

genius—deserve special attention. Melancholy, regarded as evil during the Middle Ages, was revalued in the Renaissance: on Ficino's showing it was a 'unique and divine gift', even as Saturn was now not only the mightiest star, but also the noblest (p. 259), and it was Ficino who first identified Aristotle's attribution of high intellect to melancholy with Plato's 'divine frenzy'. Agrippa of Nettesheim accepted this Ficinian doctrine and systematized it—distinguishing three grades of Saturnine and melancholic inspiration. It is the *first* of these grades which is portrayed in Dürer's *Melancholia I*, and thus the riddle of the 'I' which has exercised the minds of Renaissance scholars for so many years meets its most convincing and brilliant solution. It is the realm of the lower spirits which are operative through imagination and responsible for creative achievement in the mechanical arts (notably architecture and painting) and the correct prophecy of natural events such as cloudburst and famine. Indeed there is 'no work of art which corresponds more nearly to Agrippa's notion of melancholy than Dürer's engraving, and there is no text with which Dürer's engraving accords more nearly than Agrippa's chapters on melancholy' (p. 360).

We must content ourselves with these few hints to a store-house of information and historical wisdom. It is, of course, not primarily a historical-medical production and cannot be expected to cover all medical aspects of the subject, as for example the role attributed to black bile and the spleen in gastric digestion and its connection with the anti-humoralistic tendencies and ideas in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century medicine. Nor has it been possible to discuss the extensive literature of the last two decades, owing to the long time which has elapsed between the completion of the script of the book (1939) and its appearance in print. The book is generously illustrated and beautifully produced.

WALTER PAGEL

*The Hospitals 1800–1948*, by BRIAN ABEL-SMITH, London, Heinemann, 1964, pp. xiii, 514, 50s.

The English Welfare State has evolved piecemeal with little sustained guidance. Political, economic and social events have determined its shape, even an epidemic could change its course. The characteristics of the people and the political system have, and will, preclude any daring all-embracing revolution. We have added, subtracted, patched and built on what has existed. Populace and professions have at one time been radical, at another conservative, complaining, suggesting, fighting and sometimes coalescing, until very belatedly something has been achieved. The politician has kept his eye on the electorate and finance; the people, and the professions involved, have clung to a way of life or have been subjected to economic and social changes which have added to the confusion of arrangements. Pressure groups or the influential individual have too often displayed disunity or even antagonism. So it has been with the development of the National Health Service. Because of its past its introduction was beset with dilemmas and its future will be fraught with problems.

This book, dealing with a section of the Health Services is one everybody should read. It is not a true specialist study. It does not probe deeply enough for the social historian nor provide sufficient detail for the medical historian. Yet it will be invaluable to the student in many different fields; it will interest the layman with his growing awareness of State intervention and State help; and it will provide the doctor with an admirable digest of the development of his position and profession. For the medical man the timing of this publication is perfect for he will realize that his current problems have long been with us and are not new.

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The style of the study is simple, the chapters short and concise and the illustrations well chosen. The introduction to each section is particularly well written. Our interest and attention never falters. If no great depth is reached at least we have the most important sources ably summarized. When an ample supply of facts produced with clarity and brevity are the dominant requirement, this book not only fills a gap in a special knowledge but makes it possible for everyone to acquire it.

The salient theme is that the 'hospital system' originated from two sources, the public medical services provided by the Poor Law authorities and the voluntary hospital. As the former overtook the latter in quantitative provision their harmonious streaming together presented a gigantic task with wide ramifications. Dr. Abel-Smith has given a glimpse of the founding of the voluntary hospitals and the formation of new hospitals and special hospitals in the nineteenth century. We learn of the antagonisms and struggles of doctors, the teaching hospitals and the administrators, and of early medical education. The first four chapters could have been a great deal longer and would have made fascinating reading. The Poor Law provision of medical aid and the development that took place have been over-simplified, so that there are some inaccuracies or distortions. Legislation and policy have been recounted when practice was frequently quite different. This somewhat unbalanced nature of the study also makes the lack of dating a little bewildering for the lay reader. Action in the eighteen forties, fifties and sixties came in years, not decades, and varied greatly throughout the country. The metropolis was not the typical area and the entire work leans a little too much on the London experience.

The book really springs to life in the mid-sixties. (The dating in the title should probably have started then.) The long and important investigations of the *Lancet* showed that the 'State hospitals are in the workhouse wards'. But subsequent achievement, one must add, demonstrated that the State had awakened to its responsibilities. The last quarter of the nineteenth century witnessed a spate of building, the introduction of paid trained nursing and new ideas in hygiene and efficiency in both public and voluntary hospitals. The medical profession had many organizations and the policy of the 'extremists' was frequently adopted as the official policy of the British Medical Association a generation later.

By the beginning of the twentieth century 'a new era of medical practice and of English social history lay ahead', but reforms were delayed through the disunity of the Royal Commission of 1909 as this gave the government an excuse for inactivity or piecemeal effort. The experiences in coping with the emergencies of two wars are illuminating, and most vital is the emergence of the theme that a co-ordinated hospital service was regarded as essential. Indeed an integrated approach to the nation's health was mooted. Politicians and the medical profession played their part in the advance towards a general health service. Another force came from the long delayed and generally overlooked interference of the patient. He eventually could, and did, express his views and needs. The last third of this book is devoted to an excellent examination of how the Act of 1946 came into being. Its provisions and its consequences are reviewed skilfully and Dr. Abel-Smith finally concludes: 'The start of the health services was no more than a stage in the evolution of the nation's social services. . . .' To have included a little of the social and economic problems and the political theory of the period would have heightened the relevance of his last observation.

In producing a book of this nature the quantity of research material is overwhelming, but perhaps here each topic draws too heavily and narrowly on one particular source. When this is Parliamentary Papers, the wealth of human expression available

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through the writings of individuals or obscure societies is lost. A further criticism and one that can be levied against all contemporary research is that the human angle is absent. While we give thanks and praise for the vast and expert assembly of facts and figures and the computers' accuracy, we miss the richness of the true historian or the truths of the social philosopher. A Sigerist would have mentioned the common man and his place in the development of this part of the welfare services. This book is valuable and very necessary and will be widely appreciated. But let us also still plead for the other historian who thinks deeply and writes alone and may we be fortunate enough to have the time and understanding to read him.

RUTH G. HODGKINSON

*Die Assimilation der arabischen Medizin durch das lateinische Mittelalter*, by HEINRICH SCHIPPERGES, (*Sudhoffs Arch. Gesch. Med.*, Suppl. 3), Wiesbaden, F. Steiner, 1964, pp. x, 240, DM. 40.

This study on the assimilation of Arabic Medical literature in the West during the Middle Ages comes to us under the highest auspices. It has been recommended by the Medical Faculty of the University of Bonn as a proof of the author's competence to lecture on the subject, has been accepted by the editorial board of *Sudhoff's Archiv*, and been printed with a subvention from the German research Institute. First written in 1959, it has since been revised, corrected and put into better order. It has every external guarantee, therefore, of providing new and valuable information on this fascinating subject, on which Dr. Schipperges has written some thirty articles during the past ten years.

The book is extremely well organized, grouping the diffused and widely disparate material methodically and systematically. It is divided into two parts, the first dealing with the reception of Arabic medical literature in Salerno through the medium of Constantine's translations, the reception of the new Aristotle and the assimilation of Greco-Arabic medicine in Toledo: the second concerning itself with scholastic centres such as Chartres, Paris, Oxford and Palermo, and the outstanding personalities at these centres, who were responsible for the introduction of these new streams of thought into Western Culture. Within this framework Dr. Schipperges, displaying a firm grasp of detail, sketches in large outline the salient characteristics of the literature which was brought to the notice of the West at that time. The book, therefore, is eminently practical for those who wish to learn something of the broad basis on which Arabic scientific learning penetrated into the Academic circles of Europe, and we are grateful to the author for having provided so clear and methodical a conspectus.

One had hoped, however, for a little more than this, for, good as the book is, it does not carry us much beyond the findings of Haskins and others of an earlier generation. In the preface mention is made of the manuscript material on which the study has been based, and about 400 manuscripts are listed at the end, many of which have been examined by the author. Unfortunately, very little, except the opening and closing lines of these manuscripts, is given in the text. This is a great loss. An analysis of the contents of these manuscripts or a comparison with the printed texts already available would have been invaluable. It would have enlarged our knowledge and stimulated further research. As it is, we remain as much in the dark as before. A great opportunity has been missed here, and we can only hope that Dr. Schipperges will undertake something on these lines in the future.

There is another disquieting feature to which, regretfully, attention must be drawn.