

Book Notices

J. HERMANN BAAS, *Outlines of the history of medicine and the medical profession*, trans. rev. and enl. by H. E. Handerson [New York, J. H. Vail, 1889], 2 vols., Huntington, N.Y., R. E. Krieger, 1971, pp. 348, 350–1173, [no price stated].

Baas's book, originally published in German in 1876, was described by Garrison as ". . . still in many respects the most readable . . ." (*An introduction to the history of medicine*, 4th edition, Philadelphia and London, W. B. Saunders, 1929, p. 884). H. E. Handerson of Cleveland, Ohio, translated it into English in 1889, incorporating a large amount of material the author had gathered for a second edition. (See review in *Br. med. J.*, 1891, i: 182). The late Dr. W. R. Bett characterized it as follows:

To this medical historians continue to turn again and again because it bristles with information omitted or despised by other standard works of reference, and possibly also to stimulate their jaded appetites and to refresh their plethoric minds through the most masculine and the most readable of the larger histories of medicine. Though its background is commendably accurate, the book is enlivened by a delightful array of asides and tit-bits, trivial maybe and gossipy, erotic sometimes, and often frolicsome. (*Ann. Med. Hist.*, 1939, 1 (Series 3): 97).

Unfortunately the present publishers have produced only a straight reprint and have not bothered, presumably for financial reasons, to provide an up-to-date assessment of the book and the author. Much has been written on the history of medicine since 1876 and attitudes and opinions have changed, so that readers of Baas must be cautious, and they should be aware of the voluminous secondary literature of the last ninety-eight years.

HARALD NIELSEN, *Ancient ophthalmological agents*, in, *Acta Historica Scientiarum Naturalium et Medicinalium*, vol. 3, Odense University Press, 1974, pp. 117, illus. [no price stated].

An excellent survey of collyria in Ancient Rome. This name was originally applied to ointment sticks in Ancient Greece, but was later used for all eye medicines, of which there were many varieties. The 250 extant collyria seals which record the name and that of the prescriber or preparer, and which were in use from A.D. 100 to 500, are also described in detail.

BOOKS ALSO RECEIVED

(The inclusion of a title in this list does not preclude the possibility of subsequent review.)

R. G. RICHARDSON, *Larrey, surgeon to Napoleon's Imperial Guard*, London, J. Murray, 1974, pp. x, 266, illus., £4.50.

J. RIERA, *La introducción en España del método antiséptico de Lister*, Universidad de Valladolid, Seminario de Historia de la Medicina (*Acta Historico-Medica Vallisoletana*, no. 1), 1973, pp. 81, illus., [no price stated].

H. SIEFERT, *Der hippokratische Eid-und wir? Plädoyer für eine zeitgemässe ärztliche Ethik: ein Auftrag an den Medizinhistoriker*, Frankfurt-am-Main, Kohlhauser, 1973, pp. 60, [no price stated].