

: : BOOK REVIEW : :**THE STORY OF MEDICINE**

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What strikes one immediately, on reading this work, is the magnitude of the task of compiling the immense stories about the vicissitudes of medical progress, and the excellent way it has been performed. To appreciate this, one needs only to visit a medical library and peruse over the numerous volumes on the history shelf. In this book lies a remarkably good performance of placing, in a little over two hundred pages, all the pertinent as well as incidental, sequences that have led to the seemingly slow but sure and steady erection of the "temple of medicine". As Dr. Charles Best comments in the foreword, "he has selected the subjects that are of particular interest to both the medical and non-medical reader", wherein lies another virtue of this book. The medical student especially can profit from it, for in it he or she will read the story behind men whose names they have encountered in anatomical, pathological, surgical and other textbooks; and doubtless, find it interesting to read how these men worked and what they had to contend with in the way of opposition in order that we, today, might profit from their labors.

Dr. Murphy begins the account around the year 5000 B.C., with the Egyptians and the influence of Thoth the moon-god. The story then proceeds to unravel (or rather begins to knit) of how early medicine here was founded more on superstition than fact. But at times, greater men intervened like Imhotep, (who later became the great Aesculapius, god to the Father of Medicine) to help cast aside the enigma of these fallacies. After an account of India's great, but forgotten, contributions, the story then turns to the works of the early Greeks. Here the story of Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine, is related with conciseness . . . no easy task when dealing with the merits of this man. Galen is another highlight in the early story of medicine but, fortunately his teachings were not as durable as his name alone.

From here the theme of the story reveals how men fought with contemporaries to overthrow the prevailing beliefs of Galen's misconceptions: the Christians and their hospitals; the attack of de Mondeville on Galen; the medical renaissance with Vesalius, da Vinci, Paracelsus, Paré, Copernicus and Galileo. The work of Harvey on the circulation of the blood is written of, and how it disproved the Galen concept, which maintained that blood was made in the liver and when it reached the periphery of the body it faded away.

Interesting indeed is the chapter "Men with Lenses" and its story of Kircher, Hooke, Leeuwenhoek and Malpighi. Rightly honored is the account of Thomas Sydenham and the origin of the word "diagnosis".

To carry out a full review of the story would be as much a job as the writing of it. It will then suffice to say that all aspects of the history are considered: of men like Hunter, Jenner, Morgagni to the era of cell study with Muller, Helmholtz, Henle, Schwann, Schleiden and Virchow to the fore. (A humorous account is also given of Virchow's duel with Bismarck, where sausages were the weapons!) Not all was smooth sailing for our pioneers and the struggles of Holmes and Semmelweis attests to only a small fraction of the adverse criticisms that were directed towards bold workers. Claude Ber-

nard, Koch, Pasteur, Lister, Nightingale, Roentgen, Paget, Curies, Osler, Erlich, Ross and the advent of preventive medicine, vitamins, liver extract for pernicious anemia, insulin, penicillin, etc, are all given a place as the stones of the foundations and towers of the "temple of medicine" that found its beginning before Christ.

The book is so good that it would seem unnecessary to recommend it more, or to offer any criticism such as the printing of . . . "ACTH . . . most potent of the adrenal hormones." The medical reader will knowingly understand and, surely, by now the lay reader is so versed with the "Reader's Digest" that it will not perplex him.

D. T. Janigan.



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