

highest?—Courage. What faults do you find the easiest to forgive?—All. What do you regard as life's greatest boon?—Sudden death, with no doctors anywhere around. What would you miss most in life?—A sense of humor. What do you consider the most important invention in the history of man?—Wine, Leonardo da Vinci's *divino liquore*. What do you consider the first essential of a happy marriage?—The capacity to forgive. What is your favorite recreation?—Humming Schubert to myself.

The story of Axel Munthe has gained added flavor and depth through this biographical essay. It will be cherished by all who want to keep alive the memory of this wise and rare human being.

Great Pathologist

"Rudolf Virchow," by Erwin H. Ackerknecht (University of Wisconsin Press. 304 pp. \$5) is the first full-length study of the nineteenth-century German physician, a pioneer in the science of pathology, who was also a fighter for the cause of democracy. Here it is reviewed by Ashley Montagu, chairman of the department of anthropology at Rutgers University.

By Ashley Montagu

AMONG the great names in the history of medicine that of Rudolf Virchow (1821-1902) will always occupy an honored place. During the last seventy-five years there cannot have been a medical student anywhere who has not heard his name and been the wiser for hearing it. I cannot help wondering how familiar those who have not studied medicine may be with Virchow's name. My wonder arises from the fact that Virchow, who was a great physician, an eminent medical discoverer, and the leading anthropologist of his day, was among the foremost democratic leaders of his time. In 1861 he was elected to the Prussian parliament where he remained as one of the leaders of the opposition till the time of his death. He was the arch-enemy of all that Bismarck stood for, and it is characteristic of the latter that he sought to rid himself of Virchow by challenging him to a duel, an invitation which Virchow, happily, declined.

If Virchow had done nothing else his practical achievements in democracy in the Germany of the second half of the nineteenth century should secure him a distinguished place among the great benefactors of man-

kind. And yet outside Germany, I believe I am correct in saying, the name of Virchow as a great democratic leader is scarcely known. Even more remarkable is the fact that this great man has had to wait more than fifty years for a full-length study. Perhaps the very variety of interests of the man and his enormous productivity presented too formidable a challenge to the specialist. Virchow had so many facets to him that he might be described as almost globular. We are fortunate, indeed, that the first adequate study to be presented of him in any language is from the pen of so well qualified a person as Professor Erwin H. Ackerknecht.

Professor Ackerknecht comes from the same province in Germany as Virchow, and by training he is a physician and anthropologist, and is now chairman of the department of the history of medicine at the University of Wisconsin. Faced with the task of reducing Virchow to ordinary dimensions Professor Ackerknecht has wisely chosen to follow the dictum of Virchow himself, to wit: "Brevity is the best guarantee for being read." The actual text runs to 250 pages. Within these dimensions the author has very ably contrived to give something more than a birdseye view of the life and work of this astonishing man who was at once a human being, healer, medical researcher, social worker, politician, statesman, teacher, public-health leader, and anthropologist. Not less important, he appears to have been an excellent husband and a good father.

With the publication of his "Cellular Pathology" in 1858 Virchow founded the modern science of pathology. It may well be wondered how many books there are which have done more to relieve human misery than this. The relief of human misery, that was what Virchow all his life was most interested in. But from the first Virchow clearly understood that while medicine might play a large role in bettering the lot of human beings the problem was one that could only be solved by the improvement of social conditions. As for the role of the doctor, "Medical instruction," he wrote, "does not exist to provide individuals with an opportunity of learning how to earn a living, but in order to make possible the protection of the health of the public."



Notes

MEDICAL MALARKEY: It's getting so that a well-equipped physician lays in an electric typewriter after he has made the first down payment on his fluoroscope. A diverting change from the usual anecdotal memoir churned out by the sawbones who takes pen instead of tongue depressor in hand is offered by "Know Your Doctor" (Little, Brown, \$3). Dr. Leo Smollar, a San Diego physician, in collaboration with Neil Morgan, a newspaperman from the same city, have concocted a lively and informative antidote to some popular medical misinformation. The authors make trenchant observations on the subjects of cynical doctors and simple-minded patients. They include some priceless examples of medical double-talk, and of laymen attempting self-diagnosis in terms of pharmaceutical advertising.

Dr. Smollar is convinced of the interrelation between emotional stresses and much "physical" disease, and illuminates this thesis with a number of appropriate case histories. He is also irritated by some popular medical excesses: unnecessary surgery, needless injections, alarmist jargon, etc. He and Mr. Morgan debunk current medical myths in language that is both edifying and witty. "Know Your Doctor" closes with a set of sensible rules for a layman to follow in his relations with his physician—rules designed to enlighten both the healer and his patient. In these days of high-pressure medical malarkey "Know Your Doctor" is a reassuring book to read and to own. The only unanswered question the reader might have after reading it is: How? How can one know the calibre of one's doctor in the face of "the pretense of mutual respect among doctors which confronts the public like a granite wall"? Perhaps they should all write books.

—MARTIN LEVIN.

HORSE AND BUGGY IN N. Y.: The subject of Richard and Dorothy Williams's biography has his offices on West End Avenue in New York City, yet he is the epitome of what is meant by the phrase "horse-and-buggy doctor." Dr. Jerome Steinfeld, whose life story is told in "Family Doctor" (Random House, \$3.50), did get about in a horse and buggy when he began the practice of medicine in upper Manhattan, around the turn of the century. He graduated to a Maxwell, to a Buick touring car, and ultimately to the 1951 Pontiac that now takes him on his visits. But the horse-and-buggy concept of a perambulating physician who knows his patients as individuals, and who is selflessly on tap to do battle

with whatever ails them—this the doctor has retained in spite of his succession of vehicles.

The Williamsses detail their doctor's crowded life in a colorful style, although they sometimes get too tremulous for comfort. Writers writing about doctors seem to get caught up in a high-pitched enthusiasm which is digestible in small, magazine-size doses—but which becomes harder to assimilate in book length. Its nervous pace notwithstanding, "Family Doctor" gives a many-sided picture of Dr. Steinfelder, from his medical school days (when he was unofficial medical inspector of the Baltimore red-light district) to his respectable maturity. The good, gray doctor, whose very appearance in the sickroom is part of the cure, is a diminishing breed in the face of increased specialization. More power to him.

—M. L.

HERE'S THE PSYCHOSOMATIC cure
From the prolific Merrill Moore
With a 100,000 sonnets up his sleeve;
These medical diagnoses
In homeopathic doses
Are his comment on man's dream-
world make-believe.
He is vulgar; he is tart;
He's as brash as he is smart;
He's compulsive as a subcutaneous
shot;
But you'll leave the psycho's couch
With an "ah" instead of "ouch"
If you'll read "More Clinical Sonnets"
on the spot.
Edward Gorey illustrates
What goes on inside folks' pates,
And Twayne will charge you three
bucks for the book;
If you're pent up like a city
And admire corrosive pity,
Give these meretricious sonnets a good
look.

—I. L. SALOMON.

PLASTIC SURGEON: The time may not be far off when a patient will be asked to sign a literary release when supplying his medical history. The way things are moving, his clinical dossier has an excellent chance of turning up in some medico's book of reminiscences. If his affliction is sufficiently colorful and his physician as articulate as Dr. Maxwell Maltz he may be immortalized in the pages of an entertaining literary excursion in therapy. "Doctor Pygmalion," Maxwell Maltz's autobiography (Crowell, \$3.50), is a cheerful collection of anecdote and experience, hitting the high points of its author's eventful career in plastic surgery.

Dr. Maltz's specialty involves the human spirit as well as the correction of mere physical characteristics, and the good doctor seems as interested in the personalities of his patients as in their profiles.

—M. L.



NEW EDITIONS

Souvenirs of the Roundheads

WHAT appears at first to be a miscellaneous lot of books often reveals, on closer inspection, an interesting pattern of interrelationships. Here, for example, are "Oliver Cromwell and the Rule of the Puritans in England" (Oxford, World's Classics, \$2), by Sir Charles Firth; Trevelyan's "History of England" (Anchor Books, 3 vols., 85¢ each); the first volume of the "Complete Prose Works of John Milton" (Yale, \$12.50), edited by Don M. Wolfe; "A History of Modern Colloquial English" (Barnes & Noble, \$5), by H. C. Wyld; "The Oxford Book of English Talk" (Oxford, \$5), edited by James Sutherland; "The Poems of Joseph Hall" (Grove Press, \$4), edited by A. Davenport; Robert Southwell's "An Humble Supplication to Her Maiestie" (Cambridge, \$3), edited by R. C. Bald; and the Coronation Edition of Spenser's "The Faerie Queene" (Heritage Press, \$5)—a noble printing of a great poem, with decorations by John Austen and wood engravings by Agnes Miller Parker. The first is the best short study of Cromwell that I know, written by a historian who, in G. P. Gooch's words, "has lit up every corner of the middle decades of the seventeenth century." The second, excellent in all its parts, is conspicuously good when concerned with the life and times of Cromwell, whose "riddle must be read not in his mutable opinions but in his constant character." The third contains the prose, English and Latin (the latter translated), that was written between 1628 and 1642 by the poet who was to be Cromwell's most famous secretary. The fourth, in the course of its learned survey of "English as it has been spoken during the last four or five centuries," contains this judicious passage: "It is almost impious to say so, but it must be said that Milton's prose is not in the direct line of descent from the great writers his predecessors, nor do those of the following ages derive from him. In spite of its many splendors, and its massive weight, this style does not reflect the age, however much it may express the personality of Milton. It is magnificent and memorable, but it exists in solitary state, remote, and unrelated to the general current of English speech." Mr. Sutherland's truly fascinating book of English talk—which begins with the Archbishop of York's interrogation of Margery

Kempe, the religious enthusiast, in 1417, and ends with a Lincolnshire housewife's description of a seaside holiday in 1949—contains, among its many selections, Strafford's reply to charges of treason; a discussion regarding universal manhood suffrage, in which Cromwell took part; an account of the proceedings in Westminster Hall, when Charles I faced his Parliamentary accusers; extracts from the trial of John Lilburne, Puritan extremist, who quarreled with Cromwell; and a Mr. Drinkwater's recital of his experiences with the "Commonwealth Gestapo." Hall's poems are the early work of an Anglican bishop—"too reasonable for the times in which he lived," according to Courthope—whose mild defence of Episcopacy caused Milton to strike some of his foulest pamphleteering blows. Finally, Southwell and Spenser are tied into the group by the fact that Hall made them both subjects of his satirical verse, praising the one—"Renowned *Spencer*: whome no earthly wight/*Dares* once to emulate, much lesse dares despight"—and blaming the other for adorning sacred themes with secular conceits.

CROMWELL'S character is a subject of dispute. In Firth's pages he is a leader who is both driven by events and able to make the best of circumstances; a zealot who sees history as the continuous manifestation of God's will; an honest opportunist who remarks that a man never rises so high as when he does not know where he is going. Trevelyan's short history is incomparable, thanks to its proportions, style, and memorable phrases. The new edition of Milton's prose, projected in seven volumes, will be a mighty work of scholarship, by many learned hands. The prize of the first volume is Milton's "Commonplace Book," because of what it tells us of his reading, the influences that shaped his thought, and the growth of his ideas on important subjects. Professor Wyld's volume is one that should be missed by no one seriously interested in our language. Mr. Sutherland's anthology delightfully realizes a happy idea. To those who find Hall's best satires less worthy than I do, I quote Hall himself: "What a monster must he be that would please all?" Of Southwell's "Supplication," more later.

—BEN RAY REDMAN.