

Book Reviews

American Medicine and the Public Interest, by ROSEMARY STEVENS, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1971, pp. xiii, 572, £9.00.

Rosemary Stevens has delineated the effect on medicine of the formation of professional societies representing the specialties into which it became divided in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Its introductory section, an examination of professionalization from colonial times to 1900, represents essentially a recapitulation of events largely from secondary sources with no new insights gained from juxtaposing the material. Similarly, Part V (the last 115 pages), an account of national health legislation in the 1950s and 60s, dealing with the passage and results of Medicare and Medicaid and the role of the federal government in health care, said little new and seemed unintegrated into the body of the book. What then of its middle? Here, Professor Stevens makes an original contribution to the literature and gives us the best account to date of the complicated rise of specialty boards in America. Analysed well is the role of medical schools and professional societies in deciding educational and manpower issues, the emasculation of general practitioners in the face of the specialist onslaught and the efforts of the former to recover through an academy and specialty boards of its own. She provides enlightening commentary on the effect of the open versus closed staff system of American hospitals on medical practice. In England, the closed system that barred generalists from hospitals and fostered a more decentralized system; in America the open system tended to centralize care in hospitals by allowing physicians of all kinds to use its facilities.

Interesting too are her discussions of the forces leading to the creation of internships and residencies, the relationships of non-physician health professionals to the doctor, and the circumstances that determined the number of students admitted to medical schools during the twentieth century and its consequences. The American Medical Association's role in professionalization, its relationship to the specialty societies and medical schools also is handled adroitly. Her frequent comparison between the developments in English and American medical systems proved enlightening.

This middle section, and the book in general, represents medicine seen from one aspect of its development—its professionalization through societies. It does not provide discussion of the technological and clinical factors accompanying and causing professionalization. Omitted too is any sustained discussion of the effect of social philosophies and movements, such as Progressivism or New Deal ideology in the organization of medicine. These limitations notwithstanding I recommend this book as a fine addition to the library of medical and general historians, and those interested in public policy.

Catalogue of Medical Books in Manchester University Library, 1480–1700, by ETHEL M. PARKINSON and AUDREY E. LUMB, Manchester University Press, 1972, pp. vii, 399, £15.00

Those who are concerned with the older medical literature will be familiar with the catalogue of the library of the Manchester Medical Society published in 1890, and will be aware that in its 1,300 pages are to be found entries for some nineteenth-century foreign works not otherwise to be found in England. The Society's collection

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of medical literature of earlier centuries is also notable and represents a good working library of historical texts for the many physicians in the Manchester area who are interested in the history of medicine. It was deposited in Manchester University as long ago as 1870 although it was only in 1930 that it was definitely merged with the university's medical library. The plan for a bibliographical catalogue of the whole collection on modern lines was for long a dream of the late George Wilson, the librarian who was associated with it for more than fifty years, and it is pleasing to see that this first instalment of its realization is dedicated to his memory.

The catalogue is in every way an excellent achievement and Mrs. Parkinson is to be congratulated for seeing it through to a successful conclusion. It contains the carefully prepared descriptions of nearly 3,000 books printed before 1701, with all the requisite cross-references and analytical entries for composite works. To the indexes of printers and places now usually found in such a work is added a brief subject index which will be a boon to researchers. If some of the important 'firsts' are not to be found here (e.g. Harvey, Vesalius), there is a Geminus which is much rarer than either and many other unusual items, such as the very rare *Defense of Tobacco* (1602) illustrated in the frontispiece. In fact, the inclusion in this catalogue of the medical books in the John Rylands Library in Manchester would have supplied all the leading landmarks of early medicine and it is good to see that the Rylands holdings are to be incorporated in a subsequent volume. Together with the library of the neighbouring Liverpool Medical Institution, of which a catalogue was published in 1968, and the historical texts in the Liverpool University Library, these collections offer a wealth of primary sources for all those in the north-west who are interested in the history of medicine. These are now increasing in number and it is hoped that before long additional incentive will be given to their efforts by the establishment of a department in one of the university medical schools.

The production of this catalogue is a credit to the University Press and its modest price puts it within the reach of most medical libraries.

Letter from G. Bidloo to Antony van Leeuwenhoek (facsimile of the first Dutch edition, Delft, 1698), ed. by J. JANSEN, Nieuwkoop, B. De Graaf, 1972, pp. 61 + 34 (facsimile), Dfl. 56.

While the popular expression "good things come in small packages" could scarcely be proven statistically, it comes forcibly to mind when we see this latest in the series, Dutch Classics in History of Science. The editors of this series have now made available an important document, valuable in the history of biology, of medicine, and of scientific methodology. It can also serve as a contribution to the history of human error, a branch of knowledge that should take a significant place alongside all the others.

Govert Bidloo (1649–1713), anatomist and surgeon, had made microscopic observations on certain animalcules and ova found in the bile passages, and now identified as *F. hepatica*. He was not the first to note the parasites, for his study contains abundant references to the work of predecessors, but he made surprisingly accurate descriptions and references (along with many errors). He disclosed his findings and conclusions in a letter to Leeuwenhoek.