

### Book Reviews

political, artistic and social background. The book is completed by a glossary, biographical index and 'restricted bibliography' mainly made up of French publications.

If a book sets out, as this one does, to describe the history of medicine *in toto* then it will inevitably be charged with having neglected X in favour of Y. The English reader, for instance, will notice that some names well known to him are only fleetingly or not at all referred to (Geminus, Linacre, Cullen). On the other hand national bias sometimes pays dividends when it is supported by facts, and this is the case when we come to the great French period of 1800–50 which receives twenty-seven pages as against three for the rest of the world. Unfortunate errors which must be mentioned, but which are not characteristic of the book, are statements that the Second Basle edition of the *Fabrica* is 'dépourvue d'illustrations', that Harvey was an alumnus of Canterbury University and an occupant of the Chair of Anatomy and Surgery at 'Lumley's Medical School', and that William Cobbett was an American doctor! There are very few errors in transcription, even of non-French titles, and the freshness of style throughout the book will make it a suitable one to put in the hands of students hesitant about the value of medical history.

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*Le Cours d'Anatomie Pathologique de Bichat: un Nouveau Manuscrit*, by JEAN MONTEIL, Grenoble, Imprimerie Guirimand, 1964, pp. 47, plates, no price stated.

The manuscript described by M. Monteil in this pamphlet was presented to the Grenoble Medical School Library in 1902. In spite of the frequent mention of Bichat's name in its pages no-one has attributed it to the great anatomist, or even compared it with the 1825 edition published by Boisseau from a manuscript transcribed by Béclard. It has always been significant that a close acquaintance of Bichat, Cruveilhier, never accepted the Boisseau text as anything but a mutilated version of Bichat's ideas, totally lacking in style and liable at any time through excessive condensation to be misleading. In 1931 Professor Sabrazès described an 'unpublished manuscript' on Bichat's Pathological Course and transcribed the section on cancer. Geneviève Genty was able to examine this when preparing her 1943 thesis on Bichat, and, although it has since disappeared, we have her word that it bore a striking resemblance to the Boisseau text.

M. Monteil claims that the Grenoble manuscript represents the purest version we have of Bichat's Course. He has found that the order of the lectures follows that laid out in Bichat's preliminary lecture notes which are in the Faculty of Medicine in Paris. Some of the obscurities in the Boisseau text, about which Cruveilhier had complained, are here (in the Grenoble MS.) cleared up by slight changes in emphasis or by the addition of qualifying clauses. The style is much more expressive and alive, in keeping with what we find in Bichat's other books. The Grenoble manuscript has an additional section on the pancreas (foreshadowed in Bichat's MS. notes) and is significantly richer in detail in the passages dealing with the peritoneum, wound-scarring, fistula, and the liver.

Esmond Long, in his *History of Pathology* (1925) has this to say about the Boisseau text—'woefully incomplete in detail', 'impressive as they [the lectures] are as written down they do not represent Bichat'. Perhaps one day historians of pathological anatomy will be able to read the real thing in print.

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