

Book Reviews

JOHN CULE (editor), *Wales and medicine. An historical survey*, London, British Society for the History of Medicine (Llandysul, J. D. Lewis), 1975, 8vo, pp. xi, 249, illus., £3.00.

In September of 1973 the Ninth British Congress on the History of Medicine was held at Swansea and Cardiff. Twenty-three of the papers presented have now been collected together by Dr. John Cule, the authority on the history of medicine in Wales, to form a volume both scholarly and attractive.

As with most books of this type the individual articles are of uneven value as regards content, presentation, scholarship, and documentation. There are several slender pieces, but on the other hand there are a number of important additions to our knowledge of the topic. Of the twenty-three, twelve are concerned wholly or in part with biographical accounts of outstanding medical practitioners or of men of note and influence in Welsh medicine who were either Welsh or had contacts with Wales; they range from the medieval physicians of Myddfai to Sir Thomas Lewis and David Lloyd George. Appropriately there is a group of articles dealing with occupational disorders: dust diseases, coal miners' skin diseases, and nickel toxicity. 'The interaction of war and plague in the later Middle Ages', 'Pestis flava: y fad felen', 'Meddygon Myddfai', and 'Beved Feddyg: a Welsh medical practitioner in the late medieval period' are all scholarly articles dealing with medical aspects of the Middle Ages.

Each paper is well presented, many are fully documented, and there are a number of supporting illustrations, some of which, however, have reproduced poorly. The editor in particular is to be congratulated for the great labour that is inevitably associated with a publication of this nature. He and his contributors have produced a most attractive book which without doubt will achieve a wide popularity, especially in the Principality. It is the first book devoted entirely to medicine in Wales, and we look forward to more of its kind, which will bring together medical men and historians with the common aim of presenting aspects of local British medical history. It will be a challenge to them to produce an excellent book like this one and at such a modest price. Today when books of merit rarely cost less than five pounds, a volume of 250 pages with fifteen plates, two of which are in colour, offered at the give-away sum of £3.00, reflects great credit on the group of devoted Welshmen who made it possible.

ARNOLD PACEY, *The maze of ingenuity. Ideas and idealism in the development of technology*, London, Allen Lane, 1974, 8vo, pp. 350, illus., £5.50.

There is still a great deal of work to be done in the field of the history of technology. This book is a notable contribution to the subject, and it surveys changes in ideas and outlook that have accompanied the development of technology in Europe from about 1100 to 1870. However, unlike many histories of this subject, it is not merely a record in chronological sequence of man's mechanical ingenuity, versatility and progression. The author, who is a physicist by training and has been a lecturer in the history of technology at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, is especially concerned with the intellectual and philosophical themes in the history of technology. As he points out, there are too few books on this vital aspect,