

## Book Reviews

*History of Anatomy*. He has traced eight manuscripts of this interesting book in England, Scotland, New Zealand and the United States, vindicated the authorship for Monro *primus* about 1733, and shown up the bare-faced piracy of the text by William Northcote in 1772.

This learned and invaluable book is all the more remarkable coming from a community whose collections of rare books are still small, but Russell clearly made masterly use of a brief visit to Europe and of his contacts with nearly fifty libraries here and in North America. Its physical appearance is worthy of its contents and does great credit to the publishers. Russell records that his researches were supported by the Wellcome Trust.

WILLIAM LEFANU

*An Inquiry Concerning the Indications of Insanity With Suggestions for the Better Protection and Care of the Insane*, by JOHN CONOLLY, M.D. First published in 1830, reprinted with an introduction by Richard Hunter and Ida Macalpine, London, Dawsons, 1964, pp. viii, 38, vi, 496, illus. 84s.

The scarcity of many medical works of the nineteenth century is one of the puzzles and problems facing the collector. This is particularly so with books on mental disorder, amongst which Conolly's works are almost unobtainable today. This handsomely produced volume is probably the most useful of the psychiatric monograph series yet to appear, for a wider public will now be able to begin to assess Conolly and his place in the psychiatric pantheon for themselves, with the help of an introduction written by Drs. Hunter and Macalpine. This was Conolly's first book, being published during the period when he was professor of the theory and practice of medicine at the newly founded London University. Whilst still a student 'the spectacle of a large lunatic asylum, distinguished by its excellent arrangements, awakened in me a curiosity and an interest that I had never felt before'. He pondered on the differences between the sound and the unsound mind, and on the procedures used in the treatment of lunatics. His thesis at Edinburgh had been concerned with insanity, and he had been Inspecting Physician to the Lunatic Houses for the County of Warwick for five years, but his practical experience of insanity was very limited when he wrote this book. Like Ray, in the United States, whose *Treatise on the Medical Jurisprudence of Insanity* was based on a knowledge of the literature rather than on personal, clinical knowledge, Conolly was to become a historical figure. In this, his first book, we can discern the ideas which he put forward over the next thirty years with increasing authority—and prolixity. First in importance came the total abolition of restraint, the reform of lunacy legislation, and the improvement of the care of the insane.

The ignorance of the medical profession must be remedied, medical students must be admitted to the wards of mental hospitals, and taught about mental disease. Most of the book, however, is concerned with the medical aspects of insanity, and it is just here that the reader may perhaps find most interest. Drs. Hunter and Macalpine have discovered some new material on Conolly, such as his friendship with Sir William Ellis, and his trials whilst holding his professorship, but their introduction does not help greatly in assessing Conolly's contribution to psychiatric thought. Nor is the claim that theirs is the 'first modern authoritative biographical study of Conolly' likely to be accepted without some reservation. Some of the illustrations are indecipherable without a magnifying glass, and the bibliography is printed in such

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small type as to tax the reader's eyes considerably. But these are minor criticisms—the chief virtue of these reprints—now so fashionable—is that they give the non-specialist reader access to previously unavailable material. Instead of having to rely on 'abstract history', it is now possible to form one's own views of a man and his writings. Conolly has enjoyed immense prestige amongst psychiatrists for nearly a century now—does this book disappoint or fulfil one's expectations? It is good to be in a position to decide for oneself.

DENIS LEIGH

*Bones, Bodies and Disease*, by CALVIN WELLS, London, Thames and Hudson, 1964, pp. 288, illus., 30s.

Henry Sigerist writing in 1951 in his book on primitive and archaic medicine deplored the contemporary lack of palaeopathological studies. Important discoveries and compilations had earlier come from Elliot Smith, Wood Jones, Marc Ruffer, Roy Moodie, Léon Pales and Herbert Williams, but thereafter interest declined. Sigerist would have welcomed the recent renewal of interest in the diseases affecting individuals in ancient societies manifested by the writings, among others, of Wilhelm Möller-Christensen, Don Brothwell, Dan Morse, J. T. Rowling, C. J. Hackett, Marcus Goldstein and Calvin Wells, author of the book under review.

*Bones, Bodies and Disease* is not a students' reference book of palaeopathology, but a highly readable account of diseases in ancient peoples, based partly on studies of their remains and partly on the evidence afforded by their art forms and literature. The book should interest a wide variety of persons, including amateur and professional archaeologists, medical students and practitioners, medical and other historians and pathologists. Dr. Glyn Daniels is to be congratulated on having invited Dr. Wells to contribute this valuable addition to the excellent *Ancient Peoples and Places* series. In turn, the author has been well served by his publishers in the elegant and inexpensive production of his book.

Dr. Wells points out that pathological changes are to some extent a guide to the reaction of the individual towards his environment; in archaeology any such assistance is valuable in implementing sources which are often meagre enough. It is unfortunate that the great majority of skeletal remains show no evidence of the disease which caused death because most morbid processes only implicate soft tissues. Since, in most instances, only bones remain this makes a mathematical approach very difficult, but Wells, in common with other contemporary palaeopathologists, attempts a statistical approach whenever this is feasible. An interesting example is the investigation of the frequency of dental caries over the millennia.

The author has made a special study of pseudopathological appearances and he concedes that the exact diagnosis of ancient disease processes is often impossible; in palaeopathological matters he rightly states that the best opinions are often tentative ones. In a book like *Bones, Bodies and Disease*, however, to avoid the tedium of repeated qualifications opinions must be more dogmatic than would be appropriate in learned journals. It is not surprising, therefore, that there are statements which will not meet with universal approval. It is unfortunate that the book went to press before it became clear to Dr. Wells that the interpretation of certain radiological changes in Egyptian mummies as evidence of alkaptonuria must be open to doubt.

The chapter on Injury and the material on Harris's lines proved especially interesting; perhaps Dr. Wells will consider preparing a detailed monograph on the bony evidence of ancient disease, a subject with which he is especially qualified to deal.