

### Book Reviews

- (i) *Medical Reference Works 1679–1966: a Selected Bibliography*, ed. by JOHN B. BLAKE and CHARLES ROOS, Chicago, Medical Library Association, 1967, pp. viii, 343, \$10.
- (ii) *Bibliography of the History of Medicine, No. 3*, Washington D.C., National Library of Medicine, 1968, pp. vi, 316, \$2.75.
- (iii) *World Medical Periodicals, Supplement to the 3rd Edition*, prepared by C. H. A. FLEURENT, London, World Medical Association, 1968, pp. xi, 68, 20s.

Medical librarians and historians of medicine—but especially the former—will be grateful for the new bibliography by Blake and Roos. It is a complete revision of the annotated booklist which appeared as an appendix in the 2nd edition of the *Handbook of Medical Library Practice*, and is in fact a companion volume to the 3rd edition of that work now in preparation. The compilers have organized their material in a uniform manner under the various medical specialties, making it easy for the reader to discover which reference works (bibliographies, dictionaries, abstracts, reviews, directories and histories) ought to be available in his medical library. Most of the entries are annotated. In addition there is a whole section devoted to general medical history, subdivided by period, nation and form.

The National Library of Medicine has now brought out the third annual volume in its series of historical bibliographies. It is a vast improvement on volume 1 both visually and practically. Arrangement is more or less as before, with a few subjects added and the subdivisions happily rationalized. At the end appears a list of recent sixteenth-century book acquisitions, forming a supplement to R. J. Durling's published catalogue.

The Supplement to the 3rd edition of *World Medical Periodicals* indicates that about 700 new and changed titles have appeared since 1961. This number includes—according to the index—seven historical journals, which is rather short of the truth. The fact that at least two titles have been omitted (*Episteme; Annales de la Société d'Histoire des Hôpitaux*), leads one to suspect the validity of this list for the medical historian. *Clio Medica* appears in the main section but is not indexed as a historical journal.

E. GASKELL

- (i) *Catalog of Books in the Library of the Washington University School of Medicine*, St. Louis, Missouri, 1968, pp. 239, no price stated.
- (ii) *Index to the Wm. Beaumont, M.D. (1785–1853) Manuscript Collection*, compiled by PHOEBE A. CASSIDY and ROBERTA S. SOKOL, St. Louis, Missouri, University of Washington School of Medicine, 1968, pp. 165, no price stated.

For the past few years certain American libraries have been blazing the trail in the matter of applying computers to library routines. Dr. Brodman at Washington University is one of the pioneers in this field, and by now her regular automated lists of new accessions are well known to most staff members in the Medical Faculty at St. Louis. She now wishes to extend the service by means of an annual catalogue which can be posted to people afar and which can also be used by national and international bibliographical centres. The catalogue and the concept behind it must

### Book Reviews

be applauded. It is enough to say that in appearance and arrangement it resembles the *Index Medicus*.

One has to be less sanguine over the Beaumont index. The first question it raises is whether a computer is really necessary to produce a guide to a small archive of 400 documents; though one must in fairness recognize that the index is experimental in nature and intended to stir up comment. It is claimed that the system by which it was produced can be applied to any other archive. My own response is clouded with scepticism. Here, in 165 closely packed double-column pages, bulging with entries, are recorded the contents of a 'small, homogeneous and important' historical collection. Five indexes tell us in minute, and often ludicrous, detail how many letters were exchanged, for instance, between St. Martin and Beaumont; where and when they were written, subjects discussed and the actual location of the documents within the collection. On the face of things this might seem admirable, but in fact I fear that confusion is the main result. It helps no one, least of all the historian, to have an archive of this nature microscopically dissected into its smallest constituents. Who, but someone transfixed by trivia, will be helped by index entries beginning with abstractions such as 'thank you', 'suggest', 'frustration', 'proposed' and so on? The computer has enjoyed its joke. Will the poor researcher?

Obviously a lot of hard and expensive work was put into the original indexing. Could not the results have been pruned and arranged by a person practised in the art of archive description? Old-fashioned methods are sometimes still the best; they could certainly have been turned to producing a worthwhile and economic piece of work in this instance. The computer is important enough to be kept in its due and proper place.

E. GASKELL

*The Construction and Government of Lunatic Asylums and Hospitals for the Insane*, by JOHN CONOLLY, 1847 ed. reprinted with an introduction by RICHARD HUNTER and IDA MACALPINE, London, Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1968, pp. 37 + 183, port., £4 4s. 0d.

This is the latest publication in the Psychiatric Monograph series edited by Hunter and MacAlpine, and brings yet another classic of psychiatry within the reach of the ordinary reader. Conolly's original publications are surprisingly rare, considering the influence he had on his contemporaries and on the design and building of lunatic asylums. His ideas spread as far afield as Australia, Ceylon, and Jamaica and the great upsurge in mental hospital building programmes in the later nineteenth century must have been, to some extent, the result of his writings. It is therefore important to be able to refer to the original work, so that some of the claims made on Conolly's behalf can be seen in their proper context. Hunter and MacAlpine rightly point out that three important publications preceded Conolly's own book—Samuel Tuke's *Practical Hints on the Construction and Economy of Pauper Lunatic Asylums*, 1815; Browne's *What Asylums were, are, and ought to be*, 1837; and Jacobi's *On the Construction and Management of Hospitals for the Insane*, 1841. Conolly was the third superintendent of Hanwell, and a good deal of excellent work had already been carried out by Sir William Ellis—the patients were systematically employed, a fund for recovered