

## Book Reviews

*Bibliography of the History of Medicine (National Library of Medicine)*, No. 1, 1965, Bethesda, Md., U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1966, pp. x, 290, \$1.75.

This very welcome bibliography—a by-product of *Index medicus*—was produced in the National Library of Medicine's Historical Division. Its citations were retrieved from the computer into which indexers now regularly feed information culled from the medical periodical literature. What a far remove this is from the *Index's* early days, almost ninety years ago, when only the unnatural faith of a publisher saved it from extinction.

The *Bibliography* will appear annually and then in quinquennial cumulations. It will, incidentally, serve as a complement to the Wellcome Institute's *Current Work in the History of Medicine*. Wisely in this first issue the editors have made no attempt to apply value-judgments in selecting their citations, on the principle that most historians are capable of making up their own minds. Nevertheless, one can foresee that this policy, if pursued in the cumulations, will lead to confusion in the minds of many users simply because the core of good material will be in danger of submersion under a mass of derivative and mediocre articles. Perhaps this hazard might be reduced, when that time comes, by the introduction of many more subject headings of greater specificity than those used in this volume.

Criticisms of this first experimental volume are as follows: (i) inadequate proof-reading (e.g. 'Antisepsis' as a heading; Royal College of Physicians under 'Societies—Hungary'; article on Polish surgery under 'Surgery—England'; article on Harvey under 'W. Harvey, 1807–76'; and so on), (ii) omitted cross-references (e.g. Martha Tracy under 'Public Health' but not under 'Women in Medicine'; four articles on Thomas Mann under 'Famous Persons', but only two of them under 'Literature and Medicine'); (iii) lack of running titles, leading to difficulty in finding one's correct place; (iv) excessive subdivision of headings (by place, century, and then place again), even to the extent of combining centuries in addition to providing for them individually. This leads to absurdities, such as the placing of references to the American Civil War on different pages, with references to later events intervening.

Nothing, however, can detract from Dr. John Blake's enterprise in offering this new and potentially most useful publication to medical historians. One hopes that the weaknesses listed above will be eliminated from the next volume. Perhaps also new headings can be provided for 'Red Cross' (at present hidden under 'Societies'), and for ethical *cum* chronological divisions of medical history such as Indian, Egyptian, Chinese and Greco-Roman medicine (at present dispersed under the various subject headings).

E. GASKELL

*The State and the Mentally Ill; A History of the Worcester State Hospital in Massachusetts, 1830–1920*, by GERALD N. GROB, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press; London, Oxford University Press, 1966, pp. xv, 399, 60s.

The definitive history of psychiatry has still to be written. A few sketches exist; a few themes have been explored; a few scholars are aware of the force of Karl Jaspers' comment that the 'history of mental illness may be conceived in terms of history in

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the social and cultural sense'. So far, however, only a handful of trained historians have explored systematically the lessons of the past which emerge from the study of morbid behaviour and its management. A book of nearly 400 pages on this topic by a professor of American history is therefore something of an event.

Professor Grob has chosen as his theme the development of a single institution, the Worcester State Hospital in Massachusetts, from the time of its foundation in the early 1830s until 1920. Over the greater part of a century he is therefore able to trace the story of how changes in the management of the insane reflected not so much advances in scientific knowledge as a variety of social, economic, religious and personal factors, all contributing to the fluctuating climate of psychiatric opinion. The contemporary psychiatrist must find it chastening to view the past forty years in the light of his predecessors' experience. He will as surely be impressed by the modernity of the outlook of the young Adolf Meyer during the six years he spent at Worcester from 1896 to 1902. Above all, he will be compelled to echo Sir Aubrey Lewis's question about the changing face of psychiatry: 'how much of this change is the work of doctors and how much the product of the *Zeitgeist*, or rather of social and technological movements working powerfully on the course of human affairs?'

MICHAEL SHEPHERD

*English Midwives, their History and Prospects*, by J. H. AVELING, reprint of 1872 ed., with introduction and bibliography by JOHN L. THORNTON, London, H. K. Elliott, 1967, pp. xxxii, 186, port., £7 10s. 0d.

First published in 1872, James Hobson Aveling's *English Midwives* has become extremely scarce. Mr. John Thornton has done a great service in publishing a facsimile of the work. To the modern reader Aveling's name means little. The biographical sketch which John Thornton has written and the sketch of the author brings the man into focus. Aveling was born in Cambridgeshire, studied medicine at Aberdeen and practised first at Ecclesfield near Sheffield, to which place he was encouraged to come through the good offices of the wife of the vicar who wished that there should be a doctor in the village capable of administering chloroform during childbirth. After four years he moved to Sheffield where he was appointed lecturer in midwifery and diseases of women and children. After twelve years, on account of his wife's health, he moved to Rochester, and when his wife recovered he set up in London where he helped to inaugurate the Chelsea Hospital for Women. In 1873 he founded the *Obstetrical Journal of Great Britain and Ireland* and edited this for three years. He was an inventor of many obstetrical instruments and later played an important part in the initiation of an examination for midwives by the Obstetrical Society.

His *English Midwives* has a quaint flavour all its own. Relying largely on original sources he describes the trends of midwifery practice century by century and describes the work of those midwives who either through fame or infamy have left some mark on the annals of history. In his preface he sets out briefly his intentions 'To arouse an interest in the midwives of this country—to show what misery may result from their ignorance—and to gain sympathy, advice and assistance in endeavouring to raise them to a more refined and intellectual position, has induced the author to present this