

Book Reviews

A new edition, revised by Prof. R. Herrlinger, has just been published. It covers not only the etymology of all the terms used in the Basle (1895) and Jena (1935) nomenclatures, but also the most recent additions made in the *Nomina Anatomica* accepted as an international standard at a representative Congress in Paris in 1955—although in fact relatively few completely new terms were introduced in this list; thus *Die anatomischen Namen* is the most up-to-date of all the available books and glossaries of this type. It is scholarly, comprehensive and almost entirely etymological, so that anyone wishing information about eponyms will make to seek it elsewhere. The price is rather high for a slim paper-bound booklet.

G. A. G. MITCHELL

Sir William Arbuthnot Lane, Bt., C.B., M.S.: an enquiry into the mind and influence of a surgeon. T. B. LAYTON, D.S.O., M.S. Edinburgh and London, E. & S. Livingstone Ltd., 1956. Pp. viii+128. Illustrated. 21s.

When three years after Lane's death W. E. Tanner published *Sir W. Arbuthnot Lane, Bart., C.B., M.S., F.R.C.S.: his life and work* (London, Baillière, Tindall & Cox, 1946)—a curious blend of the fully documented and the episodic, the philosophical and the trivial—many thought that the time was not yet to write a final appreciation of the man and his achievements. Mr. T. B. Layton's biography appears a decade later, appropriately in the centennial year of his hero's birth. It bears the sub-title 'An enquiry into the mind and influence of a surgeon'. Written with first-hand knowledge and industriously and painstakingly documented, it is of great historical value, and will appeal to present and past Guy's students, to all medical men interested in the history of their profession, and probably also to a large part of the general public. The style is most readable. Mr. Layton has the gift of graphic and often paradoxical expression, and as they read the narrative, those who know him can almost hear him speak. Some of the chapters have succinct and arresting titles, e.g. 'The wonderful hands', 'The perfectionist', 'House surgeons' stories'.

A work which is so obviously a labour of love, it may be invidious to criticize, but it is felt that here and there the author's views and interpretations are coloured by the prejudice of the moment. Not everyone will agree with the dogmatic statement that 'Lane initiated nothing. In all that he did he adopted, adapted and extended the work of others.' A few of the chapters are too short, and a little reconstruction might have succeeded in combining them with others. The chapter 'Great Ormond Street, New Health Society and other activities' is disappointingly sketchy. It is perfectly true that to his colleagues Lane was 'Willie', but to the average reader to whom Lane has become a name that echoes down the corridors of surgical

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history, the constant use of 'Willie' in what is after all an historical biography must seem incongruous and jarring. The index might well have been fuller. Did Lane really write 'Eiselberg' (twice on p. 109)?

The author deserves our gratitude for this intimate and colourful story of a great and controversial personality. It is a worthy addition to Livingstone's well-known series of 'Notable Historical Biographies'.

W. R. BETT

The Psychology of Insanity. BERNARD HART, M.D., F.R.C.P. London: Cambridge University Press. 5th ed. 1957. Pp. xi+127. 10s. 6d.

Since 1912 when this book was first published it has gone into five editions and been reprinted fifteen times. There has been little alteration over the years, and the text stands today much as it was written in 1912. It is a tribute to Dr. Bernard Hart that his book stands up so well to the present day enormous competition from other popular works on psychiatry. Clear, concise, the book deals with psychological mechanisms and their disturbances in a disarmingly simple way. There is a brief chapter on the history of mental disorder, but it is the book itself which is of historical interest. There are few fields of medicine in which a book written in 1912 and remaining substantially unchanged can be read today in a current edition. Perhaps this is an index either of our lack of progress in psychiatry, or of the undoubted validity of the mental mechanisms so ably described by Dr. Hart. Whatever the case the book is undoubtedly a classic, and will continue to be read for many years to come.

DENIS LEIGH

The Quicksilver Doctor. The Life and Times of Thomas Dover, Physician and Adventurer. KENNETH DEWHURST. Bristol: John Wright & Sons Ltd., 1957. Pp. ix+192. Illustrated. 21s.

Thomas Dover is remembered today because a prescription he originally intended to relieve the pain of gout chanced to be a valuable diaphoretic. As such it finds a place even in modern pharmacopoeias, strangely sandwiched between synthetic chemicals.

Dover himself never anticipated that his powder would bring him immortality. The legacy he believed he would leave to medicine was a knowledge of the therapeutic value of crude mercury. This he prescribed in the treatment of intestinal infestation, scrofula, infertility, asthma, syphilis, elephantiasis, scorbutic ulcers, intestinal obstruction and even appendicitis. Little wonder that his contemporaries nicknamed him 'the quicksilver doctor'. A title of which he was very proud.