

Book Reviews

'Childhood and infancy', etc. It is suggested that the overall benefit to the reader will be a better understanding of medicine today, how it reached the present state, and what is likely to happen in the future.

Concerning the second of these, historical material is frequently used in both text and illustrations. It is perhaps unfortunate that although this part of the book is obviously of importance to the overall aims, a professional historian of medicine was not included amongst the contributors or employed as consultant for the various sections.

Nevertheless, the editors and their collaborators have produced a useful and attractive volume which should be popular with both layman and health sciences worker.

MAGDALENA SOLOSKA, JACEK HOLOWKA and ANTONINA OSTROWSKA (editors), *Health, medicine, society*, Dordrecht and Boston, D. Reidel, 1976, 8vo, pp. xi, 516, \$39.50.

In August of 1973 an international conference on the sociology of medicine was held in Warsaw, and this book contains a selection of the papers presented, arranged in five groups: 'Health and society'; 'The transformation of medical intervention'; 'Sociological insights into the health sciences'; 'The health system'; 'Teaching'. One of the objectives of the meeting was "to review with general sociologists and physicians the different theoretical sources from which the sociology of medicine has evolved". This is, therefore, the main attraction for the historian, but the volume can also be recommended as a reliable source of information concerning present-day sociological problems, a vital necessity for those engaged in the field of the social history of medicine.

GEORGE KRIEGMAN, ROBERT D. GARDNER and D. WILFRED ABSE (editors), *American psychiatry past, present, and future*, Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1975, 8vo, pp. xiv, 205, [no price stated].

The first American public and state-supported mental hospital was established in Williamsburg in 1773 and to commemorate this event a meeting was held in 1973. Topics were carefully planned, and speakers, representing psychiatry, sociology, law, and history, solicited. The programme was divided into three parts: four papers giving perspective and including, 'The bicentennial of Eastern State Hospital', 'American psychiatry in the eighteenth century', 'American psychiatry: past, present, and future'; psychiatric therapy, dealing mainly with present-day problems; the role of psychiatry in society, where again current situations and future possibilities are discussed, one by Charles Rosenberg, 'The crisis in psychiatric legitimacy', being especially noteworthy. In the case of each group, the discussion evoked is included. These papers will be of interest to the practising psychiatrist and the historian of medicine alike.

ELLIOTT M. BLASS (editor), *The psychobiology of Curt Richter*, Baltimore, Md., York Press, 1976, 8vo, pp. xxxi, 399, illus., \$18.00.

For fifty-six years Dr. Curt Paul Richter (born 1894) has been carrying out research

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at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, and this book is a tribute to him. It contains three appreciations of him and his work and reprints of eighteen of his more important contributions to psychology, physiology, endocrinology and neurology, which illustrate his main areas of interest: animal behaviour, biological rhythms and self-regulatory functions, the autonomic nervous system, neurology and domestication.

Although these already-published articles will be the history of tomorrow, the collection is intended for the present-day student and not the historian. It will nevertheless be of value to the latter, but the introductions are inadequate and there is no running commentary. Nor is there any attempt made to integrate Dr. Richter's pioneer work with contemporary and with subsequent research by others.

PAUL SPEISER and FERDINAND G. SMEKAL, *Karl Landsteiner, the discoverer of the blood groups and a pioneer in the field of immunology. Biography of a Nobel Prize winner of the Vienna Medical School*, translated by Richard Rickett, Vienna, Brüder Hollinek, 1975, 8vo, pp. 198, illus., S.220.

The first German edition of this book appeared in 1961 and it has now been accurately translated into English. It constitutes an excellent account of Landsteiner's life and work. Although remembered as the man who discovered the blood groups in 1900 and was rewarded for this in 1930 with a Nobel prize, he has been honoured as an outstanding scientist more because of his intensive and critical studies of the specificity of serological reactions; he also worked on typhus fever, allergy and tuberculin sensitivity.

The authors first describe his life and personality and then his work is examined closely. The text is illuminated with many excellent illustrations but documentation is somewhat deficient. As well as dealing with Landsteiner, this book also provides us with information on the great school of medicine of Vienna and there is a series of photographs of teachers, colleagues, collaborators, pupils and contemporaries (pp. 123–166), many of whom were Viennese. There is also a list of Landsteiner's 346 publications.

Altogether this slender volume is an excellent biography, the first of any length in English dealing with Landsteiner. Moreover it sets a high standard for biographers, and it is to be hoped that others will attempt to emulate the authors' techniques.

HAROLD F. HUTCHISON, *Sir Christopher Wren. A biography*, London, Gollancz, 1976, 8vo, pp. 191, illus., £5.00.

The vast majority of books on Wren have dealt mainly or solely with his remarkable achievements as an architect and have usually neglected his contributions to science. The late Mr. Hutchison has catered for the general reader, omitting technical jargon and mathematics and dealing with all Wren's versatile activities. It is well written, with numerous illustrations and adequate documentation, and it provides an excellent, all-round account of a remarkable man. The author does not, however, discuss fully Wren's contributions to medical research and has omitted to record important papers describing them.

Nevertheless the book can be recommended as one of the better, and certainly more comprehensive, biographies of Wren.