

Book Reviews

PETER HAINING (editor), *The hashish club. An anthology of drug literature*, Volume I, *The founding of the modern tradition: from Coleridge to Crowley*, Volume II, *The psychedelic era: from Huxley to Lennon*, London, Peter Owen, 1975, 8vo, pp. 264, 160, illus., vol. I: £4.50; vol. II: £3.25.

The editor has selected extracts from the works of thirty-six writers who, over the last 150 years, have indulged in soft drug-taking (opium, cannabis, LSD and mescaline), ranging from Coleridge who was addicted to opium to Aldous Huxley who experimented with mescaline. Each was written either under the influence of drugs or as the result of experience with them, and there is an editorial introduction to each with a brief foreword to the chronologically arranged groups of authors. There are portraits of some of the latter and other illustrations in the first volumes, but none in the second.

The selections are said to be the best work of the representatives chosen and, in the first volume, include the well-known Coleridge, De Quincey, Poe, Wilkie Collins, Gautier, Baudelaire, DeNerval, Francis Thompson, Yeats, Blackwood and Crowley, as well as more obscure individuals, together with the account of Havelock Ellis's experiments with mescaline in 1898. The second volume contains modern contributions, mostly from Americans, and it ends with Huxley. Mr. Haining's choice of the representative short stories or essays, is, however, often difficult to understand, and in many cases other pieces would have been better and more appropriate. In addition there are a number of errors in the editorial connective tissue.

Nevertheless, as a collection of drug-inspired literature these volumes will be valuable for ease of reference, as long as their limitations are appreciated.

THOMAS S. HALL, *History of general physiology. 600 B.C. to A.D. 1900*, Volume I, *From Pre-Socratic times to the Enlightenment*, Volume II, *From the Enlightenment to the end of the nineteenth century*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1975, 8vo, pp. xii, 419, vii, 399, illus., £3.90 each volume (paperback).

In 1969 Professor Hall published *Ideas of life and matter. Studies in the history of general physiology, 600 B.C.–1900 A.D.*, which is made up of a series of excellent, scholarly essays. Most of them concentrate on one physiological phenomenon as illustrated by the work of an outstanding pioneer: life and the atom (Lucretius); neo-traditional physiology (Fernel); life as a combative interaction (Mayow); unity in diversity (Goethe); evolutionary microdynamics (Lamarck); etc. The basic theme is the life-matter problem and the attempts made to solve it: the ceaseless endeavour to elucidate the differences between organic and inorganic things and to define and interpret life. The work was received with justifiable enthusiasm (e.g. *Br. J. philosoph. Sci.*, 1971, 22: 57–58) and has proved to be a most valuable compendium of the history of basic physiological concepts.

It is now re-issued in paperback with a slightly modified title and 'Preface'; its price is almost the same as that of the original hard-back edition. We can but echo the previous praises for Professor Hall's outstanding achievement, and point out that his book is of the greatest value not only to historians of medicine and biology, but also to all who are concerned with the life sciences, whether human or animal, because many of the problems he deals with are still with us today.