

Book Reviews

Scarborough touches on these and on many other matters but too often does not press the enquiry home. This may be due partly to limited space allowed for a various and complicated subject, for which the quantity and the quality of the evidence are alike uneven. There are appendices on medical biographies, on sources and problems, on the vexed question of human dissection in Roman times, and on Roman veterinary medicine. But the combination of medical knowledge with Greek and Latin scholarship and historical insight needed for this subject is unlikely, in our times, to be found in one man, and the right man would take many years to acquire it.

E. D. PHILLIPS

Autobiography of Charles Caldwell, M.D., with preface, notes, and appendix by HARRIET W. WARNER, introduction by Lloyd G. Stevenson, New York, Da Capo Press, 1968, pp. xxvi, viii, 454, \$14.50.

This reprint, with its lively introduction by Professor Stevenson, is to be greatly welcomed. The original came out in 1855 and recounts (though one can never be sure just how accurately) memories of a long, vivid and turbulent life which stretched from 1772 to 1853. Stevenson calls Caldwell 'one of the chief priests of the great god Blah'. This he undoubtedly was; but he was also, as the editor allows, a man with superabundant energy and drive which amply compensated for the deficiencies which the term 'Blah' implies. At any rate there is no better way of getting the feel of early nineteenth-century American medicine—that strange blend of rawness and deep learning—than by reading Caldwell's memoirs.

For the unprepared they have many surprises; and even for those with foreknowledge of Caldwell's character they can provide unexpected moments of revelation. As, for instance, the pen-portrait of Joseph Priestley (missed, to my knowledge, by Priestley's biographers), whom Caldwell admired enormously but yet despised for his Yorkshireman's inability to pronounce aitches. 'These', says Caldwell loftily 'are English vulgarities'.

How useful it would be to have an index to this reprint!

E. GASKELL

A Bibliography of Robert Watt, M.D., Author of the Bibliotheca Britannica . . . With a Facsimile of his Catalogue of Medical Books and with a preliminary Essay on his Works, etc., by FRANCESCO CORDASCO, Detroit, Gale Research Co., 1968, pp. 27, 68 (4), port., \$8.50.

It is a pity this book, first published eight years ago, has not had its title changed in the meantime (or at least reversed). The bibliography actually comprises four pages; the facsimile over sixty. Which is not to argue that the facsimile is not worth reprinting, for the original (published in 1812) is rare in the extreme and its text of continuing use to the medical historian. The editor's short introduction, aided by Watt's own prefatory address to his medical students, show what an enlightened teacher he (Watt) was: both in his ideas on medicine and his attitude to his pupils. To have made his own library available to them was an act of great heroism; just how great can be judged from the quality of the books as revealed in his Catalogue.

E. GASKELL