

### Book Reviews

science in chemistry was that highly interesting and complex 'manure' of philosophy, mysticism and religion that combined with and mutually stimulated shrewd empirical observation and experimental probing, the very Hellenistic syncretism into which the author of the invaluable book under notice introduces us. We mentioned Aristotle whose influence is incalculable for the idea of chemical transmutation ('alchemy') as it is in so many other proto-scientific fields and is well shown in the fifty pages devoted to him. Other chapters are less elaborate and discursive and more in the nature of notebook pages generously made accessible; they require sometimes recourse to original contexts—a task made easy enough through the copious notes. These are properly placed at the foot of the page and thus protect the reader against the Tantalian (or rather Promethean) liver-damage inflicted by thumbing exercises in the hunt for notes which may or may not be detectable elsewhere 'at the end'. There is much to be thankful for and little to criticise in the book—there are not a few, but mostly harmless printers' errors and occasionally a false claim which must have crept into one of the notebooks, as for example that Nemesius, Bishop of Emesa, A.D. 400, 'almost anticipated the circulation of the blood' (p. 200). It is, of course, the well-known mis-statement found in Fell's commentary to Nemesius (Oxford 1671) and kept alive in such a doubtful 'source' as Almeloveen's *Inventa novantiqua* (Amstelod. 1684, p. 233). Nor is it true that Galen had any 'idea' of the 'smaller circulation'—Partington later judiciously points out that, according to Galen, no blood but air or a product thereof enters the left heart from the lung (p. 199) and thus implicitly corrects this. *Finis*—and in the present case at the same time *Inceptus—coronat opus*: the introductory volume under notice in common with the eminently high standard of the previous volumes justifies high expectations for the concluding volume of the great work to come.

WALTER PAGEL

*La Cultura Medica ed i Suoi Esponenti nella Firenze del Primo Ottocento*, by G. GUARNIERI and M. A. MANNELLI (N. 1 in *Monografie di Episteme*), Milan, Episteme, 1968, pp. 70, £2.50 (*Italian*).

This interesting small work contains a critical appraisal of the School of Medicine at Florence in the years at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The authors have considered the record of its practitioners, taking into account the extravagant medical philosophy prevailing in Italy at that time, based on the theory of the Scot, John Brown (1735–88), with the Italian variants of Rasori, Guani and Tommasini. Brown's thesis maintained that life was a sort of 'excitement' maintained by external 'stimuli'. Too much gave rise to 'sthenic' diseases and too little, to 'asthenic' diseases. Therapy was very simple and directed toward correcting the excess or the deficiency of the 'stimuli'. It followed that when life ceased the evidence of the cause of the disease disappeared, making autopsy an absurd way of attempting to show the cause of death.

The physicians of the Florentine medical school of the Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova, being creatures of their time, seem to have made no outstanding contribution to medical science. The authors claim that in a scientifically depressed period at least the teaching 'was no worse than that of the other major Italian universities'

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and many clinicians overcame the stultifying effects of the Brunonian theory. Francesco Torrigiani sought post-mortem confirmation of his bedside diagnoses, and Antonio Catellacci wrote a good account of the yellow fever—although Torrigiani accused him of plagiarizing it. Amongst the twenty short biographies is one of Giuseppe Bertini (1722–1845), the first professor of the philosophical history of medicine at Florence in 1805, and who in 1810 at the fall of the Regency was moved to Pisa, when all the other professorial chairs were transferred under the imperial government.

JOHN CULE

*The Legacy of Philippe Pinel: An Inquiry into Thought on Mental Alienation*, by WALTHER RIESE, New York, Springer Publishing Co., 1969, pp. xii, 194, \$7.50.

What is the spell Pinel has cast over the historians of medicine? Was he the right man, at the right time in the right place, or did his personality and work place him in a position to become a French myth hero? Or perhaps was it the result of a famous picture by Robert Fleury of Pinel unchaining the lunatics—an act so dramatic, so sentimental, so well portrayed and so appealing to the Zeitgeist. Pinel's *Traité medico-philosophique sur L'Alienation mentale ou la Manie* has become one of the classics of psychiatry, and Walther Riese uses it to show, by the extensive use of quotations, the importance of Pinel's work in the development of psychiatric thought and practice. Pinel's approach to mental illness was influenced by philosophers such as Locke and Condillac on the one hand, and on the other by British empirical psychiatrists—particularly John Haslam and Alexander Crichton. Dr. Riese suggests that Pinel was the inaugurator of 'traitement moral' and for this reason stands 'head and shoulders in the early history of psychiatry'. By moral treatment was meant not only the kindly control of the sick person, but a psychological approach based on a knowledge of the etiology and natural history of mental diseases, as well as on the understanding of the role of emotion in these conditions. Certainly Pinel was a pioneer in the care of the mentally ill, and by his influence on British psychiatry and thus on American psychiatry played an important role in the later non-restraint movement. Dr. Riese has illuminated many aspects of Pinel's thought, and his interpretation of the *Traité* based as it is, on translated excerpts, will be of value to those who read more deeply into the history of psychiatry.

DENIS LEIGH

*Early Days in the Mayo Clinic*, by W. F. BRAASCH, Springfield, Illinois, C. C. Thomas, 1969, pp. viii, 142, illus., \$7.50.

If ever one needed to cite a monument to individual initiative it could well be the Mayo Clinic. Here is its story, presented drily, tersely and unpretentiously, with a good number of anecdotes about the Mayo brothers. The author, who has been in Rochester since 1907, must be better qualified than most to write about the famous institution in that town.

He tells of Mayo père emigrating from England in 1845 because of the difficulties he had experienced there in his efforts to become a doctor; of his subsequent success in America where self-help was as acceptable in medical education as in any other sphere of activity; and of his two sons Will and Charles who created an astonishing