

Book Reviews

Halsted of Johns Hopkins: The Man and his Men. SAMUEL JAMES CROWE, M.D. E. W. Stephens Publishing Company of Columbia, Missouri, 1957. Pp. 247. Illustrated. 37s. 6d.

The influence of the Johns Hopkins University and Hospital upon medical and surgical education in the United States, and indeed all over the world, has been very great, and many will welcome this account of its origins and of the development of the surgical department under the guidance of that great surgeon William Stewart Halsted. In the first chapter we are told the story of the origin of the Foundation.

In 1870 Johns Hopkins, a wealthy merchant, influenced probably by his wise and forward-looking friend Dr. Waverley, signed his will whereby he left a large sum of money for the endowment of a university, and of a hospital to which was to be attached a medical school and a training school for nurses. Johns Hopkins died in 1873, and in 1875 the Trustees of the Foundation appointed Daniel Coit Gilman as President of the University before the buildings were erected. John Shaw Billings was, in 1876, chosen to organize the establishment of the hospital. It was due to Billings that Welch was in 1884 offered the post of Professor of Pathology at Johns Hopkins, and it was largely due to Welch that Halsted was in 1892 appointed Professor of Surgery and Chief of the Surgical Department. Halsted had already been working there for four years, and had satisfied everyone of his capabilities for the post.

The Hospital was opened in 1889 but the Medical School did not open till 1893. During the years of preparation the professors and their assistants developed what amounted to an institute of medical research which set a pattern for the future development of the hospital and medical school. Under Halsted's guidance the department of surgery became a school for the training of young surgeons and the furtherance of surgical research.

Great scientific departments are built up in one of two ways. In nearly every case there is at the outset one outstanding man who gathers round him a band of gifted workers attracted by his work and reputation. Further development varies. In some instances the personality of the chief overshadows that of his assistants who work along lines suggested by him so that his reputation increases along with and sometimes at the expense of his assistants. In other cases, as illustrated by Halsted's surgical department, the chief rather suppresses his own personality but guides and helps his

assistants to develop those skills which seem peculiarly suitable to their inclination and ability.

Samuel James Crowe, the author of this book, tells the fascinating story of Halsted's choice of successive surgeons (including Crowe himself) to become the heads of the various surgical departments. The choice sometimes seemed haphazard but the results justified the selections made. What a wonderful array of names—Harvey Cushing, Walter Dandy, Joseph Bloodgood, Hugh Hampton Young, and Samuel James Crowe. Crowe had intended to go to Boston with Cushing, but Halsted asked him to stay and organize a university department of otolaryngology. Crowe protested that he knew nothing about this speciality, that he had never seen a tonsil removed, and that he wished to become a neuro-surgeon. But Welch trusted and supported Halsted's opinion and Crowe agreed, and developed a magnificent department of otolaryngology.

Separate chapters are devoted to a description of the life and work of each of seven of the most distinguished of Halsted's assistants, and Dr. Crowe's intimate knowledge of the day-to-day working of the hospital staff enables him to give many interesting details. Several chapters are allotted to the life and work of Halsted himself. We are shown that Halsted was the first to develop several techniques for which others are usually given the credit. We are given an insight into the way in which he worked out his surgical problems, and the great patience he showed therein. Halsted's curious reticence of speech is illustrated by his interview with Finney, who came to see him on the day of the opening ceremony of the hospital with reference to the appointment of resident surgeon. The only remarks made by Halsted during the interview were as follows—'Big crowd, isn't it?' 'Nice day, isn't it?' 'I'll have to ask you to excuse me as I have an appointment in the laboratory in a few minutes. What time can you report for duty?' That was the end of the interview, and Finney got the appointment.

It is well known that thin rubber gloves were first used for operative work at the Johns Hopkins Hospital. It is here related that, though the gloves were originally made for the use of the theatre-sister (Miss Hampton who later married Halsted) whose hands became rough from contact with anti-septic solutions, they were not used by surgeons for some time. We quote the passage: 'For six years following the first appearance of gloves in the operating room the operator rarely used them unless a clean joint was to be opened. Doctor Joseph C. Bloodgood had the distinction of being the first surgeon to wear rubber gloves in every operation, but he did not begin to do this until 1896.'

The author contrasts the personalities of those two great neurological surgeons—Harvey Cushing and Walter Dandy. He saw them almost daily for many years and, though he had great admiration and affection for

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Cushing he came to the conclusion that Walter Dandy had more of that 'creative imagination, intuition and persistence which we are accustomed to regard as the highest form of genius'.

In a foreword to the book Alfred Blalock states that within a few hours of completing the volume, Dr. Crowe was stricken by a massive coronary thrombosis to which he succumbed. He has left behind him an account of many of his distinguished contemporaries which will be read with interest by all students of the history of surgery. We hope that an index will be provided for any reprint or second edition.

ZACHARY COPE

Movement of the Heart and Blood in Animals: An Anatomical Essay, by WILLIAM HARVEY. Translated from the original Latin by Kenneth J. Franklin, and now published for the Royal College of Physicians of London. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1957. Pp. xii + 209. Portrait. 17s. 6d.

It is only when there is a change of outlook amongst English-speaking people towards a writer in the Greek or Latin tongue, that the need for a new translation is felt. That this has taken place with regard to Harvey's classic work, last faithfully translated in 1847, is indubitable. And our generation is particularly fortunate in being able to call on Professor Kenneth J. Franklin to reinvestigate those Latin words behind which, for most of us, the thought-processes underlying Harvey's great discovery lie concealed.

Previous translations have met different contemporary needs. The first, in Harvey's own lifetime, needs no explanation. The second, in 1832, coincided with the feeling that physiology had budded off from anatomy; it was soon followed by R. Willis's hitherto standard translation, fully representative of Victorian euphony and satisfaction. Our own present-day attitude has moved far from these euphoric times. An attempt to bring Harvey's thought up to date was made by Chauncey D. Leake in 1928, but it was marred by too great a respect for ephemeral modernity and too little for the values of history. At last the need has been met by Professor Franklin bringing his classical erudition and deep knowledge of the cardiovascular system to bear on the problem.

Throughout his translation Professor Franklin brings us closer to Harvey as a person, and therefore closer to the words we feel Harvey himself would have used were he explaining his position to us today. Had Harvey been a Victorian physician he might well have used words like those chosen by Willis in his translation, but if he had a twentieth century mind undoubtedly this is how he would have spoken.

One comparison of passages will make this clear. Discussing in the first chapter the reception of his views, Willis's Harvey says: 'These views, as