

## Book Notices

LOUIS BAKAY, *An early history of craniotomy*, Springfield, Ill., C. C Thomas, 1985, 8vo pp. xii, 168, illus., \$25.75.

The title of this book, presumably, does not indicate that it was written a long time ago, rather that the author intended it to be a history of early craniotomy. This sort of carelessness is typical of a book that seems to have been written in total isolation. It is so riddled with errors that readers must treat any assertion they cannot verify with extreme caution. Within the first thirty pages, the author has asserted that, prior to the eighteenth century, apoplexy meant partial paralysis (p. 5), he has included a section on 'Venisection' [*sic*] and credited Celsus (who he clearly regards as a practising craniotomist) with the perfection of the terebra (p. 28). This is all very unfortunate since the author has attempted to present the views on craniotomy of a large number of surgeons. There is, however, no organizing theme in this history of what is an extremely interesting topic. Moreover, a number of significant figures are absent, for example, the French surgeon Pierre Dionis, and all the Irish surgeons. This absence may well follow from Bakay's apparent ignorance of the best treatment of his subject, Fred and Cecilia Mettler's splendid article on 'Trauma of the central nervous system' which was published in the *Proceedings of the Association for Research in Nervous and Mental Disease* in 1943. In his preface, Bakay writes "Neurosurgery then, as now, did not attract dullards." Maybe not, but it is hoped that their operating skills cannot be measured by their historical practice.

J. RUPREHT, M.J. VAN LIEBURG, J.A. LEE, and W. ERDMANN (editors), *Anaesthesia. Essays on its history*, Berlin and New York, Springer-Verlag, 1985, 8vo, pp. xxi, 409, illus., DM.118.00.

The essays in this volume are the edited proceedings of the First International Symposium on the History of Modern Anaesthesia. All the essays (there are eighty-three of them) are very short. For the most part, they record the activities of "pioneers" and "fathers". The papers in the later parts of the volume cover more recent events and are more valuable, not being resurrections of familiar material. Even these, however, range from very anecdotal "reminiscences" to some carefully researched studies of technical questions.

J. N. ISBISTER, *Freud. An introduction to his life and work*, Oxford, Polity Press, 1985, 8vo, pp. xi, 318, illus., £25.00 (£6.25 paperback).

Isbister proceeds sensibly on the assumption that Freud's ideas can hardly be understood independently of his life and character, and that Freudianism makes little sense except in dialectic with Freud himself. Mostly, his expositions are clear-cut and mainstream, though he finds Freud's hostility to religion a particularly crass expression of late-positivism, developed in part as a stick with which to beat Jung. In general, Freud the iconoclast is esteemed more highly than Freud the ideologue.

## BOOKS ALSO RECEIVED

(The inclusion of a title in this list does not preclude the possibility of subsequent review. Items received, other than those assigned for review, are ultimately incorporated into the collections of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine.)

VERNON COLEMAN, *The story of medicine*, London, Robert Hale, 1985, 8vo, pp. vii, 264, illus., £9.95.

DAVID F. FARDON, *Your head start on the prevention and treatment of brittle bones*, New York, Macmillan, 1985, 8vo, pp. xi, 276, illus., \$16.95.

ALBERT LEESER, *The case for homoepathy*, High Wycombe, Hippocrates Publishing Co., 1985, 8vo, pp. 88, [no price stated] (paperback).