

PAPERBOUNDS

ETHICS IN MEDICINE: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Concerns. Edited by Stanley Joel Reiser, Arthur J. Dyck, and William J. Curran. M.I.T., 1977. 679 pp. \$19.95 (cloth, \$40)

This comprehensive text developed for use in medical courses at Harvard is also a unique sourcebook for lawyers, legislators dealing with health plans, and lay citizens. It opens with selections from the *Corpus Hippocraticum* (probably written by Pythagorean philosophers in the 5th to 4th centuries B.C.) and proceeds through well-edited articles on medical conduct and ethics; regulation, compulsion, and consumer protection in clinical medicine and public health; truth-telling in the physician-patient relationship; medical experimentation on human subjects; procreative decisions; suffering and dying; rights and priorities in the provision of medical care. The emphasis throughout is on human needs rather than on narrow professional concerns.

BIRDS, BEASTS, BLOSSOMS, AND BUGS: The Nature of Japan. By Harold P. Stern. Abrams reprint, 1977. 196 pp. \$12.50

"Can a bug be beautiful?" A Western answer to this Zen question might be: Of course, if it's depicted by a Japanese artist. This large, elegant volume, printed and bound in Japan, was compiled by the late director of Washington's Freer Gallery. He briefly traces Japanese "nature" art from the emergence of Buddhist influence in the Heian Period (8th century A.D.), through the Kamakura, Muromachi, Momoyama, and Edo periods to the present. Among the 140 illustrations of paintings, drawings, calligraphy, ceramics, and lacquerware are a full-page color detail of wasps, a brushwork close-up of a

tiger's eyebrow, an impudent cat of the late Edo Period—all pure delights. Concise notes with each item provide as much background as most readers will require. (For additional information, Noritake Tsuda's classic *Handbook of Japanese Art*, first published in 1941 by Charles Tuttle, is available as a paperback reprint.)

RED TAPE: Its Origins, Uses, and Abuses. By Herbert Kaufman. Brookings, 1977. 100 pp. \$2.95

"Writing about red tape turned out to mean writing about the whole governmental process," says Brookings president Bruce L. MacLaury, introducing this brief, bright study of a subject more satirized than examined. Kaufman finds that red tape represents procedural constraints of our own making. Can its onerous qualities and effects be minimized? Not easily, is his answer, and probably only through exercising more care in the writing of *new* regulations. Administrative regulations filled 15,000 pages in the *Federal Register* in 1946. The annual postwar page total dropped briefly (10,528 in 1956), rose in 1966 to nearly 17,000, passed 57,000 in 1976, and is expected to reach 100,000 in the 1980s. That's 100,000 pages, representing millions of yards of what was, in its beginnings under the British Empire, actual cloth tape, dyed scarlet, used to tie up official files.

UHURU'S FIRE: African Literature East to South. By Adrian Roscoe. Cambridge, 1977. 281 pp. \$6.95 (cloth, \$18.50)

The reader new to African prose, poetry, and drama may be surprised by the wide variety of themes and voices; the combination of strength and confusion felt

in the work of African writers who are part of a literary independence movement paralleling political change comes as less of a surprise. Introducing the work of contemporary authors in East, Central, and Southern Africa, Adrian Roscoe describes vernacular writing ("the outgrowth of an oral literature which has begun to die before the world knows much about it"). He discusses the change in the literature syllabus—from British to African—at the University of Nairobi in 1961, since followed in Malawi and Uganda. "As the voices of Wordsworth and Tennyson grow dim," he reports, "the voices of Okigbo and Soyinka grow loud." So do those of Kenya's Grace Ogot, with her strong tales based on Luo tribal stories, South Africa's Ezekiel Mphahlele, Uganda's Taban Lo Liyong, and dozens of other artists, established or emerging, whose work Roscoe perceptively analyzes.

THE FACE OF BATTLE. By John Keegan. Vintage, 1977. 360 pp. \$2.95

John Keegan lectures at Sandhurst, England's West Point. He has never seen a battle. Neither had Stephen Crane, whose *The Red Badge of Courage* is probably America's best war novel. Keegan's book, newly available in paper covers, is not as compelling as Crane's classic, but it does distill, from historical records, what war is like to the men who bear the battle: English bowmen and pikemen at Agincourt (1415); gunners, cavalry, and massed infantry in the confusion of Waterloo (1815); participants in the unbelievable slaughter of the Somme (1916)—where the 1st Battalion, Newfoundland Regiment, in one afternoon lost 705 dead, wounded, or missing. (Newfoundland!) Looking at "the inhuman face of wars" in these three battles fought within a hundred-mile radius,

Keegan writes that "impersonality, coercion, deliberate cruelty, all deployed on a rising scale, make the fitness of man to sustain the stress of battle increasingly doubtful." One wonders.

HOUSES AND TRAVELLERS. By W. S. Merwin. Atheneum, 1977. 214 pp. \$6.95 (cloth, \$10)

Better known as a poet and translator of poets than as a writer of prose, W. S. Merwin in the last few years has won new followers with his short short stories, fables, and parables, in the *New Yorker*. Thirty of the odd, haunting narratives collected here appeared first in that magazine, others in a variety of literary journals. Merwin writes (ostensibly) about people, many of them old and lost, about paths, cabins, grain elevators, lakes, nesting pigeons, about "The Devil's Pig," and even (in 69 words) about language we have lost but cannot forget—words we "shine the lantern of our sleep on . . . and there they are, trembling for the day of witness. They will be buried with us, and rise with the rest."

THE ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY: What it is, with all the kinds, causes, symptomes, prognostickes and severall cures of it. By Robert Burton. Vintage, 1977. 1,440 pp. \$7.95

Robert Burton's years on earth (1577–1640) were greatly afflicted by the "black choler." (*I'll change my state with any wretch/Thou canst from gaol or dunghill fetch/. . . Now desperate I hate my life./Lend me a halter or a knife.*) But he made a good thing out of melancholy. His learned, witty compendium on the subject, first published in London in 1621, went through five editions before his death at age 63 of natural causes. Not until now has it appeared in paper (at a cheering price).