

Book Reviews

this. This handy and interesting little book, based upon a wide search of the relevant literature, helps to solve the problem. In 1843, or even earlier, Sir Thomas Watson, who had lost his wife from puerperal fever, threw out the suggestion that an accoucheur might with advantage wear a glove, impervious to fluids, for the safety of the mother in labour. At that time, however, it was not easy to make a glove 'impervious to fluids and yet so thin and pliant as not to interfere materially with the delicate sense of touch required in these manipulations'. The discovery of the method of vulcanization of india rubber brought the possibility nearer, and when, in 1878, Abbott introduced an improved method of vulcanization, Thomas Forster took out a patent for making india-rubber gloves. At first rubber gloves were thick and used chiefly to protect the hands of pathologists or surgeons in dealing with infected tissues. Even in the operating theatre the first use of thin rubber gloves in 1889 was to protect the hand of the theatre sister in Halsted's clinic from deleterious effect of antiseptics. The credit for using these gloves to protect the patient from possible infection from the surgeon's hands seems to be due to Bloodgood, who began to wear them soon after seeing them used by Miss Hampson. Others (e.g. Zoege) have claimed priority but on the evidence here put forward their claims cannot be substantiated.

Surgeons will find this account interesting to read, valuable for reference, and useful as a reminder that the obvious is often missed, even by clever and trained observers.

ZACHARY COPE

Johann Christian Reil. 1759-1813. RUDOLPH ZAUNICK. *Nova Acta Leopoldina.* Bd.22, No. 144. Leipzig: D. A. Barth. 1960; pp. 159. Illustrated.

If a man's claim upon our attention is to be acknowledged a century and a half after his death, it has to be based on something stronger than an anatomical eponym or a bare mention in histories of psychiatry. Reil deserves more recognition as physician, reformer and theorist than he has had. The Academy of Natural Sciences and the Medical Faculty of Halle, where Reil was a student and professor, combined in February 1959 to celebrate in some pious exercises the two hundredth anniversary of his birth, and to recall his achievements. The four orations delivered on this occasion are here published. They do justice to his varied accomplishments, though they lack the concentrated erudition and force of Neuburger's masterly commemorative address, delivered on the centenary of Reil's death.

The first oration, by Dr. Eulner, reviews Reil's chequered and busy life, and is followed by appendixes which include a full bibliography of his writings, of the dissertations presented by his pupils, and of articles about him or relevant to his scientific work. The appendix to the second oration, by Prof. Scharf, on Reil's anatomical studies, contains a complete set of reproductions of the copper engravings in which Reil demonstrated the structure of the brain. Professor Pönitz appraises Reil's psychiatric writings, separating the chaff of his far-fetched psychotherapeutic proposals from the grain of his shrewd speculations and insight into first principles. The concluding address by Dr. Piechocki, describes Reil's notable services to Halle as Municipal Physician. Much hitherto unpublished material from the town archives is here assembled, confirming the picture of Reil as a conscientious, outspoken and humane doctor with a strong sense of public duty.

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