BOOK REVIEWS

Perspectives in Biochemistry: Thirty-one essays presented to Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins by past and present members of his laboratory. Edited by Joseph Needham and David E. Green. Cambridge University Press, 1937. viii + 361 pp. $4.75.

One of the chief difficulties that confronts the individual desirous of acquainting himself with the recent advances in biochemistry is the complexity of the terms in which these advances are cloaked.

This book could be commended for the clarity of its expression and the simplicity of its presentation of many subjects usually incomprehensible to the uninitiated mind, for these reasons, if for no other. But such a reason would do poor justice both to the individual to whom the book is dedicated and also to his pupils whose contributions make up its content.

The present volume celebrates the seventy-fifth birthday of Sir Frederick and must be a source of pride to him. Its contributors and his pupils include the name of one Nobel Laureate and many others whose work is regarded as most significant in the present fields of biochemistry.

The scope embraced by these essays, ranging as it does from the social implications of biochemistry to essays upon molecular forces and flower pigments, is a further indication of the tremendous scope of biochemistry. This branch of science in the period of Sir Frederick’s life has impinged on all fields of biology and even a brief perusal of the present volume leaves one with the impression that the full tide of its contributions to these sciences has not yet been reached.

It is difficult to select any of the essays for particular comment. All are written by an authority in their particular subject, and a choice between any of them is more likely to be determined by the tastes of the reader than by any particular difference in quality.

The reading of all these essays should be obligatory for all students of biochemistry; for those seeking information as to the present position and future possibilities of this science no better volume has appeared.

—C. N. H. Long.

Not So Long Ago. By Cecil K. Drinker. Oxford University Press. Pp. xii + 183. $3.50.

Elizabeth Sandwith Drinker, Quaker, of the City of Philadelphia, endowed with a superior intelligence and an abounding faith, knew most of the answers. A wide experience to which a keen mind and unusual critical faculty had been applied provided a wealth of satisfactory conclusions bearing on medical and non-medical affairs alike; her broad foundation in her faith permitted conclusions equally satisfactory on matters beyond her own observation and experience. Furthermore, in early life—in 1758 to be exact—she
acquired "ye habit of scribbling some thing every night" as a "book for memorandams," and it is to this admirable habit and the, at times, very precise "memorandams," that we owe a most delightful picture of many phases of the medical practice of the period.

Married in 1761, she became mother of nine children who most certainly experienced all of the usual—and, indeed, some of the less common—complaints of the period. These episodes, for one rather gains the impression that in many instances they were so regarded against the background of the stirring events of the period, supplemented by similar "Fluxes," "mesels," and divers minor complaints among her grand-children, and a certain prevalent waywardness among her maid-servants, afforded material for an ample stock of memoranda.

Portrayed is the remarkable freedom from hampering hygienic restrictions characteristic of the day, as well as a fascinating picture of the medicine of the Colonial period, written, let it be noted, from the point of view of the recipient of medical attention rather than from that of the dispenser, and written with a frankness,—concise and critical,—that supplements well the more learned treatise of the period designed for publication. Elizabeth Drinker was abreast of her time, on occasion, somewhat ahead of it; and although she had respect, in various degrees, for Rush, Kuhn, Shippen, Physick, Bard, and Redman, it is evident that her faith and her past experience enforced certain misgivings as to their infallibility. For example, greater than Elizabeth Drinker passed judgment on the well-known Elisha Perkins, perhaps attaining less close to the truth than she, when she noted: "if my faith is necessary to the cure, I fear 'tis not compleat." But with all her doubts, she had a reasonable breadth of mind: if anything, she favored the Jerusalem Earth of the Widow Gomez over the bleedings of Doctor Bard as an appropriate therapy for the tuberculosis of her son William.

But to attempt to cover the entertaining and interesting points brought out in the excerpts from the Diary is impossible; the several important sections of the text deal more particularly with yellow fever, small pox, tuberculosis, and childbearing. One can hardly wish that the young Drinkers had experienced greater difficulty in getting born or in maintaining existence, yet had it been true, "ye habit of scribbling" could well have added further details worthy of being transcribed by her "twice great grandson."—G. H. SMITH.

CONCEPTS AND PROBLEMS OF PYCHOTHERAPY. By Leland E. Hinsie. Columbia University Press, New York, 1937, xv + 199 pp.

This is an intelligent and solid discussion of a number of concepts and problems of psychotherapy. Most space is given to Freudian psychoanalysis, but Adolf Meyer's psychobiology is adequately discussed too. The tenets of Adler and Jung are dealt with relatively briefly.

The book can be recommended to every senior student as well as to every physician who is interested in psychiatry and psychiatric treatment.

—EUGEN KAHN.