

Book Reviews

(1) Clinical neurology, as practised today in the ward and out-patient department, is not very different from that of 1900. In some ways it is a nineteenth-century art, and probably a greater proportion of the pathologists and clinicians (and anatomists and physiologists) who made contributions to it in the past are remembered in eponymous signs and diseases than in any other medical speciality. Ancestor worship can thus be said to be part of neurology, and for this reason Webb Haymaker's collection of biographical essays is a valuable addition to the neurologist's library.

The second edition contains thirty-four new biographies, including several of subjects who—as living contemporaries—were originally left out. Sherrington is the most notable of these. There are one or two minor omissions (like Carl Weigert's work on myasthenia gravis and the thymus), which do not detract from the usefulness of this book. It is not meant to be a complete history of neurology, but a warm reminder of the men who shaped it.

(2) Silas Weir Mitchell (1829–1914), one of the founders of American neurology, is today remembered by neurologists for his classic study on 'Gunshot wounds and other injuries of nerves', based on experience gained in the Civil War, and for his description of causalgia. Psychiatrists also refer to his work, that concerned with neuroses, hysteria and the function of asylums being influential in its time. He was a man of great versatility and previous biographers have emphasized his literary achievements—novels, essays and poetry—at the expense of his medical work. Dr. Walter's enjoyable new biography restores the balance. The amazing range of Mitchell's scientific writings is apparent from the 250-entry bibliography; Dr. Walter presents them both critically and entertainingly, and reveals Mitchell through them.

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