

Book Reviews

The Price of Power. America since 1945. Herbert Agar. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1957. 200 pp. \$3.50.

In *The Price of Power*, Herbert Agar is a publicist rather than a reporter, a painter rather than a photographer, and, I am tempted to say, a wise man rather than a scholar. A critic may say that, wise man or not, he cannot see the trees for the forest. There is no tree-by-tree analysis of the forest of American policy in the era of Truman and Eisenhower. Such detail as finds its way into this small volume is illustrative and symbolic; the result is clarification, not verification of Agar's main themes.

Progress toward ordering and understanding an apparent chaos of events and observations may not be so different in the world of science and the world of affairs as is generally assumed. It is by an alternation of brilliant hypothesis and meticulous investigation that truth can be approached, even though absolute truth can never quite be reached. Agar's intuitive, impressionistic effort to discover for Americans the inner meaning of our times is no substitute for patient historical research. It is, however, a storehouse of hypotheses which the historian may test in his detailed research. The historian has desperate need for such hypotheses if he is not to be the victim of America's office technology, which is producing records in a volume much greater than can be given even the most cursory future inspection.

The Price of Power is something else, too. It is a message by a participant-observer of momentous events and by an observer of great personages to his fellow-citizens. The book may, as the editor of *The Chicago History of American Civilization* suggests in the preface, become for future generations "itself a historical document," but the obvious intent of the author is to speak to his contemporaries. Agar's description of the great events of the postwar years can hardly be set down with the disinterested detachment of the astronomer who knows that by his observations he cannot alter the stars in their courses. As a publicist and editor, Agar is interpreting the

immediate past in a way that he hopes will shape the immediate future.

As an avowed believer in internationalism, the right to nonconformity, and Presidential leadership, he has his heroes and his villains. Senator Vandenberg is the leading hero and Senator McCarthy the leading villain. For the rest, Agar stops far short of scorn for those with whom he disagrees and far short of idolatry for those whose goals he shares. Occasionally, his vignettes are as brilliant as they are balanced. Of President Truman in 1945, he wrote: "During the next few years this strange little man—lively and pert to the verge of bumptiousness; more widely read in history than any President since John Quincy Adams; more wilful than any President since James K. Polk; more incompetent in dividing the good from the bad among his own friends at home than any President since Warren Harding—would make and enforce a series of decisions upon which, for better or for worse, our world now rests, or shakes."

President Eisenhower may be surprised to learn from Agar that when he came to the Presidency he was "something far more old-fashioned and far more interesting than 'a good Kansas Republican': he was a Whig." Whigs believed in keeping the powers of the Presidency small; the most famous Whigs, Clay and Webster, were senators. "With General Eisenhower, for the first time, a President of great authority and popular appeal has carefully refrained from power." An alternative explanation for President Eisenhower's scrupulous unwillingness to exceed his constitutional powers is that as a general trained in a country with a strong tradition of civilian control, he has had a lifelong habit of acting only when his authority to act is not to be questioned.

Some of the American disappointment with the shape of the postwar world, Agar suggests, is of our own making. We need not have been so disillusioned with Soviet behavior if we had not persisted so long in our war-time illusions. Nor need we have embarked on the great McCarthyite witch-hunt if we had had the maturity to recognize that America

was not all powerful. We would not then have had to resort to hunting for traitors at home in order to explain unpleasant events abroad.

Although Agar strikes a "two minutes to midnight" note in his closing paragraphs, in the body of his work he rejects alike the realistic pessimism of historical inevitability and the utopian pessimism of believing that nothing short of millennial reform can make the slightest difference. The price of power is constant, unremitting thought about how to use great but limited power to support world-wide and limitless goals.

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Glacial and Pleistocene Geology. Richard F. Flint. Wiley, New York; Chapman & Hall, London, 1957. xiii + 553 pp. Plates. \$12.50.

This book follows essentially the same outline as Flint's *Glacial Geology and the Pleistocene Epoch*, published in 1947, but is slightly shorter. Roughly three-fifths of the text is devoted to characteristics of glaciers, to speculations about causes of glaciation, and to the various direct and indirect effects of glaciation; the balance is a treatment of Pleistocene stratigraphy, with emphasis on North America and Europe. A valuable bibliography of 866 titles is included.

Many of the subjects discussed in the earlier volume are brought up to date. Inclusion of such new topics as deep-sea sediments, frozen-ground phenomena, soils, and radiocarbon dating serves to emphasize the rapidly expanding scope of Pleistocene research during the last decade. A major addition is the presentation of stratigraphic information in the form of correlation tables, which doubtless will prove to be among the most controversial subjects in the book. Flint recognizes the obvious hazards in this choice and repeatedly warns that the unsatisfactory status of Pleistocene stratigraphic nomenclature and the numerous uncertainties involved in correlation render his present opinions extremely tentative. Names for substages of the last (Wisconsin) glaciation in central North America, which have been used for the last 25 years, are either rejected or relegated to the category of local usage, and no alternative general terminology is suggested. Flint correlates Pleistocene glaciations in several mountain ranges of western North America and also relates pluvial lake stages to mountain glaciation; however, he does not attempt to correlate mountain glaciation with con-

tinental glaciation, nor is there a correlation of continental glaciations in central and eastern North America. By contrast, the proposed correlations between various areas in Europe and between Europe and North America are quite detailed.

This book deserves, and doubtless will receive, widespread use as an introductory text. Students and professional geologists alike will appreciate Flint's efforts in compiling and succinctly summarizing useful information on nearly every facet of Pleistocene geology. Some readers may feel that the discussions of many subjects are entirely too brief. The fact is, however, that Pleistocene geology has grown so much that anything approaching an exhaustive treatment of the subject would no longer fit between the covers of a single volume.

JOHN P. MILLER

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Functional Neuro-Anatomy. Including an atlas of the brain stem. A. R. Buchanan. Lea & Febiger, Philadelphia, ed. 3, 1957. 362 pp. Illus. \$7.50.

This relatively small volume (259 pages of text and text figures) follows previous editions in attempting to present neuroanatomy in terms of functional systems rather than of anatomical levels. Ascending pathways in the spinal cord and brain stem, the special senses and their pathways, the cerebral cortex, voluntary motor pathways, the cerebellum, the basal ganglia, and the hypothalamus are discussed in that order; general introductory and closing chapters on such subjects as functional components of nerves and the blood supply of the central nervous system complete the text.

The book is simply and clearly written, with functional and anatomical aspects nicely interwoven, and is spiced by allusion to clinical conditions and practical applications. Appropriate references to the literature are included. The text figures, almost entirely line drawings, are likewise kept simple, to illustrate particular points rather than the over-all anatomy; they include many diagrams of conduction pathways. As one can expect in a third edition, slips of the tongue and typographical errors are at a minimum. The atlas consists of photographs of sections of one half of the brain stem with the other half shown in line drawing, and labeled; the location and direction of the section are shown on an accompanying diagram.

This is a book written specifically for an introductory course in neuroanatomy, and therefore it does not contain the detail that some teachers may demand in a text on this subject. I feel that the thala-

mus is somewhat slighted but regard the book as being otherwise well balanced. The student who uses this text should emerge with a clear understanding of the fundamentals of the structure and function of the central nervous system, and for this very basic reason it deserves the consideration of teachers in this field.

W. HENRY HOLLINSHEAD

Mayo Clinic

Surgeons All. Harvey Graham. Philosophical Library, New York, ed. 2, 1957. 459 pp. Illus. \$10.

Harvey Graham is the pseudonym of a well-known London physician and editor of medical publications, Isaac Harvey Flack. Another physician, the distinguished writer and poet Oliver St. John Gogarty, provides a foreword, in which he says, "This is the best book on surgery I have ever read. I agree with every word of it except the reasons for the removal of the Amazon's right breast." However, what sort of book it is, the reader might have difficulty in determining from the author's introductory matter, in which he expresses by implication surely the most extraordinary notions of the nature of historiography in his contention that "This is a story book: a story of surgery itself. . . . It is not a history book for it has not a solitary footnote and only the most meagre reference to original works," and "it was never intended for the Olympian few who read and enjoy such things."

Whether the presence of an *apparatus scholastici* or the direction of a work to the residents of Mount Olympus makes a history is immaterial; the fact remains that this work is a history of surgery in popular vein. Consequently, it must be judged by the standards of historical writing. However, I recognize that the point of view of the author is highly personalized, and so I am tempted to accept Graham's designation of the work as a "story" in the modern meaning given by the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* ("A narrative of real or, more usu., fictitious events, designed for the entertainment of the hearer or reader"), for the work is well and entertainingly written. Certainly the popular audience for whom it was intended will enjoy the general treatment of the subject, but as a history it is totally unreliable. It suffers, like all such works based almost exclusively upon secondary sources, in that the expressed opinions are based on information obtained at second or third hand, and, further, it tends to repeat the countless errors of detail derived unwittingly from the sources. Upon such foundations are built hagiology and

mythology, not history. Dozens of errors of detail are observable, often minor but, in the mass, important. For example, the statement that Fallopius was a pupil of Vesalius is quite incorrect (incidentally on Fallopius' own testimony); this is a minor error, but the implications are important. Likewise, the observation, in reference to William Harvey (page 175), that "England knew nothing of many of the Italian anatomists, and thought but little of those few it had heard of," is absurd, as can easily be shown by reference to the contemporary English literature, and so denies the important influence which the Italian schools, especially Padua and Bologna, had on English developments.

Further, the author is often not well informed. For example, his account of Egyptian medicine is very misleading, since he depends in part on Bryan's translation from the German of Joachim's translation of *Papyrus Ebers*. Now Joachim's translation was made in 1890, as Ebbell has pointed out, at a stage in the development of Egyptology when this was far too risky an enterprise.

But a more serious criticism is the propriety of issuing a work which was published in the United States 18 years ago (as *The Story of Surgery*) without correction. The many errors pointed out by critics of the first edition remain uncorrected, save for a few mentioned in the secondary preface. The only new addition is a postscript which brings the work up to date by an assessment of the period 1939-1956. The author excuses himself on the grounds that, because the plates survived the bombing of London, the work could be reissued, without correction, at a modest price.

Nonetheless, the volume is a fascinating one, for it deals with a fascinating subject.

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The Development & Meaning of Eddington's 'Fundamental Theory'. Including a compilation from Eddington's unpublished manuscripts. Noel B. Slater. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1957. xii + 299 pp. \$7.50.

Eddington's posthumous work, *Fundamental Theory*, edited by the late Edmund T. Whittaker, appeared in 1953, nine years after the death of its author. The present work is apparently intended to serve a twofold purpose. To those readers who have attempted to read the original *Fundamental Theory* itself and have not succeeded, it presents a summary and an explanation of Eddington's ideas; it also throws additional light on