

## Book Reviews

RENATE SMOLLICH, *Der Bisamapfel in Kunst und Wissenschaft*, Stuttgart, Deutscher Apotheker Verlag, 1983, 8vo, pp. x, 342, illus., DM 58.00 (paperback).

As the author has written, it is the modern developments in medicine which have completely displaced the use of pomanders for therapeutic and prophylactic purposes, but at one time the matter was quite otherwise. From at least the days of the Ebers papyrus (c. 1600 BC) perfumes have been used for disinfection, doctors have exercised their wits on the use of scented materials in medicine, and pharmacists on the best method of presentation. Certainly by the Middle Ages, the globular or "apple-shape" was decided upon as one of the most desirable forms, and it was from these that the beautiful pomanders, true works of art, of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are descended.

Of particular interest to pharmacists is the section on ingredients; from 125 recipes, ninety different drugs are listed and the percentage frequency of use given. Rose flowers, red or white, figure in seventy-eight per cent of the formulae, styrax in an overwhelming ninety-nine per cent, and it is not surprising to find ambergris in sixty per cent; equally, to modern tastes, it is unsurprising that *Succus valerianae* is to be found in a mere one per cent. Recipes for pomanders are drawn from many countries: Italy, France, Germany, the Arab lands, and England; including one which ends with the helpful advice, "This, if your breath be not too valiant, will make you smell as sweet as my lady's dog."

The book has 106 illustrations of pomanders, well over half of which, it is interesting to note, are from this country, no less than twenty-six from the Wellcome Museum. Some of the illustrations, however, do not show the fine workmanship of the pomanders as clearly as one would like. In a world of rising costs this is always a problem, but possibly fewer pictures on an art gloss paper would have been better.

There is a fine bibliography, and the book may certainly be taken as a definitive work on pomanders. This book is yet another worthwhile addition to the series "Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Pharmazie" (Bd. 21), which is proving so useful to pharmaceutical historians. One minor defect in this volume is the lack of underlining of even major headings and titles, which does not make for easy identification of particular aspects of the subject.

J. G. L. Burnby  
Wirksworth, Derbyshire

HARRY F. DOWLING, *City hospitals: the undercare of the underprivileged*, Cambridge, Mass., and London, Harvard University Press, 1982, 8vo, pp. x, 245, £18.00.

Hospital history is burgeoning, as medical historians turn to the social history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, studying not only medical ideas but also patients, doctors, nurses, and others involved in health care. Dowling's book forms part of this trend.

Harry F. Dowling has been a physician and an administrator within the American city hospital system. He therefore writes from first-hand experience. His aim is not only to analyse the history of city hospitals, but also to draw attention to what he perceives as a crisis over their continued existence. His close involvement and his overt aim mostly assist rather than hamper the book: his account is well-balanced and informative. He has collected material from Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, but also looked beyond the eastern seaboard to Chicago, New Orleans, and other American cities. He does not only focus on medical aspects but also on the more general context of the hospital – the effects of city and federal government, changes in the medical, nursing, and administrative professions, and shifts in public opinion. He attempts to avoid casting the politicians as villains against whom the heroic doctors fought, although the former do tend to emerge either as the exploiters of hospitals for purposes of patronage, or as their underfunders.

Dowling divides his history into four periods. In the poorhouse period, city hospitals were linked as the poor relation to the almshouse. Between 1860 and 1910, in the practitioner period, the hospital became less of a social and more of a medical institution, with an increase of both doctor and nurse involvement and the evolution of hospital schools of nursing. From Flexner's Report of 1910 until about 1960, the hospitals went through an academic period, with the great