

Book Reviews

prominence, not forgetting its contribution to the development of the present army of the German Democratic Republic!

Those who like their history slanted will find much to comfort them here. Others who prefer objectivity will have to look elsewhere.

I. M. LIBRACH

Sir Thomas Browne: Selected Writings, ed. by GEOFFREY KEYNES, London, Faber & Faber, 1968, pp. 416, illus., 50s.

Sir Thomas Browne and Sir Geoffrey Keynes have this in common, that both were and are devoted to medicine and literature. However, Sir Geoffrey would seem to have the edge on Sir Thomas in that he is distinguished in both, whereas Sir Thomas's medical contributions were of no great importance.

In 1964 Sir Geoffrey edited the complete works of Browne in four volumes. The increasing interest in his life and work made it desirable to publish a short single-volume selection of his writings—not only his shorter well-known contributions such as *Religio Medici* and *Urne-Burial*—but also a wider sample of his other writings and letters.

I confess to ignorance of the latter and was surprised at their variety, random examples being—*Of the causes of Common Errors*, *Of the Elephant*, *Of the Basilisk*, *Of Swimming and Floating*, *Of the Picture of the Pelecan*, *Of the Picture of the Serpent tempting Eve*, *Bibliotheca Abscondita*, letters to Thomas Browne (his son) to Henry Power and to Daniel King.

Keynes writes a full introduction to Browne's life. Although he had twelve children, only four survived. His elder son, Edward, became a doctor but did not inherit his father's literary gifts.

It would obviously be unwise of me to attempt a critical review of these essays and belles lettres except to say that at times they tend to be verbose and obscure, and even sanctimonious. One wonders whether he himself acted on the good advice he was wont to hand out to others! He seems to have been a kindly sensitive man, keenly aware of the limitations of this world, but rather more optimistic than one would expect.

The book is 416 pages long and elegantly produced. It is cheap at fifty shillings and will serve as an excellent comprehensive introduction to a fascinating subject.

I. M. LIBRACH

Histoire de la Médecine, by ROGER BOUISSOU, Paris, Larousse, 1967, pp. 383, illus., no price stated.

This semi-stiff backed addition to the 'Livre de Poche' series will attract many readers. It is profusely illustrated and racily, even dramatically, written. No medical historian will or should use it for reference, but this is not its purpose. It is incidentally the first book, to my knowledge, to describe Oribasius as the 'First Larousse Médical'.

E. GASKELL