

Book Reviews

Sitz und Ursachen der Krankheiten, by G. B. MORGAGNI (Venice 1761 ed., with commentary by M. Michler, and bibliography by L. Premuda), (*Hubers Klassiker der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften*, Band 10), Bern, Verlag Hans Huber, 1967, pp. 195, illus., S.Fr./DM. 22 (paperback, S.Fr./DM. 14).

There must be few who are unacquainted with the name if not the contents of Morgagni's masterpiece on 'The Site and Causes of Disease'. What may surprise some is that the book was written when he was seventy-nine years old and was his last work. It was also written in the form of letters and consists of an analysis of the enormous amount of material he collected over his long life. Not unnaturally his fame led to some professional jealousy. In Italy he was often called 'His Anatomical Majesty'.

This book is really a selection of some twenty-seven letters from the seven hundred cases described in his book published in Venice in 1761. In making the selection the editor has tried to illustrate the range of Morgagni's interests: Letter 1 deals with headache, Letter 14 with diseases of the ear and nose and with stuttering, Letter 34 with abdominal pain, and Letter 61 with fractures of the limbs. Not being an expert it would be invidious of me to comment on the accuracy of the selections or translations. Nevertheless the scholarship of the editor, who is Professor of Medical History at Giessen, is made abundantly clear in his excellent Introduction on the life and work and times of Morgagni.

There is an extensive bibliography of thirty-two pages which is a tribute to the industriousness of L. Premuda, appropriately Professor of Medical History at Padua.

The volume is the seventh in the series of Medical Classics published by the Swiss firm of Huber and is up to the high standard to be expected from these publishers.

I. M. LIBRACH

Cheadle Royal Hospital, A Bicentenary History, by NESTA ROBERTS, Altrincham, John Sherratt, 1967, pp. viii, 189, illus., 30s. 0d.

The history of a famous mental hospital is likely to be predominantly of medical and technical interest when written by a psychiatrist, of social interest when entrusted to a historian, and of human interest when it is the work of a professional writer. Miss Roberts' orderly and very readable narrative falls into the last of these categories, just as the recent account of Worcester State Hospital by Professor Gerald Grob is an outstanding example of what the historian can do to record the changing fortunes and background of a psychiatric institution. Miss Roberts had produced a faithful account of administrative and personal events; it is pardonably warmed by enthusiasm, but in places cumbered with parochial detail.

In 1763, when the Manchester Royal Infirmary had been in existence for eleven years, it was proposed to add to it a Hospital for Lunatics, and in 1776 two newly-built wards were opened for this purpose. The aims of the founders were enlightened, and apart from a brief lapse in the early days the care of the patients was evidently humane. Men of ability were appointed resident medical officer or physician to the hospital. Among them was Henry Maudsley, who took over responsibility when the fortunes of the hospital were rather low, and during the three years he served there reorganized the whole institution (which had been removed to Cheadle in 1848).