

Book Reviews

little volume to English readers'. The most important part of the book is that which deals with the nineteenth-century attempts to control the practice of midwifery and to improve its standards. Little is now known of the attempt by the Society of Apothecaries in 1815 to incorporate into the Apothecaries Act, which controlled the standards of education of the general practitioners, a section to provide for the examination and control of midwives. Had this act been passed as originally framed midwives would have been placed under the control of twenty-four medical districts and would have been bound to take out an annual licence to practise. Another little known incident is the attempt by Drs. Acland and Stokes to get a resolution through the General Medical Council requiring the Council to lay down the qualifications and certification of midwives.

Dr. Aveling was not against the study of medicine by women: 'If a woman feels strongly that it be her mission to become a medical woman, and it is found that she can pass the same examinations as those which are required of the medical man, let her come boldly with the rest of us and enter into combat with disease and death.'

This book forms a landmark in the history of the English midwife and for those wishing to study the subject it is a *sine qua non*.

R. M. S. MCCONAGHEY

Beiträge zur Geschichte des Gesundheitswesens der Stadt Halle und der Medizinischen Fakultät der Universität Halle, ed. by W. PIECHOCKI and H. T. KOCH (*Acta Historica Leopoldina*, No. 2), Leipzig, Barth, 1965, pp. 188, illus., DM. 11.20.

This is a special number of the East German historical journal *Acta Historica Leopoldina* edited by Rudolph Zaunick. It is really a Festschrift devoted to commemorating the 250th jubilee of the University of Halle-Wittenberg and promoted under the auspices of the Deutschen Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina. The authors' editors are Dr. Werner Piechocki, City Archivist of Halle and Dr. Hans Theodor Koch, Physician to the Carl-von-Basedow Hospital, Merseburg.

There are eight contributions, four from each author. The first four deal with various aspects of the medico-social life of Halle Saale beginning in 1526, when city doctors were first appointed. Chapter 3 gives an interesting account of anatomy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and pays due homage to the famous anatomist Johann Friedrich Meckel, whose widow bequeathed a fine anatomical collection to the University in 1835, valued at 35,000 taler.

Chapter 5 describes what is termed nowadays 'study leave' taken by the Halle surgeon Carl Heinrich Dzondi (1770–1835). He visited Paris in 1821 and then Holland, England, Scotland and Ireland in 1822. He commented that anatomy teaching in London at that time was good and that there was no lack of cadavers for study. He was somewhat puzzled, if not shocked, by the question 'Are your bowels open?' which was seemingly put to every patient, irrespective of his illness!

The last chapter deals with the appointment of Karl August Weinhold (1782–1829) as Professor of Surgery and Ophthalmology and the misgivings it aroused.

There are eight portraits and thirty-six illustrations. My copy of the journal was

Book Reviews

marred by the fact that every page was unopened, and taxed my patience when I had to cut each page separately.

This volume should certainly provide much instructive and entertaining reading for those who like delving into little-known areas of medical history.

I. M. LIBRACH

Medicine in Medieval England, by C. H. TALBOT, London, Oldbourne, 1967, pp. 222, 35s. 0d.

The author of this book, Dr. Talbot, is medievalist at the Wellcome Institute of the History of Medicine. He has produced a book which will appeal to both expert and non-expert—medical or otherwise. The book is a hardback of 222 pages with a table of contents, an index and a bibliography, which lists books in English for further reading to supplement the text.

There are sixteen chapters beginning with general topics such as Anglo-Saxon Medicine, Arab Medicine, Salerno and Montpellier and the influence they had on each other. More specific matters such as medical education, anatomy, medical ethics, hygiene, epidemics and hospitals follow together with contributions on Gilbertus Anglicus and John Gaddesden. A separate chapter dealing with the ordinary medieval practitioner provides some comparison with his present-day counterpart, who may derive a certain satisfaction from the fact that the names of medieval doctors only appeared in official documents when the doctor was guilty of some misdemeanour or when falling into debt or claiming fees. More rarely his name would appear when a grateful patient rewarded his services.

The book also contains eight plates illustrating various aspects of medieval practice. It ends with an excellent commentary entitled 'The final phase' with faint echoes of a medieval brain-drain.

At 35s. 0d. this is a first-class work that can be wholeheartedly recommended as a gift to others or preferably to oneself.

I. M. LIBRACH