

Book Reviews

field, Sir Charles gives a lucid and concise survey of a complicated subject. He shows that, although medicine owes a debt to chemistry, the reverse is also true for the stimulus provided by medical research has led chemists to discover chemical structures so complicated that no chemist could have developed them *ab initio*.

Prof. A. Haddow's paper on the contribution of chemistry to cancer research and Prof. Catcheside's on chemistry and genetics belong to the realms of 'unfinished business', for these subjects are still in early stages of development. Their inclusion shows that the organizers of the Congress are aware that history is a continuing process. Both papers give fascinating accounts of these two important and involved subjects.

Dr. T. F. Macrae in 'Chemistry and Nutrition' shows how research into food constituents, especially vitamins, has enabled several previously widespread and fatal diseases, such as scurvy, to be conquered, at least in those countries where the results of this research have been applied.

Dr. W. A. R. Thompson, in a paper entitled 'From Antisepsis to Antibiosis', as well as tracing the development of the control of sepsis from Lister's work to the discovery of the antibiotics by Fleming, gives a few interesting glimpses of the pre-history of the subject.

The final paper, by Dr. F. L. Rose, 'Origin and Rise of Synthetic Drugs', gives an appropriate ending to the Proceedings for it is the systematic examination of many series of compounds, started by Ehrlich, that has led to the development of many important drugs and gives promise of future conquests of disease.

Dr. Rose illustrates his paper with examples from Ehrlich's work up to the development of modern drugs such as antimalarials and diuretics.

The volume will take its place with its predecessor in what promises to be a most important and interesting series of contributions to the history of medicine and pharmacy.

J. D. WHITTET

Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry. 1535-1860. A history presented in selected English texts, by RICHARD HUNTER and IDA MACALPINE, London, Oxford University Press, 1963, pp. xxvi, 1107, 84s.

From time to time the mountain of psychiatric literature tires of giving birth to mice and produces something which is lasting and not ephemeral. When such a product is at the same time an important treatise in the history of medicine, the result is likely to be exceptional indeed. Such is the case with the masterly study by Drs. Hunter and Macalpine of the development of psychiatry from the Middle Ages up to 1860. The authors have attacked their subject from two different directions, each contribution being not only informative but also interesting, even fascinating. In the first place the reader is given an excerpt from the works of many scores of writers who from 1535 onwards have added to the knowledge of the insanities, their causes, nature and treatment. This aspect of the book is intriguing and is easy reading indeed, for with both profit and delight one can open anywhere and dip. In addition each literary selection has been prefaced by a critical account of the writer himself, and short biographical details are afforded us, coupled with a reasoned statement as to his achievement and importance. Nor is that all. Drs. Hunter and Macalpine have written an elegant and critical essay upon the present status of psychiatry in the light of the past, which is a classic *in petto*. According to his private prejudices the reader will peruse these pages with a cynical nod, a chuckle, or a scowl.

Plus ça change is the background theme and one can but wryly concur with the

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authors when they write 'How far psychiatry is still behind medicine is shown not only by the survival of therapeutic principles long since discarded from the parent science (of medicine) as for instance treatment by shock, but also by the persistence of schools of psychiatry, not to mention psychology or psychotherapy, the like of which vanished from the medical scene one hundred years ago with the scientific developments of the nineteenth century'.

It is not surprising that this book has already been widely acclaimed in the lay press and it can be assured of a permanent and important place in the literature of medicine, psychiatry and medical history. Samuel Johnson, whose rating of historians was a low one, stated the requirements in that sphere as comprising penetration, accuracy, colouring and application. Each one of these qualifications is completely fulfilled by the authors of this quite outstanding book.

MACDONALD CRITCHLEY

A History of the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries of London (vol. 1, 1617-1815), abstracted . . . from the manuscript notes of C. WALL, by H. C. CAMERON, revised . . . and edited by E. A. UNDERWOOD, London, for Wellcome Historical Medical Museum by Oxford University Press, 1963, pp. xiv, 450, 28 plates, 55s.

Until recently students of the History of Pharmacy in England had to rely on obviously out-of-date works by Barrett, and Bell and Redwood, but in the last twelve months two new works have added much to our knowledge. L. G. Matthews gave a very clear account of the general development of pharmacy in Britain and now E. A. Underwood has described in greater detail the development from 1617 to 1815 of the London Society of Apothecaries which was the only body controlling the profession in this period.

This important work has had a somewhat chequered history, for Dr. Underwood has had the invidious task of revising and editing the manuscript of the late Dr. Cameron which in turn was based on the notes of the late Dr. Wall. The thoroughness with which the editor has done this difficult job can be seen from the fact that the references and annotations occupy more pages than the text itself. This, however, has had unfortunate consequences; the references, which often include important quotations, are so long and complicated (one covers 45 pages) that one fears that they will never be given that care and attention they deserve. Even more unfortunate is the fact that in such a mass of detail it is often impossible in the end to know what citation is backing what fact. All this is particularly true of the first few chapters, which deal with the most critical period of the Society's history. This period of conflict, first with the Grocers and then with the Physicians, is admittedly complicated, but could be made much clearer if it were shown that the *Pharmacopoeia* of 1618, especially the second edition, was both a weapon against the Grocers and at the same time the guarantee to the College of Physicians that the Apothecaries would stop practising medicine.

As it is, in these chapters the references and quotations are often almost impossible to reconcile with the text—was there a *Quo Warranto* (p. 52) against the Apothecaries between June 1636 and April 1638 or not? This failure to combine with the text what is essential and important in the notes also leads to many mistakes, especially in chronology, in both notes and text. 'The Humble Request' (p. 52) came after the meeting of the Privy Council in April 1638 and not some months before; the trial of Moorcrofte in 1634 (p. 301) came after, not before, Houghton's imprisonment by the College of Physicians. Many of these mistakes, such as the statement (on p. 54) that