

exemplificatory, and by concentrating on what is available close at hand, they are inviting others in France to follow them. "Go and do thou likewise" could well be the book's motto, and it will be interesting to see how many adopt it. Even those who consider themselves already sufficiently expert not to require basic instruction should not neglect some of its admonitions, and the traveller to Paris who has read this book will arrive with a heightened appreciation of what might be found in some of its institutions, whether hospitals, libraries, or picture galleries.

Vivian Nutton, Wellcome Institute

Desmond King-Hele, *A concordance to Erasmus Darwin's poem 'The Botanic Garden'*, London, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1994, pp. ix, 148, £8.00 (1-869835-50-6). Orders to Ms Tracy Tillotson, The Library, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BE.

It is curious that concordances are so little sung in the history of medicine, since they are often the first thing we turn to when technical or stylistic difficulties become a problem. Shakespeare, Milton and Dickens have been available in this format for decades; and more recently, selected texts of Charles Darwin's too. Only through these means can we start making substantive remarks about earlier usage of (say) the verb evolve or the noun science; and provide firm evidence for any verbal echoes bouncing from one writer through the work of others. Moreover, the rearrangement can be riveting. An author's mental range—or lack of it—is sharply revealed. Linguistic preferences and peccadilloes are ruthlessly exposed. In an odd sort of way, the writer's real bones emerge more clearly when stripped of the textual coherence which normally clothes them.

Desmond King-Hele gives us a fine example of this kind of dedicated scholarly dissection

with his exemplary concordance to Erasmus Darwin's *Botanic garden* (1791). One of the most famous of Enlightenment poems, Dr Darwin's double-hander comprised both *The loves of the plants* ("the most delicious poem on earth" breathed Horace Walpole), in which Linnaeus' classification scheme for plants was jauntily personified and a great deal was said about the sexual behaviour of humans, and the *Economy of vegetation*, a rousing evolutionary epic, trumpeting end-of-the-century advances in science, technology, medicine and human culture, with a central message of self-development and progress for all.

Over the years, King-Hele has fully demonstrated the significance of this larger-than-life figure in the context of the industrializing, progressive, innovative Midlands; and has moved from Darwin's developmental, evolutionary and medical ideas to discuss the influence of his poems on figures as diverse as Coleridge, Wordsworth and Shelley in *Erasmus Darwin and the Romantic poets*. The concordance emerges out of a wish to show that many of the Romantic poets were as indebted to Darwin's actual words as to his ideas. Yet the aim has expanded to reveal Darwin's deft touch with then contemporary science and medicine; his considerable verbal ingenuity; and the large number of words or usages that he coined. Every entry is therefore linked back to any relevant citation in the *OED*. Some 65 words from the *Botanic garden* are marked as the earliest known example cited in the *OED* (e.g., glow-fly, inemulous, lazuli, placental, plastic). A further 85 predate anything in the *OED* (e.g., diamond-beetle, gauzy, gigantic, insurgent, iridescent, myriad, phosphoric, promiscuous, scintillating). Darwin was apparently one of the first to use "oxygene" from French chemistry, admittedly only once compared to four phlogistons in the *Economy of vegetation*, though twice more in his lengthy non-poetic, explanatory footnotes. King-Hele suggests that the poem did a great deal to popularize the term. He was also the first to use the expression "nitrous gas" (*Economy of vegetation* IV, 171), and "tissue" in the biomedical sense.

Book Reviews

Lists of these coinages have been separately published by King-Hele but it is good to have them spelled out here in conjunction with the detailed criteria involved. No one could know more about the doctor's originality, sources and impact than King-Hele; and the concordance must surely stand as a triumph of meticulous expertise. I would imagine it was compiled without a computer—King-Hele's easy intimacy with his 5,000 words speaks instead of a long and personal relationship. The volume offers an entirely auspicious start to the Occasional Publications series begun by the Wellcome Institute, from whose collections, one supposes, the very beautiful cover also derives.

Janet Browne, Wellcome Institute

Patricia Spain Ward, *Simon Baruch: rebel in the ranks of medicine, 1840–1921*, History of American Science and Technology series, Tuscaloosa and London, University of Alabama Press, 1994, pp. xiv, 399, illus., £44.95 (0–8173–0589–0).

Biography as an art form that documents the life and times of one figure, is, unfortunately, a rarely used tool of the academic historian. Indeed, the eminent medical historian, Erwin H Ackerknecht, once complained "Every biography disfigures history". To some extent, of course, this is true. Biographers tend to be attracted more towards exceptional figures than to representative ones. Individual stories are frequently different from group experiences. On the other hand, as Patricia Spain Ward shows in her new biography of Dr Simon Baruch, it is possible to use such an exceptional figure to illustrate an individual life and how American medicine was taught, practised, and advanced from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century.

Applying a chronological approach to the life of Simon Baruch, MD, Ward follows Baruch from his arrival in the United States as

a Polish Jewish immigrant and his initial settlement in South Carolina. There, we learn of the medical training Baruch underwent and his experiences as a surgeon in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. From these events, she continues with young Simon Baruch's career in the rural South and the tempting call to the big city, New York, in 1880, and then with his well-known career as a practitioner, public health activist, and medical journalist for Charles A Dana's famed *New York Sun*. At the same time as covering these individual events, Ward takes great pains to discuss the pivotal changes occurring in medicine during this period as it tried to establish itself along new lines of scientific knowledge, professional requirements, and expectations.

One of Baruch's best-known fields of inquiry and medical activism was his long-held faith in the curative powers of hydrotherapy. Ward assiduously covers Baruch's written work on the topic, his move to make public baths available for New York's urban poor, and his widespread teaching of the medicinal uses of water for health and the prevention of disease during the last decades of the nineteenth century and until his death in 1921. She makes excellent use of the extant documentary materials including a now lost trove of Baruch's personal papers and his extensive published record. As a sign of Ward's sensitivity for her subject, she also explores some of Baruch's personality traits that hindered as well as helped these efforts. For example, in a well-written discussion of Baruch's sometime contentious work to develop the water spa at Saratoga, New York, Ward explains how Baruch's ego may have impeded the cause of hydrotherapy in New York State: "Baruch was apparently so unaware of his ego's intrusion into his work that he failed to anticipate his effect on those he hoped to persuade or instruct" (p. 243).

Baruch's long-held convictions on the power of water or his sometimes conflicting views on germ theory and the use of quarantine may seem antiquated to a modern-day reader but they also represent the complicated mix of ideas and medical epistemologies that