

Notices and Books

THOMAS WILLIS'S OXFORD LECTURES. Edited by Kenneth Dewhurst; published by Sandford Publications, Oxford, England, 1980, limited publication — 750 copies only, 181 pages, £9.00.

All who are interested in the life and works of Thomas Willis, and who know of Dr. Dewhurst's writings on historical problems of the seventeenth century will look at this new study with high expectations. The book consists of three chapters: the first 36 pages (of a total of 151, apart from summary and index) deal with Willis' life and works. Then follow 13 pages of the nature and history of the Sedleian professorship of natural history of which Willis was the fourth incumbent holding it from 1660 for life; when he moved to London in 1667, the lectures were given by a deputy. The university statutes required the professor to lecture on Aristotelian physics and his books: Willis was the only incumbent who enlarged the scope of the lectures to include the anatomy and physiology of the brain and the organs necessary for the working of the Soul. After 1667, his deputy reverted to the more literal wording of the statutes. The third part of the book is by far the longest, exactly one hundred pages which contain 34 of the lectures delivered by Willis in the early 1660s; they obviously were preparations for his later publications from *Cerebri Anatome* of 1664 onward; some of the earlier lectures referred also to the *Diatribae Duae* published in 1659 which contained Willis' iatrochemical teaching on fermentation and fevers.

A noteworthy feature of all three sections are the references and notes at the end of the text in the first two, and in the third after each lecture. They give exhaustive information on Willis' personality, the background of his teaching and on the extensive literature about him. Not seldom they refer to previously untapped sources, for example on Willis' ances-

tors and early childhood."

Almost twenty illustrations help to bring "Restoration Oxford" back to life.

The title of the third chapter is identical with that of the book — which indicates its special importance. The lectures have come down to us from the notes which Richard Lower and John Locke took, the former mainly from the early lectures, the latter (who also received Lower's notes) from ca. 1663 on; they eventually found a resting place in Boyle's "Works". However, they were in Latin and remained little read. Since they were spoken to students, they were simpler than his published works, even though they showed also Willis' tendency to untrammelled speculation. The subjects of the lectures are similar to those in his published books: the last two present a very readable summary of Willis' observations on the anatomy and function of the cerebrum and the cerebellum.

In his introduction Dewhurst describes the lectures as "unique because no comparable lectures series by a medically qualified professor has ever been published", particularly not by one of the stature of Willis who had "laid down the foundations of neurology in Restoration Oxford."

In translating the lecture-notes into English, the author uses modern English and strives (as he explains in the introduction to part III) "to allow clarity of expression to supersede the restraints of pedantry". He does not make much use of Pordage's translation in *Dr. Willis' Practice* of 1681 and 1684 — rightly so, in the reviewer's opinion, because despite its charm, Pordage's translation with its ambiguities and excessive anglicising of neurological terms would have obscured the elegance of Willis' Latin text.

This is an excellent book which, though designed as a special study of the Oxford lectures, is rich in detailed information on all aspects of the life and works of Willis. It will take its

place beside the biography (written in German) by the Swiss author Dr. Hansruedi Isler.

Professor Alfred Meyer

Books Received

PROGRESS IN HORMONE BIO-CHEMISTRY AND PHARMACOLOGY — VOLUME 1. Edited by Michael Briggs and Alan Corbin; published by Eden Press, 245 Victoria Avenue #10, Westmount, PQ H3Z 2M6, September 1980, 260 pages, \$34.95 (hardcover - Canadian funds).

ELECTRODIAGNOSIS IN CLINICAL NEUROLOGY. Edited by Michael J. Aminoff; published by Churchill Livingstone, New York-Edinburgh-London; available in Canada from Academic Press Canada Ltd., 55 Barber Green Rd., Don Mills, Ontario, M3C 2A1, 1980, 600 pages, \$56.25 Canadian funds.

Annual Research Reviews VITAMIN/TRACE MINERAL/PROTEIN INTERACTIONS — VOLUME 3. By Nestor W. Flodin; published by Eden Press, 245 Victoria Ave. #10, Westmount, PQ H3Z 2M6, October 1980, 362 pages, \$38.00 Canadian funds.

NEURAL MECHANISMS OF GOAL-DIRECTED BEHAVIOR AND LEARNING. Edited by Richard F. Thompson, Leslie H. Hicks, and V.B. Shvyrkov; published by Academic Press, New York-London-Toronto-Sydney-San Francisco, October 1980, 639 pages, \$49.50 US funds.

Current Topics in Developmental Biology VOLUME 15 — NEURAL DEVELOPMENT, PART 1 — Emergence of Specificity in Neural Histogenesis. Edited by R. Kevin Hunt; published by Academic Press — New York-London-Toronto-Sydney-San Francisco, October 1980, 427 pages, \$34.00 US funds.