

Medicine and Books

New trio from Keynes Press

Moran: a place next to Graves

The Anatomy of Courage. Lord Moran. Introduction by Denis Williams. (Pp xxix+160; £35; limited edition of 300 copies.) The Keynes Press. British Medical Association. 1984.

The Anatomy of Courage was originally published by Constable in 1945 as a thin book on rationed wartime paper. An American edition was published by Houghton Mifflin in 1967 with a new preface. Its author, Lord Moran (previously Dr C M Wilson) considered it really to be two books. One, which he scribbled as a diary in army notebooks, was an epitaph of the battalion of the old professional army with which he served as medical officer from 1914 to 1917. The other was written for men in the forces of a later generation, to pass on to them what he had learnt himself in the first world war, supplemented by what he had learnt from airmen and sailors in the second.

The presentation is in three sections: the discovery of fear (45 pages); how courage is spent (67 pages); and the care and management of fear (38 pages). The writing is masterly and the fact that it is sometimes mannered does not detract. The manner is that of one who, for over two years in Flanders and France, read only one book, Conrad's *Mirror of the Sea*, until he knew it almost by heart. In places an immediacy of feeling reflects a deep sense of personal loss. Interspersed with the diary written in dugouts and in billets behind the lines are insights and reflections which give the basis for the main conclusions: courage is a moral quality; courage is an act of renunciation which must be made not once but many times by the power of the will; courage is willpower. Courage is seen as capital; men start with different quantities of it and when it is spent they are finished. Rest can restore some of the capital, but in war of the kind that C M Wilson knew so well men wear out like clothes. The case for all these conclusions is amply, often passionately, argued.

Moran first received a bound copy of his *Anatomy of Courage* on 14 February 1945 in mail brought by a fast fighter bomber to Athens, where he was with the Prime Minister on one of his wartime excursions.¹ The book was not recorded by its author in his second world war diary as among the topics of conversation on that evening. This is not surprising. He had hoped that the Prime Minister would write a preface but when Churchill had dipped into the manuscript he had not cared for it. He was impatient with "all this psychological nonsense"; the picture painted of what goes on in a soldier's head would discourage the young soldiers; it might affect recruiting; if a soldier did not do his duty he ought to be shot.

This had not been Moran's only disappointment with the book. Fifteen months earlier, on the way to the Teheran conference, he had learnt that Macmillans had refused to publish it. He had been saddened but not defeated. After all, his very personal vision had been to fill his medical school at St Mary's with what he called *people who kept going*,² and he had shown in war and peace that keeping going was one of his own cardinal qualities.

Moran did not lack support for his enterprise.¹ Desmond MacCarthy, a highly regarded literary and drama critic, had read a draft and encouraged him. J G Winant, United States ambassador to the Court of St James, a pilot in the first world war, and perhaps one of the more sensitive people in the Churchill entourage, understood what he was trying to say and told him that he would have no difficulty in finding an American publisher. Furthermore, if Moran had ever had doubts that what he had to say was worth while they had been dispelled long ago. In 1920 he read in the press that a

commission had been appointed to investigate shell shock. He saw that no member had been on active service. He decided to write to *The Times*, and his letter, which took up a full column, was published.³ This led to invitations in the years of peace to lecture first at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, then at the Staff College, Camberley and at other army commands. During the early part of the second world war he was sought by the other services and in the USA to speak on morale and leadership.

A book with such a provenance clearly deserves consideration for a more special place than it has had up till now in British literature, so one may well ask how it has stood the test of time. Moran explained in the preface that the two books, the epitaph and the exposition of his ideas, had become one by the time he had finished, and this is so. In fact, the book is also autobiographical, though if one is tidy minded and wants to learn the actual story of his beloved battalion, the 1st Battalion the Royal Fusiliers, one has a daunting task. The narrative jumps about almost randomly between the day when Temporary Captain Charles Wilson, aged 32, joined the battalion shortly before Christmas in 1914 at Chapelle d'Armentières, where it was beginning to convert muddy ditches into more durable trenches, and February 1917, when he left it in the Loos sector, having been posted to the 73rd Field Ambulance. In between, the battalion had, as he put it, been dipped twice into the Somme. The history, and so the autobiographical component, becomes really clear only if one can refer to the battalion's war diary.⁴ Captain Wilson is incidentally mentioned in this from time to time, and among others, for courageous and gallant acts; he finished the first world war with a Military Cross, two mentions in dispatches, and the Italian Silver Medal for Military Valour.

Reference to what the *Anatomy of Courage* tells of Captain Wilson's battalion is made because notions about courage and fear are liable to be tempered by personal experience. This new edition contains an eminently readable invited introduction by Dr Denis Williams, a distinguished British neurologist whose personal experience was that as a consultant in the second world war he studied matters of psychological moment in men flying in the face of the enemy—courage, fear, exhaustion, and their consequences.

Lord Moran died in 1977 at the age of 94 so that some generations know nothing of him and several more know only that as Winston Churchill's doctor he precipitated a storm of comment when, in 1966 at the age of 83, he published an account of the illnesses of his patient, who had recently died in his 91st year. Dr Williams opens his introduction with just enough information to show that there were many more, and in many ways many more important, facets to Moran than that. Meanwhile, he places Captain Wilson nicely into context as he was when he wrote his diary on the Western front.

Williams describes his own acquaintance with Moran and contrasts the circumstances in which Captain Wilson made his observations with his own. He leads the reader to an appreciation of what courage or lack of it meant in practical terms in the Royal Air Force in the second world war. Having dealt with the management of breakdown in the RAF (a problem handled less tidily in the first war when doctors were learning about these things, and probably less tidily than in the RAF in the other services in the second war), Williams ends by identifying emotional fatigue as the common thread running through his and Moran's writing.

In the context of wartime flying, Williams, like Moran, saw Dr James Birley as the father figure. Birley's first Goulstonian Lecture in 1920,⁵ on factors that determine an airman's capacity for physical and emotional endurance in war, was far more scientific—in the sense that science is measurement—than is the *Anatomy of Courage*;

so were the writings of Dr Williams, Sir Charles Symonds, and their colleagues. Though the matter is not addressed, Moran too had aptitude for the scientific approach. He, like Birley, late in the first war was posted to a special hospital to study factors that were influencing breakdown. Birley studied 2000 flying officers. Moran, with the young James Mackintosh, studied 1500 consecutive cases of mustard gas poisoning and reported the analysis in 1920 in the *Quarterly Journal of Medicine*.⁶ The findings and their implications are summarised in the *Anatomy of Courage*.

Moran also saw himself as thinking as a scientist in the Ypres salient and in the Somme battle. In the sense in which I have used the term the *Anatomy of Courage* could not have been science if only because life in Sanctuary Wood and Trones Wood were incompatible with measurement. It could have been observational science, but there is a difficulty. Moran acknowledges that much of the writing was influenced by his own changing moods. One can indeed trace his early sense of adventure, the birth of fear in himself, and his observation of factors that influenced it, how he came to question his professional judgment, how he came to ask if war was necessary, the impact of the awful sordid monotony of the second winter, and his decline in morale in the third, after the Somme. Between the lines one sees the increasing depression.

One question that is touched on in the *Anatomy of Courage* is the relative place of the doctor and the commanding officer in cases where the capital fund of courage has been spent. These cases, which as his experience grew he came to identify in their early stages, were above all what Captain Wilson agonised over. Thirty years later, in the other war but in the peaceful atmosphere of Naples, Moran met a young subaltern who had lost three brothers and had been sent away for a rest. "He is not broken yet," he wrote, "but thank God it is not my job to return the poor devil to his unit. That is what the First War meant to me."¹ Dr Williams's introduction particularly enriches this edition of the *Anatomy of Courage* by his discussion of this question.

How well has the *Anatomy of Courage* stood the test of time? Well indeed, and it has become far more than a period piece. It has the timeless quality of a classic. I have always thought that the *Anatomy of Courage* properly shared a place on a shelf with the writings of Robert Graves and Erich Remarque and with the poems of Wilfred Owen. Rereading it has done nothing but confirm this view.

In its elegance this new edition, with Glastonbury cream wove paper and caseboard in William Morris pattern, contrasts deservedly with its 1945 predecessor, which many doctors in the services must have offered to their commanding officers in the closing months of the second world war.

RICHARD LOVELL

¹ Moran L. *Winston Churchill: the struggle for survival 1940/1965*. London: Constable & Company, 1961.

² Sargant W. *In my medical school*. London: Robson Books, 1978.

³ Wilson CM. Shell shock—the social significance of courage. [Letter] *The Times* 1920 Sept 22.

⁴ *War diaries of the 1st Battalion the Royal Fusiliers*. Public Record Office, WO/95/1613 & 2207.

⁵ Birley JL. The principles of medical science as applied to military aviation. *Lancet* 1920;ii:1147-51.

⁶ Wilson CM, Mackintosh JM. Mustard gas poisoning. *Q J Med* 1920;13:201-40.

Injustice redressed

Notes on the Composition of Scientific Papers. T Clifford Albutt. (Pp xxii+162; £35; limited edition of 300 copies.) The Keynes Press. 1984.

One way to learn the value of a book is to find that it has been stolen. I had a copy of this book, I thought highly of it, and I lent it to one of my friends. I then forgot to which friend I had lent it. He must have thought so highly of it that he "forgot" to give it back. Because my copy was stolen in this way I am delighted that the Keynes Press has now reprinted the book 80 years after its first publication in 1904.

Clifford Albutt was the Regius Professor of Physic at Cambridge and he had to read the theses presented by the candidates of those days for the degrees both for the MB and the MD. From this rich source of verbiage, platitudes, and clichés he selected splendid examples of tautology, split infinitives, inappropriate use of words, loose composition, and malapropisms. He then wove a superb and

scholarly book with a warp of these solecisms and a weft of examples of fine, lucid, and stylish English prose.

It is a splendid book to recommend to anyone who wishes to write well and is determined that the most careless or captious reader shall not nail down his words to any other meaning than that which, whether right or wrong, he intended or conceived. It is better than Gower's *Plain Words*, which is journeyman's stuff compared with the artistry of this book, which forces you down on your knees before the magic of the form and harmony of the noblest speech that the world has seen.

Albutt's comments on the meagreness of the vocabulary of the student of his day is true alas of the student of today. "To involve . . . has to do duty for to attack, to invade, to injure, to affect, to prevent, to encroach upon, to influence, to enclose, to implicate, to permeate, to pervade, to penetrate, to dislocate, to contaminate, to complicate, and so forth." He read in a thesis, as I so often still read, "the liver was involved, there being a few secondary growths in it" and he dryly adds that "the author might as well have said that his lawn was involved in a few dandelions."

Who but Albutt could write "The commas seem to be scattered with a peppercorn as a cheap decoration" or in criticism of the excessive use of copulatives (a word which I suspect has acquired overtones in the last 80 years) "they think that every joint must be oiled with *and*, *while* or *whilst* or *since*"? To successive generations of my secretaries I have quoted "Capitals are too often sprinkled capriciously about the pages: the capital letter is due to all names so we write the language of the Greeks; but the name of a language as greek or latin is not a proper name." I love his advice about the use of titles when quoting Sir John Doe or Professor Roe: "On an author's decease and his promotion to the immortality of letters, the title is dropped." I like too his comment that "the bootless suspensions of german prose are grievous to us." (But Printer please put the G of german on page 70 into lower case or Albutt will turn in his grave!)

My only regret is that the Keynes Press is reprinting the third edition, which was published in 1923. I think the first edition is shorter, fresher, and more captivating, and it contains an example of the use of suspense and surprise in composition which has always given me quiet pleasure and was left out of the third edition. "A man of thirty, if he be of liberal education, may read even the very newspapers themselves without much hurt." The book enlarges on a theme that was expressed more concisely by Pope:

*True ease of writing comes from art not chance
As those move easiest, who have learnt to dance.*

Dr Alex Paton has written an introduction to this new edition and he suggests that the achievements of the gracious, cultivated, wise, and scholarly Albutt have been overlooked perhaps because he was overshadowed by his contemporary, Osler. If this is so the reprinting of this book will redress an injustice.

I used to keep this book by my bedside until it was stolen, and when I picked it up and turned the pages I used to remember Albutt's advice for success in life: "Never waste even five minutes." The book is designed by Sebastian Carter, set in Monotype Bembo, a wonderfully distinct typeface, printed on Glastonbury wove paper, and beautifully bound by Clark Constable with a profile of Sir Geoffrey Keynes on the front board. It is a joy to look at and handle as well as to read. Thank you Keynes Press.

O L WADE

Rereading Osler

Aequanimitas. William Osler. Introduction by Hugh Dudley. (Pp xiv + 320; £35; limited edition of 300 copies.) The Keynes Press. British Medical Association. 1984.

When he published this volume of essays in the summer of 1904—"for the boys," as he wrote to ex-president Gilman—Osler hoped that they might help the young men "in forming their life ideals." In an editorial review in the *BMJ* headed "A Regius Professor's Lay Sermons" the writer praises "the lofty feeling for all that is good and

true, the genial wisdom and the energising quality of these discourses" written in "a style that can scarcely fail to captivate a reader of any intelligence." Geoffrey Keynes, a life long admirer, would certainly have welcomed this volume in the imprint which bears his name and which appears in so pleasing a style.

The essays are in their pristine state, to which are added a brief biographical note by Walter Langdon Brown and an introduction by Hugh Dudley. In times past books often carried eulogies of the author in poetry or prose. In this age of the antihero Hugh Dudley, re-examining the writings and the man, has forged some "pigmy darts" that do not wound the man who has become "a medico-historical legend." They can prick a reviewer to reply. When in 1928 we founded The Osler Club of London, plenty of men survived who had known and loved Osler. The warmth with which they greeted the mention of his name showed like an afterglow how bright his sun had been before its setting. Sixty five years after his death does any light remain?

Harvey Cushing's *Life* paints the picture, without any warts, of a most human doctor with a genius for friendship, a ready pen, and a consummate skill in communication. As a man of his time he had the faith that his values and standards, if not eternal and universal, were at least durable. Present generations (this faith largely lost) see goodness, truth, and beauty not as absolute but merely relative values to be adjusted to the satisfaction of the moment's needs. It is with today's "cynical and world weary eyes" that Hugh Dudley makes his examination. He sees a man of "childish innocence"—?childlike—concerned with scholarship, work, and, in medicine, the conquest of infectious disease. In all three he finds scope for denigration.

Firstly, Osler is rebuked for assuming that his readers would recognise the word *Aequanimitas*, although Latin was then a curriculum subject. His scholarship is dismissed as superficial and a fake. Osler himself disclaimed classical scholarship. In his lecture (chapter IV) on Physic and Physicians as depicted in Plato he shows himself at home in classical literature. The lecture is belittled on the grounds that nearly half consists of "extracts from Porson." The reality is that The Dialogues are extensively quoted in Jowett's translation (no reference to Porson), a more apt vehicle than the original Greek even in a presidential address to the Classical Association.

That his writing is peppered with quotation and allusion has always been a source of comment and wonder. Thoughts and sentences that appealed to him as he read would be jotted down on odd scraps of paper. Before the backs of envelopes existed commonplace books were filled with jottings for future savouring of facts or perceptions expressed in words that kindled the imagination. It is unworthy to suggest that the purpose of these notes was for use in his own writing.

Secondly, the work ethic as a driving force is discounted in a time of mass unemployment. For Osler, work was not equated with paid employment. What he lived by was doing what lies clearly at hand and living in day-tight compartments, practical guides even today. In his work Osler tried to link ward and laboratory. Nowhere does he define what the "scientific basis of medicine" meant to him. A conclusion from several of the essays is that it meant an attitude of mind towards observed phenomena from which deductions could be safely made. He attached the greatest importance to bedside observation and to the application to clinical studies of laboratory findings. Tradition was inimical to both. Now that clinicians have capitulated to lab men it is hard to understand the strength of the opposition or to appreciate that only a century ago—that is, after Osler qualified—doctors were practising medicine who believed in spontaneous generation and rejected the place of bacteria in causing disease. The important part that he played in this battle, his involvement in the antivivisection struggle, and his modernising influence on medical education, the subject of a recent book, all show that, contrary to Dudley, his ear was attuned to contemporary events. He also promoted the study of medical history and, although Dudley calls this an ahistorical age, the reality is that medical history is playing an increasing part in medical education, with the establishment of chairs in many medical schools.

His third preoccupation with infectious disease was common to

all practising doctors before the era of penicillin. Prevention was beginning to be possible, but Osler was no prophet and believed that infection would never be conquered nor could he or anyone else foretell the effects of this revolution on all aspects of patient care.

This volume provides for the modern doctor the opportunity to reappraise one who in his day was a leader of the profession. If the counsels and ideals expressed in these lay sermons are unacceptable today, so much the worse for us and our profession.

ALFRED WHITE FRANKLIN

Human physiology

Contemporary Medical Physiology. Robert L. Vick. (Pp 1003; \$39.50.) Addison-Wesley. 1984.

The Baylor University textbook of physiology has much to commend it. Conceived as a text to provide health science students with an understandable current introduction to human physiology, the principal author and editor has assembled an impressive number of collaborators, who have achieved together the stated objective of combining "the accuracy and depth of understanding of a multi-author text without sacrificing the uniformity of style and presentation of a single authored text." The emphasis has been on the principles and concepts of physiology rather than on the need for rote learning of facts. By basing the text on lucid descriptions of control systems and the relevance of this to human physiology in health and disease much of the description of the pathophysiology of disease becomes clear.

Several innovations commend this as a text for students of medicine and allied subjects. A "study outline" is included at the end of each chapter, which summarises key aspects of the chapter under headings and occupies about a page. Another page is occupied by relevant clinical correlations which give the students "a glimpse of physiology in action" and is related to the particular chapter or section. Each section ends with a bibliography which is commendably up to date (the most recent reference being 1982).

Thus it is readable and profusely and clearly illustrated with black and white drawings. It provides an easily accessible resource for the equations describing physiological processes and access to current investigative techniques. The individual sections clearly cannot come up to the standard of authority and scholarship of a specialist monograph but the assembly and clear presentation in summary form of a vast amount of human physiology are substantial achievements and one that will ease the teaching of physiology to students considerably.

R H T EDWARDS

Wide appeal on emergencies

Emergencies in Medicine. Ed Alistair D Beattie and John T Ireland. (Pp 248; £16.) Pitman. 1984.

Publishing the proceedings of symposia is a popular exercise nowadays and the standard of the resulting books invariably depends on, firstly, the importance of the original papers, secondly, the skill and dedication of the editors, and, thirdly, and probably most important, the reasons behind the desire to publish such a book. It is apparent that some symposia are published simply to record the event as more or less a verbatim report of the symposium, while others are carefully edited and well arranged publications of the symposium content, with wide appeal, an intelligent format, and an attractive price. *Emergencies in Medicine* undoubtedly comes into the latter category.

Its 28 chapters written by 32 authors contain a wealth of information clearly set out and appropriately enhanced by line drawings, photographs, and tables. The particular merit of the proceedings may well lie in the chapters dealing with some rarely encountered conditions such as that on the acute problems of myasthenia gravis and that on thyroid crises, both of which make

fascinating reading, particularly to the clinician who may not come across these conditions often.

The authors explain that the symposium was designed for young postgraduates and those sitting higher examinations, but another group must be mentioned in this context—the senior registrars in training and consultants in accident and emergency medicine. For this group there is a wealth of information of a variety of conditions, many that are not adequately covered in other books on accident and emergency medicine.

The standard of writing throughout is excellent. For clarity of thought and expression it would be difficult to improve on Professor Campbell's chapter on the care of the ventilated patient, a subject encompassing many disciplines and one in which, to quote Professor Campbell, "It is undoubtedly beneficial to have an agreed patient plan of management for all patients. . . ."

In general the list of references at the end of chapters is adequate without being overwhelming, and clinicians will undoubtedly find plenty of guidance for further reading on specific subjects of interest. All doctors concerned with the immediate management of the seriously ill patient can gain much from reading this book and keeping it available for further study. At double the price it would still be a bargain.

M S CHRISTIAN

All embracing paediatric title

Children: a Handbook for Children's Doctors. Ed Peter Gray and Forrester Cockburn. (Pp 374; £30.) Pitman. 1984.

There is something all embracing about this title: a vade mecum for "primary care physicians for children" (the editors' phrase). It aims, according to the preface, at making up for deficiencies in both undergraduate and postgraduate training of doctors in "aspects of child growth and development . . . such as the assessment of hearing, seeing, thinking, and growing . . . the social development of children."

Parts of the book fulfil these laudable aims: there are good introductory chapters on normal growth, and on interviewing children and parents; thoughtful chapters on death and children, and cot death, both unfortunately without references; and clear accounts of the development and assessment of vision, hearing, and speech.

Dr Day's chapter on normal development is obviously central to the concept of the book, and provides a sensitive review of the subject. It is unfortunate that the appendix illustrating the Woodside assessment tests (pages 338-40) is printed out of scale, becoming almost unintelligible as a result.¹ The appendices occupy 100 pages, but many are redundant. Do primary care doctors really need to refer to normal values of coagulation tests in preterm infants, or look at pictures of 18 different growth charts?

Prevention, the keystone of primary care, receives scant coverage: two pages on immunisation, which includes plague, smallpox, and typhus! The fundamental problem of uptake of immunisation in the population is not mentioned and the controversy over risks versus benefits of pertussis vaccine glossed over.

Much of the difficulty I found in using the book arose from the inconsistent organisation of the material, some in short chapters and some in sections of very long chapters, with widely differing levels of referencing (from none, to 75 in one section of chapter 18). The second major fault is the evident absence of familiarity with general practice and community child care. This results in excessive attention to rare disease (eight pages on neuromuscular disorders), and also to statements of the obvious, such as (about soiling): "It is often helpful to have assistance from a child psychiatric team," when doctors need to know *when* to seek such assistance. If only the editors had stuck to their primary aim and not tried to construct a minitextbook, this might be a better and cheaper book.

P D CAMPION

Peripheral neuropathies

Butterworths International Medical Reviews. "Neurology 4: Peripheral Nerve Disorders—a Practical Approach." Ed Arthur K Asbury and R W Gilliat. (Pp 339; £25.) Butterworths. 1984.

With the exception of a few well defined and relatively common disorders the clinical diagnosis and management of peripheral neuropathy have always been difficult. Many different clinical syndromes and associations exist and information about them has been built up piecemeal over many years.

Recently, however, because of the development particularly of electrophysiological techniques and techniques in experimental pathology there has emerged a more logical classification and approach to management. In the preface to *Peripheral Nerve Disorders* the editors indicate that their purpose has been to bring together this recent knowledge and to emphasise particularly its implications for treatment.

In the first 10 chapters separate authors deal with the different manifestations of peripheral neuropathy as it presents in the Western hemisphere. The last three chapters deal with manifestations encountered in India, Japan, and Africa. Each chapter is complete and independent, but there is some useful overlap so that some topics that are dealt with briefly in one section are referred to elsewhere—and usefully—from a different point of view. Each topic is treated thoroughly with an extensive bibliography at the end of each chapter. Despite this rigorous treatment, the book remains readable and concise so that a remarkable amount of information is included in the 328 pages of text and the style is unusually consistent for a multi-author text. The illustrations are black and white or half tone and of high quality.

The chapters on diabetic neuropathy, autonomic neuropathy, genetically determined neuropathy, and nerve compression and entrapment were of particular interest to me, but others will find other sections of corresponding value. It is particularly gratifying to see treatment dealt with so thoroughly along with the practical problems of genetic counselling. This is a book both to read and to refer to, and practising physicians dealing with patients with peripheral neuropathy will find it an essential companion.

J A R LENMAN

Contributors

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¹ Barber JH. Pre-school developmental screening—the results of a four year period. *Health Bulletin* 1982;40:170-8.