THE LIFE AND WORK OF ASTLEY COOPER. By R. C. BROCK, M.S., F.R.C.S., F.A.C.S. Surgeon to Guy's Hospital; formerly Astley Cooper Student, Guy's Hospital. $9 \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ in. Pp. viii + 176, with 14 figures. Index. 1952. Edinburgh: E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. Price 20s.

This is a timely medical biography of a great man. Mr Brock, I think, shares my opinion that the pupil was greater than the master, John Hunter. He is certainly a warmer and richer character, and he played his part in front of the back-drop provided by the Napoleonic era. No biography has appeared since that of Bransby Cooper in 1843. Genius, character and period lay ready for fresh assessment.

It is as true as any generalisation can be to say that no medical man should be permitted to write a biography. The long habits of case taking have dulled his mind to the more artistic variations in biographical form, and he automatically follows the Caterpillar's instructions to Alice: "Begin at the beginning and go on to the end." In spite of its familiarity this method still appeals to doctors, and, as this biography is primarily a factual summary for medical men, it is as such that it should be judged. Like all good biographers Mr Brock identifies the interests of his subject with his own, and we have a refreshing emphasis on Astley Cooper as a potential specialist in vascular surgery. As Astley Cooper was one of the last of the line of Master General Surgeons he can be all things to all specialists, and the orthopaedic surgeon might well demand a more even treatment of his masterpiece on injury, which ran through more editions than any other monograph he wrote. Cooper's work on avascular necrosis of the femur has been largely forgotten though he put the matter as clearly as it can be put to-day.

Bettany has been rightly trounced here for his statement that "He (Cooper) cannot be classed among men of genius or even of truly scientific attainments; his works are not classic, but they are more than respectable. They are defective from their almost entire omission to refer to the works of others." And yet there is a grain of truth in these remarks, and had Astley Cooper given full credit to older authors the following sentence would not have appeared in this book. "It is possible that Sir Astley Cooper was not the first to use the 'heel in axilla' method for the reduction of a dislocated shoulder, but his description and illustration of it appear to be the first." It would simply have been described as the Hippocratic method.

The enigma of Cooper: his unquestioned professional leadership followed so soon by an almost complete loss of interest in him, and the conflicting estimates of his abilities by his contemporaries, are not resolved in this partisan volume, but it is an attractive and readable tribute to one to whom all orthopaedic surgeons remain deeply indebted, and who has set the whole profession a supreme example of single-mindedness.—J. G. BONNIN.

THE APOLOGIE AND TREATISE OF AMBROISE PARÉ, containing the Voyages made into Divers Places, with many of his writings upon Surgery. Edited, and with an introduction, by Geoffrey KEYNES, M.D., F.R.C.S., F.R.C.O.G. $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ in. Pp. xxvi + 227, with 4 plates and 21 figures. Index. 1951. London: Falcon Educational Books. Price 15s.

Garrison, in his "History of Medicine," refers to three great men who lifted "the surgical art to its modern scientific status." Two of the three, Hunter and Lister, have been the subject of new biographies recently reviewed in this Journal. The third, who was the first in time and perhaps in significance, painted his own portrait, and for a racy, vivid and thoroughly delightful account of a great surgeon and of the attributes which go to his making, one cannot do better than turn to the Apologie and Treatise of Ambroise Paré.

Paré's greatness was recognised in his own time. He served three French kings; he was spared on St Bartholomew's night; and he was one of the very few Europeans to be translated widely (even into Japanese) in the seventeenth century. His contributions to surgery were enormous. His instruments were not improved until the time of the Listerian revolution. He was the pioneer of modern artificial limbs, of modern brace-making, of the ligature in amputations and, though his credulity led him into the filthy morass of "wound-salves," he was the father of modern wound surgery as well. He gave a fine description of spinal cord compression, he introduced excision of the elbow, he recognised congenital scoliosis and, most important of all, his great influence was used to foster observation and experiment in surgery and to decry the blind acceptance of dogma.

Those of us who have had to read his works in unwieldy volumes which were too costly for us to own, will gratefully welcome a new English edition of all the better known writings, beautifully produced and edited with great scholarship, printed most admirably in good type and on good