greek medicine. A few additional papers brought together as Part IV include an essay on Vesalius the humanist and another on Sydenham and Cervantes.

Even those scholars who disagree with some of Edelstein's interpretations and conclusions—and he was always extremely independent in his views—will welcome the provision of so much good matter for academic debate within a single volume. This will be an indispensable work for anybody whose researches take him into the field of classical medicine.

F. N. L. POYNTER