

## Book Notices

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INNES H. PEARSE and LUCY H. CROCKER, *The Peckham experiment. A study in the living structure of society*, reprint of 1943 ed., with new introduction by Barbara Griggs, Edinburgh and London, Scottish Academic Press, 1985, 8vo, pp. xxx 333, illus., £5.00 (paperback).

The Peckham Centre was set up by George Scott Williamson and Innes Pearse as an independent research experiment to test their ideas regarding the nature of health and the conditions necessary for its maintenance. The Centre functioned as a family club with two conditions for membership: that each family paid a weekly subscription, and that all family members subjected themselves to periodic "health overhauls". The purpose-built Centre opened in 1935 and provided the members with access to a swimming-pool and all sorts of sports activities, including roller skating and badminton. Only the top part of the building was given over to consulting rooms. Indeed, towards the end of the experiment, the Centre opened an elementary school for children and offered fresh produce for sale from its farm in Kent.

*The Peckham experiment* is the most important record of the Centre's philosophy and work, written in a straightforward manner by Pearse and Crocker, who was one of the most valued staff members at the Centre. (Later attempts to explain the Centre's work by Williamson became hopelessly convoluted.) The experiment still attracts considerable attention from those who wish that we could achieve more dynamic and genuinely interactive methods of health education and health care. From the consumers' point of view, the Centre provided high-quality care and an active community life. But Williamson and Pearse's own ambitions went far beyond what appeared to the casual observer to be an unusually well-equipped community centre with the benefit of check-ups thrown in. They believed that they were attempting a restructuring of medical knowledge and a reordering of the health services. They liked to call themselves biologists; as Pearse and Crocker explain, their intention was to observe and facilitate the healthy functioning of the human organism within the "free environment" of the Centre.

Williamson and Pearse emphasized their idea that the maintenance of health required an entirely different approach to the cure of sickness. Some of their ideas will strike any reader today as far-fetched, but the power of the book lies in the way it demonstrates how complete a rethinking has to take place if the focus of concern in terms of philosophy and practice is to be health rather than disease. For historians, it also provides one of the few thoroughgoing attempts in the recent past to reconceptualize medicine and medical care, which is all the more interesting when it is compared with the generally defensive tone of the medical profession in the 1930s. Ironically, no place was found for the Centre within the National Health Service, and it closed in 1951.

History of the Health Sciences Library and Museum, University of Cincinnati, *Daniel Drake M. D. Frontiersman of the mind*, Cincinnati, Ohio, Crossroads Book, 1985, pp. xxviii, 60, illus., [no price stated].

To commemorate the bicentennial of the birth of the American physician Daniel Drake, the University of Cincinnati Medical Center has presented in this volume three of his hitherto unpublished addresses. These three papers—which Drake delivered during the second quarter of the nineteenth century to his medical classes in the frontier towns of Cincinnati, Louisville, and Lexington—are typical of the western American medical rhetoric that set forward the cultural role of the physician in a new society. In a democratic society, Drake argued, the physician was a natural guardian of culture, and he urged on students the civic entrepreneurship that was so prominent in his own career. The volume may do real service by strongly underscoring the theme of medicine as a civilizing force on the western frontier and thereby drawing attention to a theme that deserves closer scrutiny from historians.

JOHN R. MILLBURN, *Benjamin Martin, author, instrument-maker, and 'country showman'*, supplement, London, Vade-Mecum Press, 1986, 8vo, pp. 63, illus., £5.95 (paperback).

John Millburn's excellent biography of the eighteenth-century instrument-maker and popular lecturer, Benjamin Martin, was published in 1976 (reviewed in *Med. Hist.*, 1978, 22: 111). Since

then, Millburn has amassed more information on Martin's life, and this supplement contains his findings. It includes an advertisement for Martin's lectures in Bristol in 1743, and other advertisements from various London papers for his books and instruments. In addition, it details some of the users of Martin's instruments, including Joseph Priestley and Gilbert White. Finally, there are various miscellaneous extras, all of which minutiae illuminate the darker corners of the eighteenth-century natural philosophy business. This nicely produced supplement is a worthy addition to a valuable biography.

JOHN C. GUNN, *Gunn's domestic medicine*, a facsimile of the 1st ed. with introduction by Charles E. Rosenberg, Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1986, 8vo, pp. xxi, 440 [facsimile], [no price stated], (paperback).

*Gunn's domestic medicine* was the "Buchan" of the American frontier. John Gunn was a Knoxville practitioner whose guide to medical self-help was first published in 1830. By 1840, it had gone through at least nineteen further printings. Gunn's book is extremely interesting, since, on the one hand, it brought professional medical knowledge to the domestic practice of medicine, yet, on the other, it shared its assumptions about the body and disease with the folk knowledge of its readers. All this is spelled out in detail in Charles Rosenberg's lucid and illuminating introduction. This facsimile of the first edition should prove an invaluable text to anyone teaching the history of nineteenth-century American medicine.

JOHN A. C. GREPPIN (editor), *The Greek-Armenian dictionary to Galen*, Delmar, NY, Caravan Books, 1985, 8vo, pp. 191, [no price stated].

From well before 1304, the date of Yerevan MS. 4149, until the end of the eighteenth century, Armenian scribes copied out a pharmaceutical dictionary associated with the name of Galen. Of its 575 entries, more than 400 are Greek words written in Armenian script and then glossed in Armenian, and a further forty-five are Arabic words similarly treated. When the whole book was written is unclear. The Arabic is unlikely to predate 870, but the Greek could go back to the sixth century. Although many of the terms are found in Galen's *On the properties of simples*, the overlap is not complete, and it would be unwise to posit from this an early Armenian version of that text. As with the Greek tradition of Dioscorides, this dictionary has had various redactions before reaching its present state, which may have only a very indirect relationship with any genuine work of Galen. But, at worst, it testifies to that physician's influence beyond the Byzantine Empire, and, at best, it may encourage further searches for genuine Galenic material in Armenian translation.

FRANCISCUS JOSEPH MARIA SCHMIDT, *Die Entwicklung der Irrenpflege in den Niederlanden. Vom Tollhaus bis zur gesetzlich anerkannten Irrenanstalt*, Herzogenrath, Verlag Murken-Altrogge, 1986, 8vo, pp. 395, DM.28.00 (paperback).

With undeniable personal involvement in the subject, the octogenarian psychiatrist Schmidt set himself the task of tackling the complex issue of the changes in Dutch mental health care in the first four decades of the nineteenth century, leading up to the 1841 Lunacy Act. The result: a detailed, but rather internalist account of the development of the asylum, from madhouse (where burghers at fairs or religious holidays could pay admission to watch the "wild ones") via "homely" settings to medical institutions, illustrated by the development in, among others, the Utrecht-based Willem Arntsz-House. The accompanying shifts in medical rhetoric, with increasing emphasis on the doctor's role in certification regulations, and on the staff of asylums, are demonstrated in the abundant quotations from medical statements and travel accounts of (foreign) medical visitors. An attempt at comparing Dutch with other European situations is made.

The personal role of medical reformers like J. L. C. Schroeder van der Kolk, J. P. Heije, and J. Guislain is underlined, and attention given to their treatises, which had an impact on subsequent changes in Lunacy laws and management of asylums. A special chapter is devoted to contemporary legal developments in Germany, England, and France, besides the Dutch debates, and in this context the Dutch 1841 Lunacy Act is fully quoted.

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The book lacks a more general historical analysis and does not treat explicitly currently popular questions like the position of the mentally ill, the changing concepts of madness, or medical interests other than humanitarian, although many of these topics are implicit in the quotations offered. The richness in detail, however, will definitely open up further avenues of research

G. D. SINGHAL, S. N. TRIPATHI, and G. N. CHATURVEDI, *Fundamental and plastic surgery considerations in ancient Indian surgery (based on chapters 1–27 of sūtra-sthāna of Suśruta samhitā)*, Varanasi, Singhal Publications, 1981, 8vo, pp. liv, 527, [no price stated].

G. D. SINGHAL and K. C. CHUNEKAR, *Pharmaceutical considerations in ancient Indian surgery (based on chapters 28–46 of sūtra-sthāna of Suśruta samhitā)*, Varanasi, Singhal Publications, 1982, 8vo, pp. xli, 475, [no price stated].

The standard complete English translation of the Sanskrit medical classic the *Suśrutasaṃhitā*, ‘Suśruta’s compendium’, is that of Kaviraj Kunjalal Bhishagratna, originally published in Calcutta in 1918, and since reprinted in 1963 and 1981. This is in no way a philological translation, and yet it serves those who cannot read Sanskrit by giving a general idea of what is in the text. An accurate translation made according to principles of philology and higher criticism is still very much a desideratum but cannot properly be undertaken until the underlying Sanskrit text itself has been critically edited. The volumes here noticed are the first in a projected series of ten volumes which will present the Sanskrit text of the *Suśrutasaṃhitā*, following the 1915 Nirṇayasāgara Press edition by Yādava Trivikramācārya, together with a new translation and annotations. An eleventh volume will index the simples mentioned in the text, and a twelfth volume will be a synopsis of the whole. The emphasis on “ancient Indian surgery” in the titles of these volumes should not mislead the reader into thinking that only the surgical chapters of Suśruta are covered: the whole work is meant. The project is a team effort, and one of its chief aims is to translate the Sanskrit using modern medical terminology.

ROBIN E. RIDER and HENRY E. LOWOOD, *Guide to sources in Northern California for history of science and technology*, Berkeley, Office for History of Science and Technology, University of California, 1985, 8vo, pp. iv, 194, illus, \$12.00 (paperback).

This cheap and useful guide was produced in conjunction with the XVII International Congress of History of Science held at Berkeley in 1985. It gives outline descriptions of the science and technology manuscript collections at nineteen selected institutions in northern California. Within each institutional entry collections are arranged alphabetically with some helpful cross-referencing, complemented with a full subject and name index. Inevitably, certain large bodies (such as the California Academy of Sciences) merit only brief entries, either because so much is of relevance that further enquiry elsewhere is more appropriate, or perhaps because holdings are largely uncatalogued. The guide will be invaluable as an easily usable reference work and as a stimulating reminder of the wealth and variety of archives and manuscripts in the area.

J. B. LYONS, *Scholar and sceptic. The career of James Henry MD, 1798–1876*, Dublin, Glendale Press, 1985, 8vo, pp. 88, illus., £9.00.

A better classical scholar than a physician, a better pamphleteer than a poet, James Henry is little remembered today. This charming biography, illustrated with many extracts from Henry’s autobiographical reminiscences in both prose and verse, fittingly describes the many and varied activities of one of Ireland’s most remarkable medical characters.

## ADDENDUM

CLAUDE BERNARD, *Memoir on the pancreas . . .*, London, Academic Press, 1985 (reviewed in *Med. Hist.*, 1986, 30: 479–480). The price of this book is £36.00.