

Book Reviews

Sir George Buckston Browne. JESSIE DOBSON, B.A., M.Sc., and SIR CECIL WAKELEY, B.T., K.B.E., C.B. Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone Ltd., 1957; pp. viii+143. Illustrated. 25s.

This book is more than the biography of a pioneer in urology and of a princely benefactor of medicine and science. It is the story also of a fascinating and eventful chapter in the history of surgery, and of many famous (and a few infamous) patients. His close friend for more than fifteen years, Sir Cecil Wakeley, and his co-author Miss Jessie Dobson, have skilfully enlivened and authenticated their narrative with extracts from Buckston Browne's autobiography, begun when he was over ninety; they were fortunate also in having had access to his case-histories. And what good reading their book makes! Its pages are replete with such illustrious names as T. H. Huxley, Charles Darwin, Erichsen, Sir James Paget, Sir Henry Thompson (versatile, close-fisted, impatient), Leander Starr Jameson, Thomas Woolner, Sir Henry Irving, Sir Andrew Clark, Sir Jonathan Hutchinson. There are also vividly intimate sketches of 'B.B.'s distinguished patients: Manuel Garcia, George Meredith, Robert Louis Stevenson, Ford Madox Brown, Theodore Watts-Dunton, Horatio Bottomley. Many good stories are told, and the numerous excellent illustrations are carefully selected.

The reader is left with astonishment that Buckston Browne succeeded in rising to the top of his profession and in acquiring a fashionable and lucrative practice, handicapped though he was by the lack of a higher surgical qualification and of a hospital appointment. Sir Harry Platt contributes a foreword, and Sir Hugh Lett writes a post script entitled 'Sir Buckston Browne as a surgeon—an appreciation'. The volume concludes with a list of Buckston Browne's publications and with an index. The index is not worthy of this scholarly, delightfully written, and historically important book: it is incomplete and not always accurate. 'Walsh' (also on p. 74) should be 'Walshe'; 'Leander Star Jameson' should be 'Starr'; one wonders also why he and Erichsen, Hutchinson and Alma-Tadema have been deprived of their titles?

W. R. BETT

The Evolution of Medical Education in the Nineteenth Century. CHARLES NEWMAN, M.D., F.R.C.P., Dean of the Postgraduate Medical School of London. London: Oxford University Press, 1957; pp. x+340. 30s.

This timely and truly excellent book is based on the Fitzpatrick Lectures delivered at the Royal College of Physicians in 1954 and 1955. It traces the evolution of medical education in Great Britain from 1800 against the background of developing medical science in Britain and in other countries. The book may be roughly divided into three parts. The first covers the ground from 1800 to the Apothecaries' Act; the second covers the period 1815 to 1858, and the last goes from the Medical Act to the end of the century.

The book opens with the picture of the medical profession in the early years of the nineteenth century and the way the student prepared himself for his chosen career. The irrelevant English way of teaching and examination is contrasted with the sounder Scottish system. The lag between medical progress and teaching which existed then as it does today is clearly illustrated.

Dr. Newman goes on to describe in great detail the various attempts at reform

Book Reviews

which culminated first in the Apothecaries' Act of 1815 and then in the Medical Act of 1858. The two streams of reform which led to the Medical Act are interesting to follow, and it becomes clear, as Dr. Newman stresses, that 1858 should not be considered as the date which marks the beginning of the modern development of medical education in the British Isles. 'Medicine had been reforming itself before the Act: it continued to do so after it.'

Indeed, Dr. Newman traces with great care, from 1815 to 1858, the two streams of reform, one within the profession, as new knowledge becomes slowly integrated into medical teaching; the other external to the profession, which led to legislation. Both aspects of reform make fascinating reading, be it the progressive application to medicine of physical signs, chemistry and pathology, or the efforts to counter the unqualified practitioner and to register the qualified. The various attempts at legislation spearheaded by the colourful Thomas Wakley and the opposition which had to be surmounted are valuable lessons to be learned.

The last part of the book is concerned with the evolution of medical education in the second half of the nineteenth century. It 'is largely the history of how those responsible were forced into the decision, or rather to the conclusion, which was recorded in the Medical Act of 1886, that the aim was to produce a doctor who, on the day he was registered, would be a safe man to let loose on the public, competent to practise all branches of his profession'.

Dr. Newman's book should be read by everyone interested in medical education. Indeed today in various countries, in the U.S.A., Britain and France, to mention but three, there are signs that a new era of reform is on the way. 'The main difficulty in medical education', writes Dr. Newman, 'is not what to teach or how to teach it, but to make up one's mind exactly what one is trying to produce. Given a good potential student, what does one want to turn him into?' The answer to this question must be given before any worth-while change is brought about.

J. F. DELAFRESNAYE

Kurze Geschichte der Psychiatrie. ERWIN H. ACKERKNECHT. Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1957; pp. xii+99. DM. 12.

Psychiatry is not simply a medical speciality [writes Professor Ackerknecht, Director of the Institute of Medical History of the University of Zürich in his Foreword]. One hundred and fifty years ago Reil placed it beside internal medicine and surgery as one of the great medical disciplines. . . . But in this field one cannot yet sound those trumpets of progress which have made the general work of the medical historian so much easier. . . . Griesinger's melancholy statement that knowledge of mental illness was in the same state in his time as diseases of the chest before Laënnec [indeed one might add medicine before Harvey] is still substantially true.

Why has the history of psychiatry been neglected although, as the author says, it is of immediate interest and value for the practitioner—much more so than the history of other specialties? One reason is that it is only in part a medical discipline: philosophical, theological, social, legal and even literary forces have played their part in shaping it and still do. Further, as there is no accepted body of psychiatric knowledge to provide a secure vantage-point from which to survey the past, it would seem that the history of psychiatry can only be written by practising psychiatrists who can evaluate earlier contributions in the light of their own clinical experience.

Professor Ackerknecht's task is rendered more difficult by the absence, which he rightly regrets, of reliable preliminary and basic studies in the field; hence he has