

Book Notices

JOACHIM RITTER and KARLFRIED GRÜNDER, *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Bd 7, P-Q, Basle, Schwabe, 1989, 4to, pp. 933, SFr 248.00, DM 298.00.

This great work continues at a stately pace (see *Medical History*, 1981, 25: 337–8, and 1985, 29: 223). Medical historians should be aware of its discussions of such words as “pathic” and “pathology” as well as the five hundred columns devoted to the ramifications of “psych-” (not forgetting “panpsychism”, “parapsychology”, and “psychophysical parallelism”). The articles are at times dissertations in themselves, and can serve as excellent starting points for semantic investigation. One may regret, however, that there is no room in the survey of the varied meanings of “Polizei” for the concept of “medical police”, made famous by the work of Johann Peter Frank. In exchange, one may plunge into the dizzy whirl of pathosophy and pathodicy, and encounter the Pharisees, the Pneumaticists, and the Platonists, as well as a history of philosophy, before reaching the quintessence and knowledge “*quoad nos*”.

B. BARRY LEVY, *Planets, potions and parchments: scientifica Hebraica from the Dead Sea Scrolls to the eighteenth century*, Montreal and Kingston, McGill-Queen’s University Press for the Jewish Public Library, 1990, 4to, pp. xii, 140, illus., £28.45 (paperback).

To celebrate its seventy-fifth birthday, the Jewish Public Library of Montreal held an exhibition of scientific books and objects. This exhibition catalogue amply demonstrates the riches of the Jewish scientific traditions, in medicine, astronomy, geography, botany, and the like, from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment. It is rightly inclusive in scope; amulets and magical prescriptions accompany learned anatomical disquisitions, ritual calendars complex planetary calculations. Celebrated scholars like Maimonides, Spinoza, and Tobias Cohn stand alongside the obscure Elhanan Carmi. The catalogue itself is both informative and generally accurate. Latin causes difficulties in the title of nos. 152 and 87; and there are problems with cross-references on pp. 99 (= no. 133?), 102 (= no. 149), and, more seriously, pp. 63 and 30, where the works cited do not appear to have formed part of the exhibition. Chairomancy (no. 131) is, alas, not what it might seem, and the discussion of Farissol (no. 168) inadvertently conveys a new sort of immortality on this sage.

HILARY MARLAND, *Doncaster Dispensary 1792–1867: sickness, charity and society*, Doncaster Library Service Occasional Paper 3, 4to, pp. vi, 102, illus., £3.50. Inquiries to the Chief Librarian, Central Library, Waterdale, Doncaster DN1 3JE.

The dispensary movement started in 1770 in London and spread quickly to the provinces. One such dispensary was in Doncaster, an important regional market town in south Yorkshire. Hilary Marland has provided a comprehensive account of the rise and decline of the Doncaster Dispensary from its foundation in 1792 to its amalgamation with the Doncaster Infirmary in 1867. The history of the dispensary is set against those of the town itself, the wider dispensary movement, contemporary medical care and disease patterns, contributions to public health, and its own continual struggle to balance income and expenditure.

The comprehensive approach is this short monograph’s strength. But it might have been set more in the context of other Doncaster medical-care purveyors—sick clubs and friendly societies—when considering the dispensary’s success rate (pp. 60–1) and the amalgamation in 1867. Overall, this is a valuable contribution to the history of dispensaries and to local history. Dispensaries reflected their communities.

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WILLIAM BEAUMONT, *Experiments and observations on the gastric juice and the physiology of digestion*, facs. of 1st ed. (1833), Abingdon, Oxford Historical Books, 1989, 8vo, pp. 280, illus., £21.50.

William Beaumont's treatise on digestion holds a deservedly classic status; it is a piece of early medical Americana, tells a story full of human interest, and presents important observations. Whether this bald facsimile edition has many commercial prospects remains to be seen, since another facsimile of the first edition, initially published in 1929 and reprinted in 1941 and 1959, and containing a biographical introduction by Sir William Osler, is still commonly to be found in antiquarian booksellers' catalogues.

JOHN CRAMMER, *Asylum history: Buckinghamshire County Pauper Lunatic Asylum-St John's*, London, Gaskell (an imprint of the Royal College of Psychiatrists), 1990, 8vo, pp. xi, 195, illus., £10.00 (paperback).

The Buckinghamshire County Pauper Lunatic Asylum survived a ratepayers' revolt, headed by Benjamin Disraeli, to open in 1853; it will close this year (1991). John Crammer's Preface to his history of what is now St John's Hospital explains that he wished to add some shadings of relief to what he sees as the monolithic accounts of English nineteenth-century asylums offered, on the one hand, by "medical men with a fondness for anecdote, a reverence for pioneers, and a belief in 'progress'" and on the other by Andrew Scull and other antipsychiatric, "non-medical sociologists and social historians". The latter phalanx may not exist (see Roy Porter's review in *Med. Hist.*, 1991, 35: 126–7), but in combating it Crammer usefully emphasizes the heterogeneity of the asylum's population and, by extension, the complexity of its functioning within the community. And he does record false starts and criminal failures—most notably, the deaths of 257 (out of 763) inmates in 1918, a mortality rate largely attributable to malnutrition. This book may be strongly recommended for other virtues not usual to hospital histories. Its readability is enhanced by a thematic, as opposed to strictly chronological organization; non-local readers will learn how Buckinghamshire's geography and economy (particularly in relation to nearby London) affected the asylum's population; it pays careful attention to the physical form and services of the buildings; and it maintains as much of an historical distance as possible from recent and future events.

DAN E. BEAUCHAMP, *The health of the republic: epidemics, medicine, and moralism as challenges to democracy*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1989, 8vo, pp. xiv, 298, \$29.95.

Beauchamp argues for the political justice of collective provision of "public health" for the United States. He joins the current debate on "distributive social justice", engaged in by political philosophers such as John Rawls, Michael Walzer, and Robert Bellah, to claim that health is a primary social good which must be provided according to the criterion of "republican equality", rather than being reified into a commodity determined by market values. Free-market medicine has sought "equity" in the distribution of health care by creating "medical money", creditors, debtors, and charity, thereby leading to "medical inflation". By contrast Beauchamp roots his concept of republican equality in the tradition of a commonwealth of "community possession of shared institutions", deriving from the Founding Fathers and subsequently expressed in the politics of the Progressive Era, the New Deal and the Great Society. His model for communal provision is a democratic *public health* system designed to protect civil liberties by guarding against the imperialism of moral majorities, or minorities such as the New Temperance Movement. Beauchamp's elaborate philosophical system may seem superfluous to Europeans served largely by government planned health systems. But American public health advocates must compete against entrenched ideologies in a complex, pluralistic political structure. His book is, therefore, a necessary and eloquent contribution to US health analysis.

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ROBERT H. BLANK, *Life, death, and public policy*, DeKalb, Illinois, Northern Illinois University Press, 1988, 8vo, pp. x, 177, £20.25, £6.80 (paper).

Blank explores the implications of modern biological technologies for public policy. His first demand is for public policy to be formulated in order to replace the current recourse to court adjudication for resolving ethical conflicts created by the possibilities of genetic selection, independent foetal existence, organ transplantation, and invincible life prolongation. Legal courts, Blank claims, cannot be responsible for what must be democratic political decisions and judges, no matter how conscientious, cannot possibly cope with the level of technical sophistication involved. The democratic system must develop a means for the formulation of policies that represent all interests adequately. This is because, he suggests, the challenges which advanced medical technologies pose to our conventional concepts of life, death and, indeed, "humanhood" are linked not only to moral or religious ethics concerning individual human rights, but to much broader economic and political questions of equity and justice in health provision, such as profit-making versus rationing. His book is a fascinating and marvellously informative survey of the current hot debates on the relationship of US health policy to biomedical ethics.

MARILYN McADAMS SIBLEY, *The Methodist Hospital of Houston: serving the world*, Austin, The Texas State Historical Association, 1989, 8vo, pp. x, 241, illus., \$19.95.

Until the middle of the twentieth century, Texans could and did pride themselves on a lot, but not on their medicine. A great deal of expansion of their self-esteem has to do with Michael Ellis DeBakey, the first of the surgical superstars, who joined Baylor University's College of Medicine in 1948. Oil and cotton money enabled the Methodist Hospital, established in the aftermath of the great influenza epidemic, to move to the new Texas Medical Center in 1951; and to affiliate with then-Baptist Baylor. DeBakey's reputation as a cardiovascular surgeon helped to put the hospital in the black as early as 1954, when Methodist averaged a very high 91 per cent occupancy rate; the Duke of Windsor came in 1964 because he had been told that DeBakey was the best. This well-written account of how a small denominational hospital came to require its own Marriott Hotel for the convenience of patients' families lacks the racy detail about patients and doctors found in Thomas Thompson's *Hearts* (1971), about DeBakey's celebrated rivalry with Denton Cooley. But it usefully reminds us how the lush proliferation of Protestant denominations shaped, and still shape, the American hospital landscape. And stories of very large sums of money changing hands have a distinctive charm. When Mrs Fordren was faced with a failure of nerve on the part of her fellow board-members, she announced that they would have 300 beds or they would do it without her millions. "We just sat there, kinda stunned, blinking like bullfrogs in a hailstorm", reported one magnate about this meeting. Would that it were possible to have such records from older hospitals' histories.

MARIANNE GOSZTONYI AINLEY (ed.), *Despite the odds: essays on Canadian women and science*, Montreal, Véhicule Press, 1990, 8vo, pp. 452, illus., \$19.95, in Canada Can. \$19.95 (paperback).

Essay collections are notoriously difficult to review. It is therefore a pleasure to notice one whose editor makes no pretence at having aspired to comprehensiveness or coherence, but who simply thought it time to jump in at the deep end and collect twenty-four well-documented articles, of which eight have been published before, plus a select bibliography, for the use of students, teachers, and others who might want to pursue a brand-new area within the history of Canadian science. "Science" is defined broadly, and the essays include studies of female nineteenth-century commercial photographers, and twentieth-century advertisers of domestic technology, as well as physicists, mathematicians, pharmacists, gerontologists, and horticulturalists. Non-Canadians will be struck by the ways in which many women's careers were affected by the necessity of adapting to a highly centralized civil service, government bodies whose task it was to identify and exploit the country's enormous wealth of natural resources.

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This could work both ways—the Department of Agriculture was happy to employ female mycologists and plant pathologists in the 1920s, for example: these were crucial disciplines without many practitioners. On the other hand, the Fisheries Research Board and the Geological Survey hesitated for a long time to employ women in positions that required work under difficult and remote field conditions. The story of three sociologists offers a particularly chilling account of how a woman might feel that merely doing her job well and letting “accidental connections and friendly interventions determine the course of my life as a sociologist” (Helen Hughes) would in time be rewarded with a cumulative and coherent body of work—and be wrong.

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.)

WERNER GERABEK, *Naturphilosophie und Dichtung bei Jean Paul: das Problem des *Commercium mentis et corporis**, Stuttgarter Arbeiten zur Germanistik no. 202, Stuttgart, Hans-Dieter Heinz, 1988, 8vo, pp. 313, illus., DM 43.00.

FRANÇOIS AUGUSTE GYSIN, *Schaffhauser Psychiatrie im 19. Jahrhundert und die Entstehung der Kantonalen Irrenanstalt Breitenau*, Zürcher Medizingeschichtliche Abhandlungen 218, Zurich, Juris, 1990, 8vo, pp. 140, Sfr. 35.00 (paperback).

HILDEGARD HUGENTOBLER-SCHWAGER, *Der Anthropologe Rudolf Martin (1864–1925)*, Zürcher Medizingeschichtliche Abhandlungen 216, Zurich, Juris, 1990, 8vo, pp. 134, Sfr. 34.00 (paperback).

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

ALFRED SCHETT, *Vom Helmholtz-Augenspiegel zur Funduskamera: Ophthalmoskope und verwandte Instrumente des Medizinhistorischen Museums der Universität Zürich*, Gesnerus Supplement 41, Aarau, Sauerländer, 1990, 8vo, pp. 82, illus., SFr. 42.00, DM 48.00, (paperback).

SIGI SCHMID, *Der Kieferchirurg Pierre Schmuziger (1894–1971)*, Zürcher Medizingeschichtliche Abhandlungen 215, Zurich, Juris, 1990, 8vo, pp. 80, Sfr. 20.00 (paperback).

WILLIAM J. SCHULL, *Song among the ruins*, Cambridge, Mass. and London, Harvard University Press, 1990, 8vo, pp. x, 307, illus., \$25.00, £19.95.

URS PETER WEILENMANN, *Der Anthropologe Otto Schlaginhaufen (1879–1973)*, Zürcher Medizingeschichtliche Abhandlungen 217, Zurich, Juris, 1990, 8vo, pp. 79, illus., Sfr. 20.00 (paperback).