

Book Reviews

DAVIDA RUBIN (comp.), *Sir Kenelm Digby F.R.S. (1603–1665): a bibliography based on the collection of K. Garth Huston, Sr., M.D.*, San Francisco, Jeremy Norman, 1991, pp. xvi, 130, illus., \$95.00 (0–930405–29–3).

Having forgiven his significant contribution to quackery—the promotion of an infamous “powder of sympathy” that healed without coming into contact with the wound—historians in this century have worked successfully to establish Sir Kenelm Digby as one of the great early experimental philosophers. His reputation is now based primarily on his *Two treatises* (1644), in which an early defence of Harvey and revolutionary accounts of the nervous system and epigenesis are found in a work credited with introducing continental atomistic theories into England. He also wrote extensively on other subjects, including politics, literature, natural history and religion.

Tracking down nearly 150 editions of Digby’s twenty or so books, sometimes anonymous, sometimes published abroad, cannot have been an easy task, and the present bibliography is certainly the fullest and most detailed record of the *oeuvre* that has hitherto appeared. By the evidence presented in it, one work traditionally ascribed to Sir Kenelm, *The royall apologie* (1648), may with more reason be attributed to his brother George Digby (1612–1677). Most of the entries give adequate details of each book’s title, imprint, collation and pagination; significant variants have been noted; and general introductions to each title neatly summarize the nature and status of its contents.

Sadly, however, the end product is marred by two facts that should have been made explicit in the title. Firstly, the Californian anaesthesiologist Kenneth Garth Huston (1926–1987) was, naturally enough, unable to acquire all the books by, about, or relating to the object of his enthusiasm. Instead of using his collection as an unparalleled opportunity for further research, the editor takes only brief notice of editions not in Dr Huston’s library, and leaves some sections (on manuscript sources, and Digby’s own library, for example) manifestly incomplete. This fault springs no doubt from the other great disappointment facing the reader who expects a straight work of scholarship, namely that the bibliography is actually a disguised sales catalogue, in which many of the notes are put to the service of selling Dr Huston’s Digby collection in individual lots (prices available on request).

Gerald Beasley, Wellcome Institute Library

JANET GOLDEN and CHARLES E. ROSENBERG, *Pictures of health: a photographic history of health care in Philadelphia 1860–1945*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991, pp. xxix, 197, illus., \$49.95 (0–8122–8237–X), \$29.95 (paperback, 0–8122–1311–4).

Historians of American medicine have long acknowledged the standing of the University of Pennsylvania as the pre-eminent centre of medical education in the United States at least until the early years of the twentieth century. Yet health care in Philadelphia has never been exclusively the story of achievements at Penn; many other institutions, including Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia General Hospital, Medical College of Pennsylvania, Hahnemann Medical College, and Pennsylvania Hospital, have all made their distinctive contribution to the city’s unrivalled medical history.

Indeed, the most salient feature of *Pictures of health* is the institutional diversity displayed in myriad illustrations of nursing schools, laboratories, hospital wards, dispensaries, surgical clinics, maternity wards, bath houses, first aid rooms, mental asylums, and pharmacies. Formal portraits of prominent physicians are eschewed in favour of photographs of public health employees bustling about the slums, sanitation workers engaged in clean-up campaigns, tuberculosis patients clustered forlornly in deck chairs, tremulous children awaiting diphtheria immunization, and inquisitive medical students dissecting grisly corpses.

The authors of this fascinating book, in a series of percipient essays, demonstrate that the illustrations, despite their apparent informality, carried, nevertheless, a host of implied meanings. Cultural assumptions, as, for example, the segregation of blacks and women in medical practice and training, are embedded in photograph after photograph; structured