

would agree with Dr. Rowntree that there are 'giants with us in these times'. It is unlikely, however, that we would be willing to accept the conclusion that thirty-two of the selected thirty-eight are American citizens. Nor are we likely to be interested in a detailed account of his own personal ailments, together with those of his wife. However, Dr. Rowntree's conclusions drawn from a full and active medical life, if somewhat trite, abound in common sense. In an Apologia are listed a further ninety-four important medical men of this century, only a dozen of whom live outside North America. The author promises us a further work embodying this material.

As is usual with this publisher, the present book is beautifully produced. It gives a useful picture of American medicine, and despite a somewhat biased and uncritical selection, it is an excellent picture album of twentieth-century medical men. In respect of the latter, it would have earned Caryle's praise.

EDWIN CLARKE

Young Endeavour: Contributions to Science by Medical Students of the Past Four Centuries.

WILLIAM CARLTON GIBSON. Springfield, Ill.: C. C. Thomas; Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1958; pp. 292. 50s.

Longfellow's immortal lines are undoubtedly true for it is certain that contemplation of the lives of great men acts as a stimulus to striving students; the testimony of the great men themselves concerning its influence proves that it is a potent force. The student, however, views his hero's Olympian stature with awe and may be overcome by humility on account of his own intellect and relative position. He thinks more usually of contributions to knowledge made during the prime of life by an established and experienced worker surrounded by pupils and junior helpers. But if he finds out that this man when but a student himself was able to contribute significantly either to his chosen field of interest or to some other, this is more within his ken. The effect upon the appropriate person may thus be greater and more fruitful.

Dr. W. C. Gibson, realizing the importance of this transference, has collected as many examples as he has been able to find, of outstanding medical practitioners who, during their undergraduate years, were able to carry out notable research. There are some sixty-six of them and they range from Fernel and Vesalius to Gowland Hopkins and Sherrington; they are grouped according to the subjects to which they contributed. A biographical sketch is given with emphasis upon the nature of the student contribution and the author writes well, except for occasional excesses such as the use of the phrase 'tortured verbal emesis' to describe modern medical terminology. There are adequate and well-chosen illustrations but a reference to them in the text would have been helpful.

The author admits that his collection is probably only a selection of all the persons who have assisted medical progress during their student days. And he has, of course, included only those who in their later life were outstanding personages. There are probably others who sank into oblivion after a meteoric start to their career. In addition, there are others whose contributions were made in conjunction with their elders and whose part in the research has either never been recorded or inadequately so. Thus William Squire whilst still a medical student at University College Hospital, played a prominent part in the introduction of ether anaesthesia to this country in 1846. Yet his uncle, the more famous Peter Squire is often accorded, incorrectly, the credit of being present on that famous Monday afternoon when Robert Liston employed 'this Yankee dodge' for the first time in Britain.

William Squire was one of a research team, a state of affairs which occurs more

Book Reviews

commonly today. Whereas previously research was such that an individual might make noteworthy progress by employing only his own intellect and his special senses, nowadays technical medical research demands the endeavours of a group of workers, often using complex apparatus. That the appropriate student should be included in the team and so benefit from the discipline is accepted by most, although some would say that the medical student of today is already too fully occupied and that the person who is so inclined can start his research after qualification. There will always be, of course, the chance of making a student contribution single-handed and perhaps by the use of only the innate talents. The young man should not, however, be disappointed if he does not emulate those included in Dr. Gibson's book. Reading this book and thus knowing what has been possible will certainly help, and as Sir Henry Dale in his charming foreword remarks, adequate recompense is likely to be obtained from expecting success in research as well as from its achievement. The contact with those devoted to this discipline can alone be an important factor in moulding a young man's approach to medical problems, and the salutary lesson of failure is no less important.

Despite the value of being aware of successful student investigators, the question whether it was justifiable to devote a whole book to this topic springs readily to mind. If we are to encourage medical students to read about their worthy predecessors, it is important that they should be given a balanced view of people, ideas and periods. By its very nature Dr. Gibson's book fails in this task and it would seem that before tackling his biographies, which have all been produced elsewhere time and time again, or perhaps in conjunction with it, some instruction or additional reading is also necessary so that the student or junior practitioner may fit his heroes into the background of medical ideas and progress.

This book is well produced and there is a minimum of textual errors. Together with wider reading in medical history, it should form part of the medical student's self-education which Michael Faraday, one of the book's most illustrious representatives, advocated so passionately. Unfortunately, its price may keep it out of the personal collections of the very persons for whom it is intended.

EDWIN CLARKE

Tissot und sein Traité des Nerfs. H. W. BUCHER. Zürich: Juris-Verlag, 1958, pp. 62. The eighteenth century abounded in sparkling medical geniuses. The physician, Samuel A. A. D. Tissot (1728–97), although claimed as one by his contemporaries, has since received scant mention from those outside his native Switzerland. Popular with professional colleagues, students and laymen alike, he spent almost his whole professional life in Lausanne, despite tempting offers made by the Kings of Poland and of England, which in themselves illustrate his fame. He was elected to several learned scientific bodies, including the Royal Society, and the great Haller styled him *celeberrimus clinicus*. It was even said that he was a greater attraction to visitors than Voltaire, when the great Frenchman was living at Geneva and later at Fernier.

Tissot's best known achievement was a book on popular medicine and hygiene (*Avis au Peuple sur la Santé*, 1760) which ran into ten editions in less than six years and was translated into every European language; it included an attack on quackery which was particularly praiseworthy and timely. His writings on small-pox inoculation and on masturbation likewise brought him fame and popularity, but his other works, of which there are several, are less well known. Of the latter, the *Traité des Nerfs* (1778) calls for special mention.