

journey at all—which it often failed to do being lost with all hands—the average death rate on board during the voyage between Amsterdam and Batavia was 8 per cent and was occasionally as high as 40 per cent of the personnel—but it must be remembered that the voyage took anything up to 400 days, a striking contrast to the present-day 130-hour trip which the K. L. M. air-liners make in each direction three times a week.

The Dutch administration was interrupted at the beginning of last century by European wars and for five years no ship arrived in Java from the Netherlands. From 1807 to 1811 they enjoyed the not very sympathetic rule, to medical science at any rate, of a military-minded French governor Daendels; he was turned out by the British Raffles, who remained for about five years. The latter's influence on medicine and science generally appears to have been good, and he remodelled the medical services on the Bengal lines. He was followed by Sir John Fendall. These two British administrators appear to have remained in Java for all this time because nobody told them not to, and when at last they had given up all hope of persuading the British Government to declare the country a British possession, they gracefully handed it back to the Netherlands.

The references to individual diseases are few, but in the section on cholera there is a record of some incredible decisions at which a body of Batavian physicians, who were called together to deal with a severe cholera 'epidemy' in 1851, arrived. These commenced with the statement that the disease was not infectious—in the widest sense of the word—and that, as no means to ward off cholera were known to be successful, none should be attempted!

Medical progress was slow, as it was in all colonies, and lagged behind that in the European mother country, but an evolutionary movement was apparent at all times throughout the last century.

The record is one of great medical as well as historical importance, and we congratulate the author on his achievement. The English is excellent throughout except that he uses a few unusual words, such as 'epidemy', and the reader in this country will take a little time to get accustomed to the words 'India' and 'East India Company', used, as they are throughout, to indicate the Netherlands East Indies and the United Netherlands East India Company, respectively.

L. E. N.

THE DIARY OF A SURGEON IN THE YEAR 1751-1752.—By John Knyveton. Edited and Transcribed by E. Gray. 1938. Published by D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., London and New York. Pp. xiv plus 322. Illustrated. Price, 10s. 6d.

THE reviewer was not aware that he had a suspicious nature but there are a few points about this book that invite scepticism. We have singularly little information about the 'journal' itself. Was it written in English? The 'journal', as it now appears, is not written in the English of 1751—the word 'prosy' was, according to the S. O. E. D., used first in 1821, seventy years later—nor incidentally in the English of to-day. In fact the style is like that of Pepys' Diary, which was written three-quarters of a century before, and deciphered three-quarters of a century after, the date of the John Knyveton's diary. We might also add that the literary style is not that of Ernest Gray, of the preface; this, like his grammar and arithmetic, is unique. Never have we known any writer to take such liberties with the participle!

This George Knyveton was a distant ancestor of a very close friend of the editor, the leather-bound Journal in which the Diary is written appearing whilst helping this friend sort out some old family records, and being presented to him, as one especially interested in the History of Medicine.

'Bearing all these things in mind, the hospital of those days can better be imagined than described'.

'Physicians and surgeons as a whole were growing tired of the dogmatism of the ancient authorities—Aristotle, Hippocrates, and Galen, whose theories had held sway for some five hundred years'.

Why only five hundred years? This might have been a misprint, but it is not so, for the writer is quite determined to stand by his 'five hundred years'.

Galen died in A.D. 200, but his view that the body was composed of certain "Humours" (originally four in number), disease resulting from absence or over-production of one special "Humour", dominated the medical outlook, as we have said, for five hundred years'.

Why was it necessary to disguise the name of the hospital or even of the surgeon? (Incidentally the name of the hospital is very thinly disguised: from Soho Square to which hospital does one walk 'across the park' and thence along the Mall to Westminster Abbey?)

However, this is all by the way. The diary itself is full of good things and we can thoroughly recommend it to any one who wishes to learn something of the state of medicine two hundred years ago. The philosophy and humour exhibited making the reading very pleasant; for example, the diarist's observation that one of the differences between town and country practice was that in the former more saw-dust was thrown on the floor of the operating theatre is, we feel, too good to be true: so also are his remarks on the value of the natural acids of certain fruits in the prevention and cure of scurvy.

We can recommend this book to the physician, especially if he is interested in literary detective work as he will find this book a simple exercise, and to his patient, especially the patient who is critical of the medical profession of to-day as he will soon learn to be thankful that he was not born two hundred years earlier.

L. E. N.

IDEAL WEIGHT: A PRACTICAL HANDBOOK FOR PATIENTS.—By W. F. Christie, M.D. 1938. William Heinemann (Medical Books), Limited, London. Pp. x plus 111. Price, 5s.

THERE are many books on diet written for the laity, but it is sometimes difficult for the physician to find one that is altogether suitable to recommend to his patients. So many of these books contain fantastic statements and uphold unorthodox theories to which the physician feels he cannot subscribe. On the other hand, it is usually advisable to recommend to the patient whom he is putting on to a reducing diet some book in which he can look up essential facts. This particular book contains no wild theories about the mixing of proteins, fats and carbohydrates, nor does it suggest the eating of nothing but milk and potatoes one day and avoiding these substances for all the rest of the week: in fact he advocates no particular 'stunt', but gives a plain straightforward statement of a number of important facts regarding the requirements of the body and the composition of foods, which are in the main accurate. We say in the main because a few of the statements are not strictly accurate, for example, that the caloric value of clear chicken soup is *nil*, or that the chemical composition of the vitamins is quite unknown.

The book is written in 'popular' language and any technical words that are used are explained.

The book on the whole will be a very useful one to the physician and his patient.

L. E. N.

DISEASE AND THE MAN.—By R. F. Lapham, A.B., M.D. 1937. Oxford University Press, London and New York. Pp. viii plus 143. Price, 8s. 6d. Obtainable from Oxford University Press, Bombay and Calcutta

THIS book is written to emphasize the importance of treating the individual patient as well as his disease, a thing that is liable to be neglected in these days of improved scientific investigation of patients by