

Book Reviews

He met many famous people. Butler of *Hudibras* fame he described as 'an old paralytic claret drinker, a morose surly man except when elevated by claret'; of Robert Hooke he wrote, 'a very knowing man of great learning, very communicative, and extreme civil, from whom I collected many things'. Robert Boyle entertained him 'with free discourse above an hour in his chamber'.

James Yonge was made free of the Barber-Surgeons Company and he was persuaded to be examined for the Diploma of the College of Physicians; his detailed account of this examination is a historical gem of great price. His surgical and scientific reputation gained for him the Fellowship of the Royal Society. Altogether this human document penned three hundred years ago is interesting from cover to cover, and we commend it cordially. The production is excellent.

ZACHARY COPE

Das Medizinische Weltbild des Paracelsus—Seine Zusammenhänge mit Neuplatonismus und Gnosis, by WALTER PAGEL, Band I of *Kosmosophie*, with a brief account of the purpose of this series by the editor, KURT GOLDAMMER, Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1962, pp. xii, 136, illus., DM. 29.20.

'Mehr will ich richten nach meinem Tod wider Euch; der Theophrastus wird mit Euch kriegem ohne den Leib.' How astonishingly have these prophetic words been fulfilled! Four centuries after his death, the battle-cries of the *Lutherus Medicorum*—physician, seer, vagabond—have been taken up by scores of devoted partisans, among whom Dr. Pagel is already distinguished for his *Paracelsus* (Basel, 1958) in which, well this side of idolatry, he set this protean man against the background of the tumultuous age in which he lived. Now, in the present work, he has explored much more deeply the relations between the complex and not wholly consistent *Weltanschauung* of Paracelsus with that of the Gnostics, Stoics and Neoplatonists, both in their classical exposition and in the renaissance revival by such Christian humanists as Marsilio Ficino—translator of Plato, author of sober plague tracts and celebrant of mystical musical rites.

The first part (pp. 1–32) of Dr. Pagel's book provides a lucid and critical estimate of the place of Paracelsus in the history and present state of medicine. At this stage he restricts himself mainly to the techniques and insights that have proved of lasting value, entering into a discussion of Paracelsus's esoteric terminology only in so far as it is necessary to emphasize the latter's belief that it is the *unseen* world that exercises the power whether for good or evil, the material agents—even the stars—being only as it were vehicles. This section by itself provides an admirable introduction into the labyrinth of Paracelsus's thought, and as such can be strongly recommended even to those readers who might feel unable to devote the time and thought necessary to follow the author into the fascinating hinterland. Such a critical and balanced study is all the more important if the real significance of Paracelsus for the philosophy of medicine is not to be perverted by unhistorical claims for a modernity of approach quite foreign to his nature.

The second and much longer part of the work is concerned with the relation of the Paracelsian concepts of *iliastrum*, *astralleib*, *cagastrium*, and the like, to the *daimon*, *logos*, *pneuma*, etc., of the earlier 'cosmosophies'; thus emerges a picture in which the Renaissance world of occult powers and their 'signatures' becomes coherent and highly suggestive. Space does not permit of more than this hint of the richness of this lavishly documented and deeply learned study. Moreover, English-speaking readers

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may be reassured that in Dr. Pagel's hands the German language never runs amok among those 'misty profundities' to which—and especially in such a subject as this—it only too easily lends itself.

WILLIAM P. D. WIGHTMAN

The London: A Study in the Voluntary Hospital System, vol. 1, 1740–1840, by A. E. CLARK-KENNEDY, London, Pitman Medical Publishing Co. Ltd., 1962, pp. 264, 30s.

Those who acquired their clinical training in the days of the voluntary hospitals will have no doubt that our present hospital service owes its greatness entirely to the voluntary tradition built up over a period of two centuries. Already there are young doctors who were no more than infants when the Second World War began and twenty years hence post-war doctors will be in the majority. It is fitting, therefore, not only that the histories of all hospitals should be recorded but that these chronicles should be compiled by those who knew them in the days when they were in fact still voluntary organizations. Histories of many of our hospitals have already been published; indeed some of the more famous can claim more than one. The history of the London Hospital prepared by E. W. Morris in 1910 is well known and full of valuable information, but Dr. Clark-Kennedy's account, which when completed will deal with the first two centuries of its life, will be more comprehensive. Dealing with the period 1740–1840 the present volume includes a wealth of material not found in the earlier account together with useful contemporary maps showing the sites of the Featherstone and Prescott Street hospitals.

The story is one of people rather than of bricks and mortar and it is written with insight and understanding of their ambitions and anxieties. The introductory chapter is as perfect an account as is possible to find of the mid-eighteenth-century scene. The devotion of John Harrison, the twenty-two-year-old surgeon, at whose insistence the hospital was opened on a capital of only one hundred guineas, and the poverty of the foundation in comparison with that of Guy's are revealed in the story. The special objects of this infirmary were to be the poor manufacturers and the sailors in the Merchant Service, together with their wives and children. The opening of the doors on 3 November 1740—and incidentally with only a shilling left in the bank—was less than six weeks after the inaugural meeting of the charity and the call on the thirty beds was so great that a move to a building in Prescott Street facing Goodman's Fields was rendered necessary six months later. By now a measure of financial stability seems to have been attained for not only were they able to purchase two dozen new beds but also 'chairs of Virginia Walnut Tree with matted seats' at six guineas each for the doctors and two for the dispensary not exceeding 4s. 6d. each. The patients may not have had the best of nursing and in their dinner stew they may have had to put up with 'the scragg and veiney pieces', but the doctors gave freely of their time while the spiritual welfare of the sick lacked nothing. Some customs, such as anniversary meetings persisted for many years but not, one would think, the adjournment of the committee each Thursday to the Angel and Crown 'for the better transacting of the business of the Infirmary'. (The Committee of Accounts, incidentally, seem to have preferred 'The George and Vulture'.)

It is with some surprise that one learns that the promoters of so laudable a design as a hospital for the sick poor should, on the occasion of their annual procession in 1744 from the Church of St. Lawrence through the City to their 3s. 9d. dinner at Draper's Hall, have had to pay thirty shillings for the privilege of hearing the bells of St. Lawrence and two guineas for those of St. Michael's, Cornhill. The preacher on that occasion was Bishop Isaac Maddox, recently translated from St. Asaph to