

Notices

THE following two Officers have recently obtained the D.P.H.

Major W. M. Stewart }
 Major D. D. Maitland } January 5, 1950.

Reviews

THE JOURNAL OF DR. JAMES BARRY. By Olgar Racster and Jessica Grove. Bodley Head. Price 15s. net.

This book is dedicated by the authors to Sybil Thorndyke for "her fine impersonation of Dr. James Barry" in their play which was put on at the St. James's Theatre.

In a preface dated 1932, the authors describe how they first, in 1911, became interested in the story by hearing of a local tale that the woods near Camps Bay, a suburb of Cape Town, were haunted by an apparition in Georgian Uniform—Dr. James Barry. Fragments of anecdote were collected, most of it handed down from the narrator's grandparents; little that was factual could be found though research was continued till 1919. The following extract from the Dictionary of National Biography was as illuminating as any:

"Barry, James (1795-1865) Inspector General of the Army Medical Department. A woman who passed through life as a man. Said to have been granddaughter of a Scottish Earl. Served at the Cape and at Malta. Lord Albemarle met her at Cape Town when she was medical adviser to the Governor, Lord Charles Somerset, as well as Staff Surgeon." "The most skilful of physicians and the most wayward of men." Died at 14 Margaret Street, London, July 25th, 1865, when official report was sent to Horse Guards that she was a woman. "Motive alleged for disguise—love of an Army Surgeon."

The story concerns a woman of gentle birth who, for reasons unknown, assumed male clothing and studied medicine in Edinburgh University. On qualification she became an Army Surgeon, went to South Africa in 1815 and rose in the Army Medical Department to become the Senior Inspector-General of Hospitals, as she is shown in Hart's Army List of 1865. There is record also of service in St. Helena and Jamaica.

It is a tale of the triumph of will over the handicaps of a frail body, of a skilled and fearless woman doctor who, in the early years of the nineteenth century, competed successfully with men ("as an accoucheur he was unequalled, and as generous as he was skilful"); a story of almost life-long deception as to her sex.

In such circumstances it is understandable that no diary should ever have

been found. The form of the book, with most of its story, is entirely fictitious. It is written as a diary in rather sententious language emulating the style of the period and tells a story which, though carefully fabricated, has woven in its fabric all the known facts.

The story opens shortly with tales of student life in Edinburgh but passes quickly to qualification in 1815, and her Commission as an Army doctor and posting to the Cape as Staff Surgeon and Adviser to the Governor, Lord Charles Somerset. The Governor is said to have known Barry's secret and, through this knowledge, to have been able to help him in many ways. There is a lively description of life in Government House circles at the Cape in those days, of delightful gardens, riding in the woods, and broad tree-shaded streets outlined by irrigation channels; of gossip and bickering in a limited society and of the laziness and ignorance of local medical practitioners whose bitter resentment Barry soon encountered by his energy and enthusiasm for reform. He was appointed Inspector-General of Hospitals, prison doctor and port vaccination officer.

An interesting account concerns his delivery by Cæsarean section of the wife of Thomas Munnik, a prominent business man whose family had South African records dating back to 1716. The child was christened James Barry Munnik, and his son, similarly named, became town clerk of Wynberg, near Cape Town. The town clerk's widow possessed a miniature painted on ivory of Dr. James Barry which is reproduced on the wrapping of the book. It is very similar to a small portrait in the Headquarter Mess at Millbank and reveals a delicately featured individual with curly auburn hair, large lustrous eyes, a broad forehead and narrow chin tucked into the high collar of a scarlet tunic.

The town clerk's sister married a Hertzog and both the Hertzogs and the Munniks use the name of Barry as an additional christian name.

The book skilfully combines a few facts with what is mainly fiction and tells a colourful, if slight, story of conditions in Cape Town in the early nineteenth century. It is well worth reading by all who find interest in the story of one of the most remarkable officers who have risen to high rank in the Army Medical Services.

J. M. M.

SYNOPSIS OF MEDICINE—NINTH EDITION. By Sir Henry Letheby Tidy, *K.B.E.*, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P.Lond. Bristol: John Wright & Sons, Ltd. 1949. Pp. 1243. Price 30s.

This work, so well favoured for systematic study and isolated reference, has undergone extensive revision which has involved rewriting much of the subject matter and the addition of a few new articles. In carrying out this work the author has sought to improve classification and clear up confusion where this besets the subject matter dealt with. Influenza takes its proper place among the virus diseases. Splenic anæmia is divorced from Banti's disease, and the confusion attendant on the use of the terms tropical sore and tropical ulcer is

banished by the presentation of three entities under the names Desert Sore, Tropical Ulcer and Tropical Sloughing Phagedena. These are representative of much of the excellent reorganization the work has undergone. An interesting innovation in disease grouping is that of Reiter's disease, Felty's syndrome and Stevens-Johnson's disease under the parenthood of abacterial pyuria, useful for provisional integration in the present state of our knowledge.

The advances in medicine achieved in the course of the recent war are adequately represented. The view is expressed that phenol-preserved T.A.B. vaccine modifies the clinical course of enteric fever while the alcohol-preserved preparation does not do so. This is welcome, and will hearten those who have hesitated to accept the immunological view that the efficacy of the vaccine can be judged by reduction in mortality alone. In the next revision consideration might with advantage be given to the mention of the multiple pressure method of vaccination and the interpretation of its results.

Time lag between revision of text and publication has entailed lack of reference to some of the recent dramatic successes of antibiotic therapy, but the presentation of established fundamental knowledge required for the recognition, understanding and general management of the diseases described will readily ensure the maintenance of the position this work deservedly holds in medical literature.

J. B.

JOURNALS RECEIVED

THE following journals have been received and are available in the Library of the Royal Army Medical College.

<i>Vojno—Sanitetski Pregled</i>	November-December 1949
<i>Medical Press</i>	January 11, 1950
<i>Edinburgh Medical Journal</i>	October 1949
<i>Army Med. Services Magazine</i>	January 1950
<i>British Medical Journal</i>	January 7, 1950, and on
<i>St. Bartholomew's Hospital</i>	January 1950
<i>New Zealand Med. Journal and Supplement</i>	October 1949
<i>Medical Journal of Australia</i>	November 26, 1949
<i>Journal of the R.A.S.C.</i>	January 1950
<i>Journal of the Royal Egyptian Medical Association</i>	January 1950
<i>Lancet</i>	January 14, 1950
<i>B.M.J.</i>	January 14, 1950
<i>Jour. Royal Inst. Public Health</i>	January 1950
<i>Leprosy Review</i>	October 1949
<i>Medical Press</i>	January 20, 28, 1950
<i>Medical Journal of Australia</i>	December 3, 10, 1949
<i>Surg. Gynec. and Obs.</i>	January 1950
<i>South African Medical Journal</i>	January 1950
<i>Chronicle of World Health Org.</i>	December 1949
<i>Canadian Jour. of Public Health</i>	December 1949
Report of the Med. Res. Council	1945 - 1948
<i>Military Surgeon</i>	February 1950