

Book Reviews

Transactions (No. 28, 21 October, 1667, 539–40); and blood transfusion (III, 480). An informed interest in medical subjects spread far beyond the qualified doctors of medicine, Boyle being the most notable example. Prince Rupert (whose own *Medicine Chest* is described, II, 229–30) recommended Valentine Greatrakes the ‘stroker’ to Boyle (III, 59), and a wonderful example of English scepticism is provided in Dr. Nathaniel Fairfax’s account of the Norfolk gardener who experimented on himself and ate poisoned toads and lots of spiders to disprove the old wives’ tales about them.

Oldenburg’s far-ranging foreign correspondence gave rise to numerous letters from foreign scientists, many of the greatest interest and value. We cite at random from a letter of Michael Behm to Hevelius, 1 November 1667 (III, 574–7) on a disease which is still a problem. Behm has referred to Boyle’s work on *Colors and Fluidity*, and wishes that he would publish more on the nature of salts. He goes on to suggest that Glisson or Wharton might investigate the process of coagulation of the blood. Behm himself has just suffered an attack of gout, and he goes on to write:

I have certainly observed that gout and arthritis are caused when the urinous corruption is not separated from the bulk of the blood by the kidneys and by sweating but is circulated about the body with it, adhering in the colder ligaments around the joints; there it causes rather acute pain and even swellings by the accretion of salt, or because of its viscosity occasions stiffness and calcification. Would that the causes of this disease and its remedies might be more thoroughly investigated by the sublime wits of England, and [the results] communicated to the world, so that medical men might no longer regard it as incurable. [Professor Hall’s translation from Latin.]

It is customary for reviews of works of this type to conclude by drawing attention to a number of errors or oversights. It is a mark of the editors’ concentration and high scholarship that very little can be done in this way. An obvious misprint (‘tetrol-ogy’ for ‘teratology’—which should more correctly be ‘teratism’) occurs in the index of Volume III. Pure serendipity allows me to correct the reading of one personal name and so assist identification—‘Mr. Whingate of ye grange in Dymoc’ (II, 3, II) is undoubtedly one of the Wynniatt family who, with the Dymocks, practically comprised the village of Dymock in Gloucestershire from Saxon times. On the date in question (1663) it was probably Wenman Wynniatt (at the time sometimes spelt ‘Whinyat’) who was recommended to Oldenburg as knowledgeable on the making of cider. Finally, the ‘Mr. Bernard, an apothecary’ (II, 354) who passed on to Oldenburg his observation of a comet, was probably the famous Francis Bernard, the medical bibliophile who got a Lambeth M.D. and was later made a Fellow of the College of Physicians.

The next volume of this fascinating correspondence is eagerly awaited.

F. N. L. POYNTER

Medizingeschichte im Spektrum. Festschrift zum fünfundsiebzehnten Geburtstag von Johannes Steudel, ed. by GERNOT RATH and HEINRICH SCHIPPERGES, Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner, 1966, pp. viii, 211, illus., DM. 28.80.

An impressive collection of eighteen essays to honour Professor J. Steudel on the sixty-fifth anniversary of his birthday. The book is fittingly introduced by a short biographical note and winds up with a bibliography of Steudel’s publications 1923–1965. The scientific level and value of all essays are high, but no more can be given

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here than a short notice. The change in the meaning of Biology in the early nineteenth century (W. Baron) and that of Chemistry in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (H. Schimank), the concept of the gland as a secretory machine in the Borelli-circle (L. Belloni), Steno's veiled and self-contradictory criticism of Harvey around the *ovum-uterus expositus*-metaphor (E. Lesky) and Nature as a historical process—the Naturalist as a 'historian' of Nature in the world of Novalis (H. Schipperges), are the subjects of a more general character. The history of medical history is touched upon in H. Buess's portrait of C. Brunner, surgeon and medical historian, and in W. Leibbrand's delightful reminiscences we have a sketch of the Berlin Medical School half a century ago. Special subjects are dealt with in the essays of L. Buchheim (Aegyptian otology), H. Herter (medical ethics and deontology—*areté*—in Thukydides), M. Schmid (the Hippocratic idea of body versus corpse), G. Keil (the manuscript-tradition of Avicenna and a new fragment), O. Spies (smallpox in the Arabic literature before and after Rhazes), L. Münster (German students and doctors at Ferrara), C. D. O'Malley (Falloppio on cranial nerves), E. Schmitz-Cliever (a broadside of the early sixteenth century advertising a nostrum possibly containing mercury and of special interest with reference to Paracelsus), H. Goerke (on Linné and C. A. von Bergen), W. Katner (a satirical broadside against Hahnemann by J. F. W. C. Dietsch, after 1843) and G. Rath (on a Jenner-letter to Ballhorn). The work is well printed and illustrated.

WALTER PAGEL

Ludwig Aschoff—Ein Gelehrtenleben in Briefen an die Familie, Freiburg-im-Breisgau, H. F. Schulz, 1966, pp. 480, illus., DM. 42.

Ludwig Aschoff (1866–1942) made medical history through the most brilliant chain of discoveries, observations and ideas in pathology since Virchow. What is less well known is that he also wrote medical history and thereby substantially enriched the subject. Already in his early years he contributed profound studies in Sanscrit Medicine and as an old man wrote one of the most penetrating historical accounts of the cell-theory in pathology. Right to the end, in spite of much suffering, his deep interest and active work in Medical History occupied a prominent place in his life. This is well shown in the letters to his family—the book under notice. Here he mentions as early as in 1901 his lectures in Medical History and this in a historic account of his first visit to London where he was engaged in research work at the Jenner Institute and the School of Tropical Medicine. Here he was happy to receive from Dr. Sanborn duplicates of Etruscan votive tablets from the latter's collection—'most welcome material for my lectures on Medical History' (p. 106). In 1940, then an 'Asthma-patient aged 73' under the care of the Freiburg Medical Clinic, he writes of his last small book on Virchow as an International and a spiritual force between the nations, and several historical subjects which were at that time studied under his supervision. Between 1901 and 1940 lies a medico-historical panorama unfolding itself around the personal impressions which Aschoff—an indefatigable traveller—was able to collect and record all over the world. An invaluable source for the general historian of our own age as well as for the medical historian and philosopher, the book is as delightful to read as it is impossible to review within the space permitted.

WALTER PAGEL