

Book Reviews

Medical Illustrations in Medieval Manuscripts, by LOREN MACKINNEY, London, Wellcome Historical Medical Library, 1965, pp. xvii, 263, 104 plates, 105s.

It is a pity that Loren MacKinney did not live to see the publication of this beautifully produced book, which represents to some extent the culminating point of his thirty years' search for medical illustrations in medieval manuscripts. He had immense enthusiasm for this work and pursued his quest with a thoroughness which makes it unlikely that anyone else will discover new material. He investigated the contents of no fewer than 172 libraries in Europe and America and as a result amassed a unique collection of 4,000 photographs. The publication of all this material was obviously impossible and therefore the present book contains but a small fraction of it. This he has arranged under various headings, hospitals, diagnosis, materia medica, medication, surgery, obstetrics and so on, introducing each section with a short historical sketch, and giving a description of the various illustrations contained in the latter part of the book. But for the benefit of those who may wish to pursue some particular subject, he has given a complete check-list of all extant manuscripts containing medical miniatures with details of the subjects illustrated. This is supplemented by a bibliography of works which contain other useful reproductions and a comprehensive index.

The genesis of the book, the illustrated lectures given by MacKinney over the years to groups of medical and non-medical historians, is reflected in his choice of illustrations. The ambivalence in the author's mind about the purpose of his work, wishing it to be neither a picture book nor an outline of medical history and addressing it therefore neither to professional physicians and surgeons nor to lay readers, makes it difficult to assess the exact value to be placed on some of the pictures. Some are not technical enough for the professional and others not beautiful enough to delight the layman. But there can be no denying that the collection of illustrations as a whole is both interesting and informative. The coloured plates are particularly successful and it is much to be regretted that practical economics prohibited the reproduction of all the plates in this way. All the same, it is a book that will give much pleasure to many, and with its invaluable list of manuscripts stimulate the interest of many more.

C. H. TALBOT

La Théorie des Passions à la Lumière de la Pensée Médicale du XVII^e Siècle, by WALTER RIESE, *Confinia Psychiatrica*, supplementum ad 8, Basle, 1965, pp. vi, 74, Sw.Fr./DM. 13.

Dr. Riese has written a monograph of seventy-four pages setting forth views of the passions held by a small group of seventeenth century physicians, philosophers and one divine. It contains a study of the Cartesian theory of the emotions (or passions) followed by an examination of the views of three physicians, Louis de la Forge, Cureau de la Chambre and Georg Ernst Stahl. John Locke is then dealt with very briefly, and, after a discussion of some general aspects of baroque theories of the passions, the relevant views of Spinoza are accorded fourteen pages. The two closing sections of the monograph contain comments on a work of the seventeenth century divine, Senault, and some remarks on the equivocal position occupied by the passions

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as part of the moral order on the one hand and as pathological phenomena on the other.

Dr. Riese writes interestingly of his seventeenth century theorists, and the reader will find much of what he has to say rewarding, especially with respect to the work of medical men so little known as de la Forge and de la Chambre. Rather than praise the obvious merits of Dr. Riese's monograph, however, I shall make a few critical remarks regarding two of his theses. Certainly Descartes did, as Dr. Riese writes (p. 2, 3) leave a permanent imprint on the structure of neurology and psychiatry, but it is open to question whether the distinction and separation of these two branches of contemporary medicine is as wholly Cartesian in origin as he believes. An equally fundamental and much older antithesis than the philosophical one of *res cogitans* versus *res extensa* is medical and therapeutic in character: the treatment of the ill person with words (and other operative elements of human meaning) versus treatment with diet, drugs and surgery. It is also true that the separate tasks of the philosopher and physician, or of the divine and the physician, were well established long before Descartes. Further, in discussing the topic of the uses of the passions as set forth by Descartes (p. 11) and de la Chambre (p. 25), Dr. Riese ascribes rather too much originality to their views—he goes so far as to say that 'de la Chambre soutient pour la première fois sa thèse de l'usage des passions en disant que *le bon ou le mauvais usage fait tout le bonheur ou le malheur de la vie. En effet, si elles sont bon réglées, elles forment les vertus et conservent la santé; mais si elles vont dans l'excès, ces sont les sources d'ou les désordres de l'âme et du corps prennent leur origine.*' This passage contains nothing more than part of the standard medical doctrine of the six non-naturals (the sixth being the *passiones animi*), causative factors in health and disease which were regarded as beneficial if properly used but harmful if abused. Dr. Riese is of course aware that the thesis of the usage of the passions goes back to Galen, but he seems to have momentarily lost sight of the medical tradition in Western Europe insofar as he makes de la Chambre both anticipate Descartes and recall Galen and Plutarch, leaving a great gap in between.

These strictures do not significantly reduce the value of the monograph for the student of the history of psychology, psychiatry and psychosomatic medicine, but they do suggest that it must be read with some caution. More serious is the objection that half of the monograph is given over to the work of non-medical authors—although we are told in the preface that its subject is the theory of the passions in the light of medical, rather than philosophical and literary, thought—while the medical sources, rich as they are in the seventeenth century, are slighted. It cannot be denied that the title of the monograph is somewhat misleading, in spite of the value and interest of the contents.

L. J. RATHER

William Harvey, by KENNETH D. KEELE (*British Men of Science Series*), London, Nelson, 1965, pp. xii, 244, illus., 42s.

Over the years William Harvey, as one of the giant figures of medicine's past, has received much attention, mostly related to his discovery of the circulation of the