

Book Notices

HUBERT W. SCHEFER, *Das Berufsethos des Arztes Paracelsus, Gesnerus Supplement 42*, Aarau, Sauerländer, 1990, pp. xii, 106, illus., SFr. 42.00 (3-7941-3374-9).

This useful dissertation sets out Paracelsus' prescriptions for the true physician, concentrating especially on his own medical *Oath*. It has the merit of taking Paracelsus seriously, although it does not explore in any depth the contradictions between his ideals and his own career and behaviour. A more sophisticated approach would also have led to a more detailed investigation into the relationship between his religious views and his medical ethic, and modified the assumption of a blunt rejection of Hippocratic medical ethics. A better formulation would see a basically Hippocratic *Oath* altered almost beyond recognition under the influence of Paracelsus' evangelical christianity.

JOSÉ MARÍA LÓPEZ PIÑERO, *El grabado en la ciencia hispánica*, Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1987, pp. 140, illus., (84-00-06699-5).

By comparison with his predecessor, Ferdinand IV—an uxorious madman—and with his successor Carlos IV—a half-witted sensualist—Carlos III of Spain was a great patron of the more theoretical natural sciences. During 1988, an exhibition was arranged to commemorate the bicentenary of his death. This book is one of the fruits of that exhibition. Despite the promise of its title, the book is not—nor could it be, at 140 pages—a complete history of scientific illustration in Spain and the Spanish-dominated New World. López Piñero provides an introduction in which he laments the lack of adequate studies of the topic. The course of his lament is fortunately rich with allusions to the available literature to guide the serious student.

López Piñero makes his selection of reproductions of illustrations from the canonical works of Spanish science. These range from a woodcut zodiacal chart, published just three years after Columbus set sail for the edge of the world, to the final (folding) plate; a complex colour histogram of correspondences between meteorological conditions and the progress of the last noteworthy cholera epidemic in Spain, in 1885. Illustrations were chosen to indicate the breadth of scientific enquiry in Spain. Each double-page spread introduces a fresh set of landmarks, broadly grouped around major themes. For example, the reader is presented with several key early works on astronomy and navigation grouped together, underpinning the references to Columbus's voyage. For medical historians he gives, following the justly celebrated "auto-écorché" from Juan Valverde de Hamusco's *Historia de la composición del cuerpo humano* of 1556, two rather more *recherché* medical treatises.

Lastly, a note for bibliophiles. This book is extremely well-presented. Set in Bodoni and Baskerville types, it is beguilingly and expensively printed (with the letterpress in red and black) on Rivoli paper, with covers of heavy, grained, watercolour paper. The edition is limited to 1,500 copies.

WILLIAM HARVEY, *The Circulation of the Blood' and other writings*, transl. Kenneth J. Franklin, 2nd ed., with an Introduction by Andrew Wear, Everyman's Library, London, J. M. Dent & Sons, 1990, 8vo, pp. xvii, 183, £4.99 (paperback, 0-460-87008-4).

This reprint of Franklin's translation is accompanied by a new introduction by Andrew Wear. Comparison with Franklin's old introduction shows a major shift in perspective, from a strictly anglocentric biographical account to one that emphasizes Italian developments and Harvey's thinking (although, oddly, no mention is made of Boyle's recollection of what the elderly Harvey had told him). Wear explains the book's argument clearly, and a new translation is provided for the crucial (and, as first printed, ungrammatical) sentence in chapter eight in which Harvey set out the various notions that contributed to his discovery of the circulation. These improvements add considerably to the value of what is, for students, the most accessible collection and translation of Harveiana.

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H. FLORIS COHEN (ed.), *Tractrix: yearbook for the history of science, medicine, technology, and mathematics*, vol. 2, Dutch Society for the History of Medicine and Science, 1990, pp. 167, illus., dist. Rodopi (Amsterdam and Atlanta), Dfl. 35.00, \$17.50 + postage (ISSN 0924-0829).

Volume 2 of the yearbook of the Dutch Society for the History of Medicine and Science keeps up the high interest-level of the first. Posing the question of the popularization of science, Marta Feher contributes a substantial re-examination of Algarotti's *Newtonianism for the ladies*; and Harold Cook examines the malpractice suit which rumbled in London through the 1690s against the Dutch-born practitioner, Jan Groenevelt (John Greenfield). Groenevelt had harmed the health of a patient by overdosing with a medicine containing cantharides: were such strong specifics a proper part of the *materia medica* or were they quackish? Cook pursues this question, to derive some interesting conclusions about the contrasting styles of Dutch and English medicine.

CLAUDE QUÉTEL, *Escape from the Bastille: the life and legend of Latude*, transl. Christopher Sharp, Cambridge and Oxford, Polity Press, 1990, pp. vi, 217, £29.50 (0-7456-0596-6).

No medical man in *ancien régime* France enjoyed a stranger career than the surgeon Jean Danry, alias Latude. Convicted in 1749 for fabricating a weird plot against Madame de Pompadour, he spent the next thirty-five years successively in Vincennes, the Bastille, Charenton, and the Bicêtre, suffering grotesque persecution and engineering audacious escapes, before his release in the mid-1780s allowed him the opportunity to write his memoirs and become, for a while, one of the heroes of the Revolution. Claude Quéтел's skilful narrative astutely leaves open the question of Danry's status: victim, conman, madman, or self-dramatizer *extraordinaire*?

REGINALD MURLEY, *Surgical roots and branches*, The Memoir Club, London, British Medical Journal, 1990, 8vo, pp. x, 341, £14.95 (UK), £18.50 (abroad, including air postage).

Reginald Murley, born in 1916, became President of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1977. His name should be familiar to anyone remotely interested in the politics of medicine if not the technical history of surgery. His name was (and still is) frequently associated with the cause of private medicine (although not in a strict, politically-aligned fashion). His autobiography resembles nothing so much as a multi-decker confection in which a small number of structural elements are replicated throughout: a chunk of factual background, a layer of inside information, a leaf of political opinion and a topping of anecdote. Some guidelines to the digestibility of this repast seem possible but satisfaction will vary according to the reader's predilections. The factual layer is plain white fare, but the inside information is rare and delicate; the chapters on the experience of being a surgeon in the Second World War, in the early days of the National Health Service, and in the corridors of power in the 1970s are especially rewarding. The consumer's response to the political pronouncements and denouncements ("Barbara Castle, bless her heart" p. 270) will doubtless depend on taste. As to the anecdotes, some will find them coarse, others refined. The overall style of the dish will not appeal to every audience. Some will find delicacy in the author's parenthesizing ("as we said in the cavalry") and his distaste for "foul language" and a "mixed audience" (pp. 204, 112). Others will discover in the whole approach the ultimate club-sandwich.

SYDNEY M. LAIRD, *Roses in December: memories of the early antibiotic age*, Braunton, Devon, Merlin Books, 1990, 8vo, pp. 391, illus., £13.95 (paperback).

The second part of Dr Laird's autobiography covers his career from 1946 to 1979, as a venereologist and dermatologist in Suffolk, Manchester, and Bournemouth, as well as on assignment overseas. The reviewer of the first volume (*Med. Hist.*, 1988, 32: 482-3) reports that this one, too, is not only excellent reading, but provides an insight into the problems of health education, epidemiology, and bureaucratic obstruction that still faced venereal-disease specialists in the "early antibiotic age".

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ALLEN B. WEISSE, *Medical odysseys: the different and sometimes unexpected pathways to twentieth-century medical discoveries*, New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers University Press, 1991, pp. x, 250, \$36.00 (0-8135-1616-1), \$13.95 (paperback, 0-8135-1617-X).

This is a book for readers who like racy and colourful stories. Discoveries about mercury, penicillin, liver extract, cancer chemotherapy, heart surgery, artificial kidneys and Legionnaires' disease are among the fifteen topics reviewed. About a dozen references are given on each subject. No sources are quoted for many of the anecdotes, and it is difficult to know whether they are based on historical evidence or on the author's imaginative reconstructions. But the broad outlines agree well with better-documented accounts of the events described.

STELLA LOWRY, *Housing and health*, London, British Medical Journal, 1991, pp. ix, 109, illus., £7.95 (UK), £9.50 (abroad), (paperback, 0-7279-0304-7).

W. F. Bynum's historical introduction sets the stage for this book, which covers subjects like domestic accidents, sanitation, and high- versus low-rise dwelling, and such variables as humidity, noise, light, and stray electro-magnetic radiation, in succinct and vigorously-written summaries of the problems, prospects, and available literature. Public-health historians might be surprised at the way in which the links between housing and health still elude experimental demonstration and remain common-sense matters; they will certainly be interested by the modern findings. The chapters were first published as articles in the *British Medical Journal*: British general practitioners increasingly have to concern themselves with their patients' homes, or lack of them.

BOOKS ALSO RECEIVED

(The inclusion of a title does not preclude the possibility of subsequent review. Items received, other than those assigned for review, are ultimately incorporated into the collection of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine.)

PETER N. BENNETT (ed.), *Ethical responsibilities in European drug research*, Bath University Press for the European Ethical Review Committee, [c 1991], pp. iv, 84 (0-86197-111-6).

HEINZ STEFAN HERZKA, *Die neue Kindheit: dialogische Entwicklung—autoritätskritische Erziehung*, Basel, Schwabe, 1989, pp. 208, SFr. 32.00, DM 38.00 (3-7965-0900-2).

ROBERT A. MAXWELL and SHOHREH B. ECKHARDT, *Drug discovery: a casebook and analysis*, Clifton, NJ, Humana Press, 1990, pp. xxv, 438, £75.60, (0-89603-180-2), dist. in the UK by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

JORGE NAVARRO, *La imagen de ultramar en la medicina valenciana del siglo XIX*, Valencia, Comissió de la Generalitat Valenciana per al Vè Centenari del Descobriment d'Amèrica, 1990, pp. 136, (paperback, 84-7890-294-5).

CYNTHIA O'NEILL, *A picture of health: hospitals and nursing on old picture postcards*, (22 Church Meadow) Milton-under-Wychwood, (Oxon OX7 6JG), Meadow Book, 1990, pp. 106, illus., £7.65 incl. postage from Mrs O'Neill (0-9515655-0-8).