

### Book Reviews

plants and animals. 'Evolution' should not be understood in the modern sense because an assumption of evolution included the idea of pre-delineation, i.e. that all that was going to evolve had already an invisible existence in the beginning. Wolff comes down on the side of epigenesis, maintaining that new entities can be generated and, indeed, new forms come into being, without any previous existence. The introduction gives a short sketch of Wolff's life and the main problems discussed in these treatises. It shows Wolff's relations with his contemporaries whose views he fearlessly opposed, even those of the mighty Haller. Wolff opposed not only the 'theological' view still represented by Haller, e.g. that all future embryos were contained in Eve's ovaries, but also that of 'mechanical medicine' which regards the body as a machine. He tried to explain changes in organisms, including generation, by assuming a *vis essentialis*, a force performing what was needed. Professor Herrlinger's introduction continues by describing the influence of Wolff's theory on posterity and concludes that though much in it is 'wrong' when compared with the present state of modern embryology, its acquainting us with the spirit of the time and its problems, makes this book well worth printing.

MARIANNE WINDER

*Geschichte der Fusspflege*, by BRUNO VALENTIN, Stuttgart, Georg Thieme, 1966, pp. 103, illus., DM. 19.80.

Unlike dentistry, chiropody has been ignored by medical historians. This is surprising as both developed because of medical disinterest, and until the 1850s on the same lines. Chiropodists have done some work, and now this short history by an orthopaedist indicates chiropody's place in medical history.

There is a well documented account of skin and nail diseases, particularly of corns. The emergence of chiropodists in France, Germany, Britain, and America, is outlined. The important practitioners, Rousselot, Laforest, Lion, Guthery, Durlacher, and Runting are dealt with in detail. All wrote books and several contributed to medical literature—Laforest (1782) an account of hallux valgus, and Durlacher (1845) first described plantar digital neuritis. But others, as Low (who coined 'chiropodist' in 1785) and Zacharie (Lincoln's chiropodist), pirated books, made false claims, and generally misbehaved. The chapter on the chiropodist in art and literature is fascinating and well illustrated. There are 191 references but no index.

Based on printed sources (Seelig's scholarly work is largely unpublished) the book is not definitive. It sometimes fails to distinguish between legitimate, if medically unrecognized, practitioners and the charlatans. This is not always easy, Durlacher's book is in Garrison and Morton, Eisenberg's book (1845) is rubbish. Organization and education began over fifty years ago and are mentioned, but the continuing problems created by quacks (as in dentistry before 1921) are not. This book will interest dermatologists and orthopaedists, and chiropodists will be grateful to the author for introducing their history to his colleagues.

J. C. DAGNALL