

### Book Reviews

Several of them are well known: C. W. Hufeland's, 'Begriff und Wesen der Krankheit' (1975); Virchow's, 'Über die heutige Stellung der Pathologie' (1869); Ribbert's, 'Das Wesen der Krankheiten' (1909); Canguilhem's, 'Essai sur quelques problèmes concernant le normal et le pathologique' (1950); Freud's, 'Die Arzt und der Kranke' (1927); Rather's, 'Zur Philosophie des Begriffs "Krankheit"' (1958); Engel's, 'A unified concept of health and disease' (1960); and the editor's, 'Der Krankheitsbegriff (was ist Krankheit?)' (1972). Each piece has its own references and there is a bibliography of selected titles, pp. 459–472, and useful indexes. All of the selections appeared originally in German, except for three, two French and one English chosen presumably because the book is aimed primarily at a German audience. On the other hand it is likely that the German contribution to this basic topic has been greater than that of other nations and therefore the choice is not a biased one.

There is no editorial comment to introduce the essays, but instead Professor Rothschild provides an excellent brief prelude; this does not, however, substitute satisfactorily for critical and explanatory introductions. He explains that his approach has been more from the point of view of cultural history, with its intellectual re-orientations and new concepts of the aims and methods of medicine. His selected authors therefore tend to be the young men attacking the old order, and whose comments have most relevance today. The author explains how each of his essayists fits into the pattern of advancement of ideas concerning the basis and etiology of disease and associated problems.

It is most valuable to have this anthology on a topic central to the history of medicine and it should be carefully examined by all medical historians, and also by medical practitioners who are in contact with disease daily.

ROWLAND RYDER, *Edith Cavell*, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1975, 8vo, pp. x, 278, illus., £4.95.

The shooting of Edith Cavell (born 1865) in Brussels on 12 October 1915 by the Germans released an international furore, elements of which are still present seventy years later, remaining in the memories of those contemporary with the event and those who were brought up on the legend. She was an uncomplicated, selfless, Christian nurse whose first duty was to help others. It was only natural, therefore, that she should shelter British and Allied soldiers and help them to escape. This she carried out in an efficient and tireless fashion, having helped more than six hundred men before she was arrested.

The story has been told many times before but Mr. Ryder's is one of the best so far. He has carried out extensive research on his topic, and in this regard it is a pity that his references are not more extensive and more professionally presented. He is utterly fair in his narration and his style is captivating so that the book can be read rapidly and with much reward. His contribution is more to the earlier parts of Miss Cavell's life and he has used oral historical techniques extensively. To her tragic death and to the events leading up to it and beyond he has little new to say.

This is an important addition to the history of nursing, to medical biography and medical history. Quite apart from providing an accurate account of an episode in war medicine, it offers an absorbing and informative narrative.