

### Book Reviews

Cohen finishes by setting out a bibliography of Sherrington's writings and he also reproduces his last entry in *Who's Who*. This present volume is beautifully printed and there is a frontispiece in colour of Augustus John's portrait of Sherrington—which, understandably perhaps, the sifter thought little of. There is also a black and white reproduction of the portrait by R. G. Eves, one which will probably command wider commendation.

MACDONALD CRITCHLEY

*A History of Medicine*. Revised Edition with Supplement. DOUGLAS GUTHRIE.

London and Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd., 1958; pp. xvi+464. 42s.

This admirable history, first published in 1945, has proved so popular that after reprinting in 1945, 1946, and 1947 the author has now produced a new and revised edition, which includes a valuable supplement in which additional information is given on subjects ranging from Peruvian mummies to the Red Cross.

Dr. Guthrie has accomplished the difficult task of producing a book which is not only a rich source of information for the serious student of medical history, but remains at the same time most readable for those who, like the medical student, are entering for the first time the fascinating realm of medical history. If the reader's first impulse is to glance through the admirable illustrations, as is often the case, he could thereafter hardly resist plunging into the surrounding text—it is to be hoped at the beginning. In writing of a work of this size and importance it is difficult to select individual sections for comment, but the high quality of the author's scholarship and his sound judgement are well illustrated by the skill with which he handles the scattered and incomplete evidence available of primitive medicine and early civilizations, and his appreciation of the influence of philosophy on medicine in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Again, when faced with the task of condensing into a small space the wealth of information contained in the many biographies and other accounts of William Harvey and his contribution to medicine, he has produced a freely flowing and interesting narrative, marked by keen perception and sound judgement.

The classified bibliography, which forms the appendix, and the 'books for further reading' at the end of each chapter, will be a boon to the student, whether expert or tyro.

WELDON DALRYMPLE-CHAMPNEYS

*Call the Doctor. A Social History of Medical Men*. E. S. TURNER. Michael Joseph, 1958; pp. 320. Illustrated. 21s.

Those who have read the author's *Boys will be Boys* in which was recounted the history of the penny dreadful, and his *Shocking History of Advertising*, will know what to expect. The others are in for a great treat, for the author has read widely, choosing his subjects and quotations with skill, and has added a wry commentary which hits the target repeatedly. He begins by stating that the book is not a history of medicine. It deals with the doctor as a member of society from the fourteenth century to the present times, and on the regard in which he has been held by the community. It is to a large extent a record of controversy; controversy not only between doctors themselves and between the democracy of medicine and the Royal Colleges, but controversy with the public on such themes as body-snatching, man-midwifery,

## Book Reviews

woman doctors, vivisection, vaccination, anaesthetics, prostitution control, birth control, face-lifting, psycho-analysis, and euthanasia. Questions of ethics occupy many of its pages. The two big pitched battles over socialized medicine—the first in opposition to Mr. Lloyd George's Bill, the second in opposition to Mr. Aneurin Bevan's—receive a chapter each, the author believing that the doctor's case was poorly handled.

The book is full of rich plums. Sir Richard Jebb was obliged by private practice to resign his hospital appointment. When a nobleman paid him only three guineas instead of the expected five, Sir Richard dropped the coins, as if accidentally, on the floor. A servant picked them up and Sir Richard said, 'There must be two still on the floor, for I have only three.' The deficiency was then remedied. A rather less subtle technique was that employed, at a later date, by John Bell, the surgeon, when a rich Lanarkshire laird paid him a too-modest fee of £10. As he was being shown out, Bell said to the butler, 'You have had considerable trouble opening the door to me. Here is a trifle for you,' and handed over the fee. In due course he received a draft for £150. Philip Thicknesse, an ex-apothecary's assistant, recommended that the best way to live long was by partaking of the breath of youthful persons.

The brisk and lively motions in the blood of young people is the cause of their health, vigour, and growth; and I see no reason to doubt but that the re-respiring their breath may arouse the sluggish circulation of men advanced in years.

Dr. James Barry entered the Army as a hospital assistant in 1813, and, by 1858, had become Inspector-General of the Army Medical Department. Not till one morning in 1865, when the Negro valet brought up his morning tea and found him dead, was it discovered that Dr. Barry was a woman. Dr. James Copland, F.R.C.P., told a meeting of the St. Pancras Anti-tobacco Society in 1861:

There is no vice that visits its sins upon the third and fourth generations more completely than smoking. . . . It is seldom that smokers have great-grandchildren or grandchildren.

Such characters crop up on nearly every page.

Other subjects discussed are the miserably poor pay of the Poor Law doctors, the stench arising from the vaults of the London churches in the 1840's, pre-anaesthetic operating with amputations in less than a minute, the shortcomings of the Royal Colleges, Harley Street, the efforts of the B.M.A. to obtain abolition of the insanitary custom of kissing the Bible in the witness box, and Lister's tactful reply to Queen Victoria's invitation that he should decry vivisection.

Medical men of all kinds will revel in this book. So will their patients, providing they are not too squeamish. Indeed they should be encouraged to read it so as to appreciate the times in which they live. Medical historians will be grateful for the references that are included unobtrusively.

WILLIAM BROCKBANK

*Soldier in White: The Life of General George Miller Sternberg.* JOHN M. GIBSON. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press; London: Cambridge University Press, 1958; pp. 277. Frontispiece. 51s.

Sir William Osler said of Sternberg's contribution to the conquest of yellow fever that it assured him a high place among the benefactors of his time. That Sternberg