

## Book Reviews

reputation for themselves as surgeons.

What drove them on was their constant and almost obsessive desire to go one better than their colleagues from the Eastern seaboard. They succeeded. And yet, at the same time, the more sophisticated men from Boston and Baltimore were themselves setting out to raise American medicine up to and above European levels. And they, too, succeeded.

In this short book one can learn a great deal about the need for a combination of humanity and dignity both in the direction of medical institutions and in the doctor-patient relationship. The Mayo brothers had these qualities almost to excess, which accounts perhaps for the support which the public accorded the Clinic and for its ability to attract skilful surgeons. Foresight was shown too in the formation of a Graduate School of Medicine, of a charitable Foundation, and of a good library. One of the most fascinating vignettes in the whole book is of Mrs. Maud Mellish, the formidable first librarian who edited the Clinic's papers with vast erudition and who even rewrote work of her own employer, Dr. Charles, in such a way that he afterwards failed to recognize it.

E. GASKELL

*A History of Bladder Stone*, by HAROLD ELLIS, Oxford, Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1970, pp. x, 77, illus., £1.75.

My first introduction to this subject was as a student when P. T. Crymble—Professor of Surgery at Queen's University, Belfast—opened a lecture with the momentous words 'Cutting on the gripe ended with the advent of Listerian surgery'! Later I was to renew a more personal acquaintance as a sufferer and patient.

As the blurb says the story of bladder stone is amongst the longest in medical history. It is a story punctuated by the agonised cries of the patient be he so humble or exalted, and where quackery made one of its greatest impacts. It was indeed surprising to see that no one had previously set down this story in book form. It is fortunate that Professor Harold Ellis has seen fit to do so, for he is both an entertaining and erudite author.

This is a small book of only seventy-seven pages, including a table of contents, a bibliography and an index. There are seven chapters—an introduction, perineal lithotomy, supra-pubic lithotomy, trans-urethral lithotripsy, two royal bladder stones—Napoleon III and Leopold I of the Belgians—litholapaxy and finally victims of the stone. There are numerous photographs, diagrams and drawings of surgical instruments. The layout and print make for easy reading.

Some facts may whet the appetite for the prospective reader—thus—the oldest bladder stone is Egyptian from a boy of sixteen years at El Amrah, about 4800 B.C.; the apparatus minor was a simple operation requiring merely a knife and a hook to extract the stone, and, perhaps strangest of all, the development of lateral lithotomy by Frère Jacques whose name has been perpetuated in the well-known nursery rhyme. Finally, there was Samuel Pepys' mother who voided a large stone which to his disappointment she threw into the fire.

Non-surgeons should not be put off either by the title or the contents. This is a most excellent account and one which does credit to author and publisher alike.

I. M. LIBRACH