

Book Reviews

P. M. G. RUSSELL, *A history of the Exeter hospitals 1170–1948*, Exeter, Medical Postgraduate Institute, 1976, 8vo, pp. vii, 171, illus., £4.28.

J. D. Harris's *The Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital* was published in 1922, and the present work supplements it by dealing with other hospitals in Exeter, the first of which was for lepers. The author includes medieval almshouses, which, strictly speaking, were not hospitals as we conceive of them today, and also deals with the Old City Hospital, the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, the City Hospital, two mental hospitals, a dispensary, an eye infirmary, and an orthopaedic hospital. The treatment of each institution, therefore, has been necessarily superficial. Likewise little comparative material concerning more general events or institutions is added. Perhaps this is a good thing, for there is an obvious lack of knowledge of broader issues, as shown, for example, in comments made on the history of leprosy.

Nevertheless, Mr. Russell has brought together interesting material, and he has made a useful contribution to the history of provincial British medicine.

J. B. LYONS, *Oliver St. John Gogarty*, Lewisburg, Pa., Bucknell University Press, (London, Associated University Presses), 1976, 8vo, pp. 89, £2.00 (\$4.50).

Gogarty (1878–1957) was said to be “a first-class writer, a second-class patriot, and a third-class surgeon” (p. 84). His father and grandfather had been doctors. Qualifying in 1907, he chose otolaryngology as his specialty. But he is remembered for his poems, prose, and plays. He was in fact a national poet, for in his poems he was able to integrate the ancient Mediterranean myths with the Celtic ones of Ireland, and could embellish the ordinary phrase with fancy.

Dr. Lyons, the well-known Dublin physician and writer, evaluates Gogarty's writings with sympathy and feeling. There is still controversy concerning his contribution to Irish culture, but it seems that his worth is becoming increasingly recognized. This book will assist this laudable process.

RALPH COLP, *To be an invalid. The illness of Charles Darwin*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1977, 8vo, pp. xiii, 285, illus., £10.50.

A great deal has been written on Darwin's various illnesses, and Dr. Colp has gathered together all the available evidence. He believes that the recurrent ill health from 1837 onwards was of psychological origin, much of which was due to anxiety resulting from the fatigue of his great work and relating to its possible reception by society. Overwork also at times contributed to illness.

Dr. Colp, who is a psychiatrist, presents all that is known of Darwin's bouts of indisposition and the treatments used, together with his response to them and to medicine in general, and with his relations with his doctors. All the possible etiologies that have been put forward are discussed, and in an appendix is the first transcription of Darwin's family medical book.

This is a scholarly study which can be recommended to all who are concerned with Darwin or with nineteenth-century medicine and psychological disorders. For the time being it must be considered the definitive work on a much-discussed topic.