

Book Reviews

glossary of technical terms, a series of extracts of famous medical texts from the Ebers Papyrus to Henri Dunant, a table of contents, an index and six line drawings.

The author goes out of his way to point out in his Foreword that the book is not for the expert. On the other hand, it seems to me much too detailed for the school child. The trouble with German scholars is their inability to be concise. Thus, although this book can be warmly recommended to the adult reader, I doubt whether the unfortunate school child will be able to digest its many facts, however well-intentioned the author might be to include them.

I. M. LIBRACH

Carl Ludwig, Begründer der messenden Experimentalphysiologie 1816–1895, by HEINZ SCHRÖER (Grosse Naturforscher Band 33), Stuttgart, Wissenschaftliche Verlagsgesellschaft M.B.H., 1967, pp. v, 340, illus., DM. 32.50.

Biography in the literal meaning of the word as perpetuated by tradition since Diogenes Laertius and Plutarch is subject to limitations since events and problems which transcend the life of the given individual are necessarily omitted. In the particular case of Ludwig's presentation by Schröer it means leaving aside aspects of actual interest to the historian: the analysis of his part in the development of the mechanistic movement which he initiated with his three celebrated companions, Brücke, Helmholtz and Du Bois-Reymond; the significance of quantitative physiology which he promoted as compared with qualitative physiology at a time when so much remained to be discovered; physics versus chemistry as analytical tools in the experimental method. Since the author's purpose is to narrate and not to interpret, he fulfils his aim and makes of Ludwig's biography a model of thoroughness and objectivity.

The first part describes the humane scientist and his wandering life from one university to another, still highly productive, until he settles in Leipzig where for thirty years he accomplishes fundamental work in the most famous institute of physiology of its time, created by him and so much envied by Claude Bernard. It became the 'United Nations' centre for physiologists from all over the world who came to work under him and spread his ideas and methods.

The second part is consecrated to his scientific discoveries which are related in great detail, the author stressing most rightly the relationship between techniques and biological progress, a much neglected aspect nowadays when the fashionable intellectual history is thought to hold the key to every historical problem.

Notes, indices, unpublished letters dealing with scientific matters and a rich bibliography complete this valuable book.

JOSEPH SCHILLER

Our Ophthalmic Heritage, by CHARLES SNYDER, London, J. & A. Churchill, 1967, pp. xii, 170, illus., £5.

Since 1961 the *Archives of Ophthalmology*, one of the special journals of the American Medical Association, has been carrying regularly short historical essays contributed by the distinguished librarian of the Lucien Howe Library of Ophthalmology at Harvard.

The publication of thirty-seven of these essays in book form is a measure of the appreciation which they gained. Highly readable, they deal with phases and persons of special interest to the practising oculist. The historical events drawn from the