

### Book Reviews

The present excellent monograph comes from Professor E. H. Ackerknecht's Department of Medical History at Zürich and, although dealing specifically with this last-mentioned book and its author, it contains in addition information concerning the history of neurology up to the time of Tissot. A biographical sketch is followed by a consideration in turn of each part of the *Traité*. The author's descriptions and beliefs are discussed in the light of preceding and contemporary knowledge of the structure and function of the nervous system and of its diseases. The salient features of Tissot's contribution to neurology are then succinctly summarized. Finally there is a list of the contents of the *Traité* which included sections dealing with the anatomy and physiology of the nervous system, apoplexy, paralysis, epilepsy, catalepsy, migraine and insanity and a bibliography of its author. There are neither illustrations nor index.

On the whole, little has been written on Tissot's contributions to neurology and psychiatry. He upheld the views of his famous contemporary Albert von Haller who had elaborated and refined Glisson's concept of 'irritability', showing by experiments that all anatomical structures containing nervous tissue and muscle fibres are at once sensible and irritable. Daremberg considered this as Tissot's greatest merit. He also discovered and demonstrated the insensibility of tendons, and in his concept of epilepsy, he was in advance of his contemporaries. Furthermore, when dealing with the epileptic fit he reveals the sympathetic, compassionate approach so fundamental in those who are outstanding in clinical medicine. Dealing with the treatment of neurological disorders, he had, like his fellow clinicians and many since them, little original to contribute. Regarding his observations in psychology and psychiatry, it has been claimed that he anticipated some of Freud's basic notions by one hundred years. Certainly in the *Traité* he evolves a concept of the unconscious and the sub-conscious in rudimentary form, as well as hinting at the theory of suppression and dealing at length with various aspects of psychopathology.

Dr. Bucher's monograph can be recommended as the best available publication on a famous but little-known clinician and in particular on his neurological and psychiatric teachings. Furthermore, inasmuch as these are placed in their historical perspective, it can be considered a useful addition to the history of neuropsychiatry.

EDWIN CLARKE

*Das Leben des Biologen Johannes Müller, 1801-58.* GOTTFRIED KOLLER. Stuttgart:

Wissenschaftliche Verlagsgesellschaft M.B.H., 1958; pp. 268. Illustrated. Dm. 16.80. Johannes Müller (1801-58) was undoubtedly the greatest biologist that Germany has produced. He had from childhood a passion for study, took a medical degree at Bonn and in 1826 became professor of anatomy there at the age of twenty-five. In the same year he issued his first major work *On the comparative physiology of the sense of sight*. In 1831 he saw the sea for the first time. This is noteworthy as most of his best work was on marine organisms. In the same year he spent two months with the anatomist, Jakob Henle, at Paris where he met Cuvier and Alexander von Humboldt and had demonstrated to him the different functions of anterior and posterior spinal nerve roots as previously displayed by Magendie and Charles Bell. In 1833 he was called to Berlin as professor of anatomy and physiology. This inaugurated a period of unparalleled intellectual activity. In that year, 1833, he issued the first volume of his *Handbook of Physiology*, the pioneer of modern physiology, and began editing his famous *Archiv für Anatomie und Physiologie*. Müller now had only twenty-five years to live. They were crowded with research of the most varied type, the results of which dominated the biology of German-speaking peoples in the second half of the nine-

### Book Reviews

teenth century almost as much as Darwin dominated English biology in the same period. Müller specially directed attention to the rich results yielded by careful microscopic research, and for more than fifty years after his death Germany remained supreme in this department.

Among Müller's students were Henle, Schwann, Helmholtz, Max Schultze, Remak, Du Bois-Reymond, Haeckel, Virchow. It would be impossible to enumerate here his discoveries, for in his great working years he issued an important paper or book at the rate of one a month. We may mention his doctrine of specific nerve energy, his work on the eyes of insects, his fruitful comparison of the double nerve cord of many invertebrates to the sympathetic system of vertebrates, his correct placing of Amphioxus and of the Cyclostomes in the vertebrate lineage, his discovery of the Lymph-hearts of Amphibia, his many writings on the Echinoderms and fishes, and on the structure and working of the organ of voice in man and animals.

Müller was not physically a large man but he had a magnificent, even an heroic bearing. His attitude to life was one of dignified and lofty asceticism, and he approached his labours as to a prophetic call. He died quite suddenly and unexpectedly in his sleep when at the very height of his powers. Despite rumours to the contrary, it is most improbable that he took his own life.

It is pleasant to recall here that this great man was particularly interested in the history of science. He solved the problem of Aristotle's 'placental shark' and showed once and for all that there really is such a creature and that it really has a placenta. Professor Koller's account of him is a handy, well-arranged, convenient and simply written little volume and is well worth translation. Its author has hit upon a particularly good and graphic method of indicating his hero's contemporaries which deserve imitation.

CHARLES SINGER

### BOOKS RECEIVED

ARETAEUS, CAPPADOX. [*Opera.*] Edidit C. Hude. Editio altera . . . correcta . . . indicibus . . . aucta. [*Corpus Medicorum Graecorum II.*] Berlin. [Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften.] 1958. pp. xxvii, 277.

Publication of the series, *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*, was interrupted by the war and has now been resumed under the auspices of the Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften. The first edition of the works of Aretaeus was published in 1923.

GLASSER, OTTO. *Dr. W. C. Röntgen*. (Second edition.) Springfield, Ill.: C. C. Thomas, Oxford; Blackwell Scientific Publications. [1958.] pp. vi, 1 I., 169. Illustrated. 34s.

The text of the first (1945) edition has been revised to include recent information on Röntgen and the early history of radiology. Improvements have been made in a number of the illustrations. Translations are provided of Röntgen's three papers on his experiments with X-rays. A list of his scientific papers, a chronology of his life, and a bibliography of source material on Röntgen are given in the appendices.