

Book Reviews

who through ignorance of the proper method commits error after error and who is led astray by a simplistic reliance on symptoms. But there are limits to a doctor's knowledge; only God, a higher power, knows everything or disposes of health to every patient, and the workings of the heavens are not always revealed to the physician. Sometimes the responsibility for a patient's failure to recover can be properly laid at the door of his doctor, but at other times chance and the vagaries of the patient himself must take the blame (cf. pp. 123 and 231).

Although one might take issue with Professor Westerink's renderings on occasions (e.g. "gases" for "*pneumata*" and "trial" for "*peira*") and occasionally suspect his text of being more corrupt than he allows (e.g. p. 241, 32), this should not take away from his considerable achievement in editing and translating this complicated text. It is a mark of the quality of his scholarship that one regrets not having a longer introduction which would set out more clearly the meaning and significance of the "Olympiodorean method" (a reference to Richard is not enough by itself) or set the work itself in its broader educational context. But this reviewer also appreciates the virtues of brevity and concision.

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GIAMBATTISTA MORGAGNI, *Clinical consultations*, the edition of Enrico Benassi (1935) trans. and rev. by Saul Jarcho, Boston, Mass., Francis Countway Library of Medicine 1984, 8vo, pp. C, 450, \$42.50 (distributed by University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville).

It is rare to be able to greet a book with unreserved applause, but *The clinical consultations of Giambattista Morgagni* deserves nothing less. The story of the publication is interesting in itself. In 1771, Morgagni, perhaps more than a little aware of his abilities, gave to Michele Girardi, his favourite pupil, fourteen folio volumes of his writings. Included were a hundred clinical consultation reports, opinions on cases in which, in most instances, Morgagni had not seen the patient. They were written in Italian and, after many vicissitudes, they were edited and annotated by Enrico Benassi, an eminent Italian radiologist, and issued in an edition of 500 copies in 1935. The current edition is a translation by Saul Jarcho of Benassi's edition with a new preface, and a great many new footnotes.

Consultations by letter, as Jarcho points out, were "neither a novelty nor a rarity in Morgagni's time" (p.L). They were common in the middle ages and, in the eighteenth century, both Boerhaave and Cullen had extensive epistolary practices. In some instances, the original letter asking Morgagni's advice has been preserved, in others only his reply. The reader familiar only with Morgagni's *De sedibus et causis morborum* may at first be surprised by this volume and its apparently marginal use of pathological anatomy, but closer acquaintance clearly shows the letters to be progeny of the same hand that wrote the classic of local pathology. The impression the letters leave is of Morgagni, using every resource available, attempting to paint a picture of sickness as part of the life of the sufferer. Using anatomy, humoral pathology, chemistry, ancient knowledge, climatology, and so forth, he built up an account of how specific diseases—aneurysm, phthisis, or whatever—took such a form in the patient at the time. On the basis of this he constructed careful, and entirely individual, therapeutic indications. Within this world, pathological anatomy was simply that, the anatomical aspect of disease, not its be-all and end-all. The cases also show that Morgagni was not only a physician, since they include advice on trauma (a torn tongue) and pregnancy. Jarcho has provided a simple and sensitive, but scholarly introduction, avoiding any flamboyant theorizing about eighteenth-century practice. For *aficionados* of Enlightenment medicine, this volume will be a treasure. For tyros looking for a point of entry into the strange world of eighteenth-century practice, it should be a delight.

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