

## Book Reviews

reflects as much degree of social incapacity and disturbance as extent of psychopathological derangement. And through the ages the aim of physical treatments or restraint has been to remove socially unacceptable states or behaviour.

Nothing shows this better than the breakdown of George III in 1788–9, the critical influence of which on the English political scene Dr. Derry examines in this book. He shows how the constitutional issues raised led to the break-up of the old Whig party although supported by the talent of Burke, Fox and Sheridan among others equally famous. That the Government emerged triumphant against the demand for a Regency was no less due to Pitt's political astuteness and the therapeutic confidence of the Reverend Dr. Francis Willis than to the remitting nature of the King's illness. Among the other royal physicians Dr. Richard Warren stands out for his adherence to the party of the Prince of Wales; the author suggests that his Whiggish views may have overshadowed his otherwise admirable prognostic acumen. But the diagnosis of manic-depressive insanity, arrived at only on the history of recovery and recurrence, and by ignoring many interesting and unexplained clinical features, will no longer do: the illness of America's last king deserves to be brought into line with modern psychiatric concepts.

RICHARD HUNTER

*Anthimi de Observatione Ciborum ad Theodoricum Regem Francorum Epistula*, edited and translated by Eduard Liechtenhan, Berlin, Academy of Sciences, 1963, pp. 86, D.M. 33 or 39.

Anthimus was a fifth to sixth-century Greek physician, and when he was ambassador to Theodoric, king of the Franks, he initiated a custom that was to become popular in the Renaissance. He wrote for him, in Latin, a book of advice concerning dietetics and cookery. Various foods, both animal and vegetable, are dealt with in turn and, together with methods of preparation, the therapeutic values are indicated. Cautions and simple common-sense advice are also included: 'But if oysters smell, and anyone eat of them, he has need of no other poison' (49); 'Kidneys of no animal should be eaten' (16); 'Apples, well ripened on the tree, and sweet, are good, but sour ones are not agreeable' (84). He summarizes the object of his work as follows: 'How all foods should be eaten that they may be well digested, and produce a healthy condition and not weakness of the stomach, nor distress in the human body.'

This edition of the text is based upon the manuscripts and there is a detailed analysis of it, together with a translation into German, and an index of grammar and words used. In addition to its medical content the text is of great linguistic importance for it was written in the period of transition from Latin to the Romance languages and is full of barbarisms and Greek words. It is said to be the last specimen of vulgar Latin.

This is a further contribution to the great German *Corpus Medicorum Latinorum* series and the precise philological scholarship of its predecessors is maintained. The only criticism concerns the Latin preface. Now that translations of the texts into the vernacular are appearing in the series, the value of this book, as well as its public, would have been increased if the Preface had received the same linguistic liberation.

EDWIN CLARKE

*Incurable Physician. An autobiography*, by WALTER C. ALVAREZ, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1963, pp. xiii, 274, \$4.95.

To millions of daily readers in America the syndicated newspaper column on medicine by W. C. Alvarez has been a 'must' every morning at breakfast. Long before it