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photographs, which were taken in defiance of regulations. The diary gives some insight into living conditions. Sometimes the nurses lived in wooden huts, but on other occasions in tents, which were not altogether weather proof. Sister Gass clearly experienced at first hand both Flanders mud and the intense winter cold. She made extensive entries until early 1917 at which time two of her relatives were killed or died of wounds. Perhaps because of this or because of the intensity of her work, the entries then become less frequent and shorter.

The diary reveals some of Sister Gass's duties and the extent of casualties. She describes how she had to set up wards in tents, which were also not entirely weather proof, how she had to obtain stores and stock the ward. She did not enjoy night duty, which came round every three months, because she found it difficult to sleep in the daytime. There were days when nursing activities were slow and others when life was hectic, particularly during the periods of the major Allied offensives such as the Somme, Passchendaele and Vimy Ridge. The matron of the Hospital, whose recollections are also included in the book's extensive appendices, quotes the total number of casualty admissions as 143,252 with 11,395 operations performed.

The book, which is edited by Susan Mann, contains not only the diary but also a useful introduction to the life of Clare Gass covering events before and after those recorded in the diary. In addition there are extensive notes and appendices. Overall the book contributes to a better understanding of the life of nursing sisters in the CAMC, and how they managed both away from the front line and close to it.

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Jean Fernel, *La Physiologie*, reprint of 1655 edition, ed. José Kany-Turpin, tr. Charles de Saint-Germain, *Corpus des Oeuvres de Philosophie en Langue Française*, Paris, Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2001, pp. 662, €52.00 (hardback).

Jean Fernel (1497–1558) was one of the foremost physicians of his Renaissance day, and wrote extensively on the full content of the medicine of the time. And on more than medicine, for he interested himself very seriously and very competently in, for instance, astronomy and the measuring of a degree of latitude. He wrote exclusively in Latin, which a century or so later was still being inculcated early into the children of the ambitious; for example, in Paris Guy Patin (1601–72) had his son Charles (1633–93) speaking and understanding Latin, so that before he was six years old he could speak it to the educated, and French to the household. So Charles said later, anyway. His father Guy declared Fernel to be one of his “Saints”, alongside Galen, and the best role model for his sons, who were thus early able to read him. But by that time not everyone was so well equipped. Hence in 1655, “pour ceux qui n’entendent pas la langue Latine”, Fernel’s *Physiologia* was published in a French translation of the original Latin publication of 1554, the only one of his works to be translated into French, and arguably his most important.

This translation has now been reprinted, a welcome development, and the reprint has been provided with a small number of notes and corrections. One of the notes (on p. 132) dismisses too summarily Fernel’s statement that images and spirits *emerge* through the pupil, rather than entering through it. A belief of this kind not only goes back at least to Plato’s *Timaeus*; it also addresses problems of visual physiology, even now incompletely solved (see Otto-Joachim Grüsser, ‘On the history of the ideas of efference copy and reafference’, in Claude Debru (ed.), *Essays in the history of the physiological sciences*, (Clio Medica 33)

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Amsterdam and Atlanta, Rodopi, 1993, pp. 35–56).

A translation of the *Physiologia* into English by myself, together with an introduction by John Henry and a transcript of the original Latin, is undergoing publication by the American Philosophical Society this year. And

recently published, for those interested in Fernel, is a special number (41) of the review *Corpus* from Paris, which includes articles by V Aucante, Hiroshi Hiraï, Danielle Jacquart, Paul Mengal, Roberto Poma, Jean Céard and Sylvain Matton.

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