

Book Reviews

These essays prefigure many of Ryle's later ideas on "social medicine". For Ryle, the biomedical sciences had narrowed the scope of medicine in an era when it most needed to expand its horizons, epistemology, and aims. He was later to recruit the methods of the modern social sciences to enhance his idea of clinical practice as the natural history of disease in order to place it on a preventive basis. Social medicine, in Ryle's schema, would deal with the health of populations as well as restore the health of "whole" individuals.

Ryle's holistic medicine was controversial in its day and remained so. As Michael Shepherd points out in his excellent Introduction to the book, contemporary medicine needs to recapture something of Ryle's philosophical approach in order to face its current challenges. The moment seems appropriate to reflect upon the messages of John Alfred Ryle.

Dorothy Porter, Harvard University

LEONARD F. PELTIER, *Fractures: a history and iconography of their treatment*, Norman Orthopedic Series 1, Norman Surgery Series 3, San Francisco, Norman Publishing, 1990, 4to, pp. xxiii, 273, \$195.00.

This is an altogether admirable book, not least because it is written by a practising surgeon who is also an academic and administrator of distinction and a scholar able to take both a wide and a long view of his subject. From an enormous literature, he has skilfully selected the cardinal accounts, illustrated, even from antiquity, by instantly illuminating pictures: that on the dust cover comments silently that it was no accident that related the *Scamnum* to the rack. One is constantly reminded of the ingenuity of our predecessors, even as we use it and that of our contemporaries. The study of history teaches those willing to learn, that we are not so clever as we think. Dr Peltier has given this message fresh impetus, backed by authority based upon catholic reading and much experience.

The title is misleading, since the text deals almost entirely with fractures of the long bones and associated dislocations. Fractures of the skull vault are not mentioned, nor are those of the maxillo-facial skeleton, though the classical description of reduction of the temporo-mandibular dislocation is there. Apart from the Egyptian description of traumatic paraplegia, there is little mention of vertebral fractures or of their management.

The standard of production is excellent: paper, type, illustration, general organization, proof-reading (though there are slips, e.g., "Gemenschaft"), a good index and binding. In sum, the book is a notable addition to the history of fracture treatment.

J. W. Dickson, Ipswich, Suffolk

MILTON WAINWRIGHT, *Miracle cure: the story of antibiotics*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1990, 8vo, pp. xi, 196, illus., £16.95.

Dr Milton Wainwright has published a number of interesting papers on the history of antibiotics and his book is therefore an opportunity to incorporate new perspectives to an old story. The bulk of the book is devoted to the histories of penicillin and streptomycin: to each of them Wainwright brings new and interesting characters. Cecil G. Paine, who trained at St Mary's Hospital and had been shown Fleming's original plate, was the first person to obtain a cure using the medium on which *Penicillium* had grown. Wainwright and Dr Harold Swann have found some of the original clinical notes from 1930, reproduced in the book. Selman A. Waksman, who received the Nobel prize for discovering streptomycin, had many research students to whom he was a father figure and friend. However, one of these students, Albert Schatz, was the co-discoverer of streptomycin and sued Waksman. Wainwright has interviewed Schatz and investigated the controversy; he writes sympathetically about both men.

Wainwright quotes the obituary of a soldier, wounded at Alamein, who is said to be the first treated with penicillin, in Cairo. Major Robert Pulvertaft, who was not a surgeon, published the case notes in the *Lancet* in 1943 and the first case was treated on 17 August 1942, months before