

Book Reviews

René Marie and Huchard's lengthy review were regarded as no more than contributions to this seemingly endless dispute.

Physicians at this period were preoccupied with physical diagnosis by means of percussion and auscultation in which respect coronary disease was a sterile field. Herrick's paper of 1918 at last supplied the missing link, namely a physical sign in the form of an abnormal electrocardiogram, and once this had been confirmed, the diagnosis of cardiac infarction was no longer difficult and almost overnight the modern epidemic of coronary heart disease erupted.

Dr. Leibowitz's review covers most of the familiar landmarks and adds some which are less familiar such as Vulpian's case of cardiac infarction and Nicholls's account of the ruptured heart of King George II whose role in the history of cardiac infarction is comparable with that of King Edward VII in the history of appendicitis. The illustrations are specially well chosen to enhance the interest of the book. The bibliography of twenty-four pages adequately covers the British, American and German publications in the nineteenth century but those in French seem somewhat neglected and one misses the names of Germain Sée, Merklen, Peter and Daniélopou, but this is a minor criticism having regard to the wealth of historical information incorporated in this volume of modest size and reasonable cost. Any lacunae in the bibliography are probably covered by the historical surveys which are separately listed.

Professor Leibowitz's review of the twentieth century covers anticoagulants and intensive coronary care which are still subjudice and have as yet scarcely found a place in history, but a contemporary evaluation will doubtless interest future historians.

In a book likely to become a historical source book, the index plays an important role and great pains have obviously been taken to make it a reliable reference guide to the text. The general style and arrangement of the book is admirable as befits a publication by the Wellcome Institute of the History of Medicine.

In studying the motion of the heart, Harvey emphasized the imperative need first to know what has been thought of these things by others in their writings, and Dr. Leibowitz's book will enable all concerned with coronary disease to do so with pleasure and profit, and at relatively modest cost. By bringing together in a single volume information otherwise scattered over a vast literature, the book will also prove a useful reference guide to medical historians.

D. EVAN BEDFORD

Transactions of the British Society for the History of Pharmacy, ed. by M. P. EARLES, Vol. 1, no. 2, 1970, pp. 58, 80p.

Volume 1, Number 1 of anything carries with it an exciting ring of a birthday, an initiation, fresh fields of endeavour, and of a pioneering spirit. A happy birthday and a cordial welcome, then, to the first issue of this journal under the distinguished editorship of Dr. M. P. Earles, 17 Bloomsbury Square, London, W.C.1. The British Society for the History of Pharmacy held its first conference at the Welsh School of Pharmacy, Cardiff, in March 1967 when Dr. John Cule discussed the problem of leprosy in Wales in the middle ages. This is now printed as an authoritative twenty-nine page text with ninety-eight notes and references. The only feature missing from this fascinating account are the colour transparencies, prepared by Mr. E. D. Jones,

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Librarian of the National Library of Wales, and used to illustrate the lecture at Cardiff.

The initial article is a scholarly account of Thomas Baskerville, Elizabethan apothecary of Exeter, by Margery Rowe and G. E. Trease.

To a Welsh reviewer, another pleasing feature of the *Transactions* is that it has been printed by J. D. Lewis and Sons Ltd., Gomerian Press, Llandysul. They have already done so much to improve standards nationally and internationally, and it is undoubtedly largely due to their expertise that the current *Transactions* is offered at the bargain price of 80p or 2 United States dollars including postage.

D. GERAINT JAMES

Roman Medicine, by JOHN SCARBOROUGH, London, Thames & Hudson, 1969, pp. 238, illus., £2.50.

The subject of specifically Roman medicine, first without Greek influence and then with it, has, so far as I know, never been treated in a unified fashion, except in chapters of general histories of medicine, where the authors who are mainly interested in other things have to cross this territory. Like all manifestations of Roman culture, Roman medicine was affected by Greek theory and practice in some degree, but the Roman strands are traceable throughout. The Roman attitude to Greek theory is an important part of the subject, since medicine is as practical as government or warfare, which were Roman specialities.

Scarborough emphasizes that the practical medicine which once fell within the duties of the *paterfamilias* was simple and undeveloped, but never lost its hold on the Roman mind. As time passed, professional practitioners appeared, and beyond them there was a body of religious and magical medicine, Latin and Etruscan. These three types of medicine served the Romans until faith healing was reinforced by the cult of Asclepius, which was installed on Tiber Island early in the third century, and until on the other side professional physicians arrived from Greece, who were theorists and philosophers as well as practitioners. With their coming the conception of a physician among some Romans changed, very much as the conception of a juriconsult did through stoic philosophy. The interaction of Roman medicine of the old style with Greek medicine may be illustrated by one example quoted on p. 23. Serenus Sammonicus says that a certain fever returns on alternate days, arranging the attacks with the exactness of an accurate balance. This one would suppose was tertian malaria, reckoned by inclusive counting and defined in Greek fashion. But the prescription was seeds of cummin sealed in wax and hung in a red bag round the patient's neck, along with a branch of pennyroyal to give off healing odours, and with a smashed bug eaten in an egg, 'horrible to the touch but not difficult to swallow in this fashion'. As Scarborough says, such practice lacked organization and accepted pattern. Greek medicine is easier to study because, in spite of the detail in some treatises, there is in others much theory which is not difficult to grasp.

Greek medicine reached Rome after its Hellenistic development, which had for a time under the Ptolemies in Alexandria included dissection and thus an advance in anatomy. There was also a theoretical development in physiology, so that Asclepiades arrived in Rome with a medical application of Democritus' theory of atoms. This, in his case, took the place of teleological views. Though Galen and Pliny later dis-