

Book Reviews

JAMES STEPHENS, *Francis Bacon and the style of science*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1975, 8vo, pp. xi, 188, £7.50.

There is a very large literature on Bacon and his proposals for scientific enquiry, but so far no one has studied carefully his style of writing, his method of communicating upon which he laid so much emphasis. Professor Stephens here presents and analyses in four chapters the style that Bacon found appropriate for scholarly and scientific writing. First he deals with the problems facing Bacon, and his debt to Aristotle in creating a neo-Aristotelian stylistic. The second chapter is concerned with his theory of the relation of style to science and how style should not only engage the imagination but should also dispel preconceptions; these ideas can be traced from 1603 to 1623. In the third and fourth chapters Stephens discusses Bacon's own style and the methods he employed, including the intellectual games he played with his readers. By his various techniques he hoped to match the success of poets and prophets.

This scholarly study is by no means complete, but the author hopes it will inspire others to extend it. It certainly will be of great interest to historians of seventeenth-century science and medicine and can be strongly recommended to them.

A. RUPERT HALL and NORMAN SMITH (editors), *History of technology. First annual volume, 1976*, London, Mansell, 1976, 8vo, pp. [3 11.], 186, illus., £9.75.

The editors present this as the first of an on-going series which will give preference to the more general article on the history of technology, whilst not excluding those on technical details. Papers on technology before the Industrial Revolution will be especially welcome, and the editors are soliciting papers from all appropriate quarters.

The first three here were presented at a 1974 symposium, and of the remaining five readers of *Medical History* will find interesting: Dr. R. A. Buchanan on 'The Promethean revolution: science, technology and history', and Maurice Daumas on 'The history of technology: its aims, its limits, its methods' (translated by Professor Hall).

This first volume of a new venture deserves a warm welcome and good wishes for an extended viability. Its aims are praiseworthy and it should complement rather than duplicate the existing serials in the history of technology.

ANN MOZLEY MOYAL (editor), *Scientists in nineteenth century Australia. A documentary history*, Stanmore, N.S.W., Cassell (Australia), 1976, 8vo, pp. [4 11.], 280, [no price stated].

The author has had the interesting idea of collecting together letters written by major nineteenth-century scientists and their distinguished visitors so that together they present a picture of a colonial scientific society and its contacts and collaboration with Western science. Her material is arranged partly by subject: 'The botanical tradition'; 'The bizarre world of natural history'; 'The conquest of the rocks'; 'The progress of geophysics'; 'Evolution'; 'Applied science and technology'. Other chapters deal with 'Patrons and potentates', 'Scientific visitors', 'The scientific community', 'Bones of contention' and 'The rise of the universities'.

Much of the material is published here for the first time and the extracts from the

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letters are introduced, commented on, and annotated by the editor. The result is an excellent picture of a part of nineteenth-century science previously unrevealed. Other one-time colonies could well emulate Dr. Moyal's original and revealing contribution to the history of science. A similar technique could also be applied to the history of medicine.

RONALD L. NUMBERS, *Prophetess of health: a study of Ellen G. White*, New York, Harper & Row, 1976, 8vo, pp. xiv, 271, illus., \$10.00.

Whereas the founder of the Mormons, of the Christian Scientists and of the Jehovah's Witnesses are relatively well known, little has been written on the originator of the other major American religious sect, the Seventh-day Adventists. The author, who is Assistant Professor of the History of Medicine in the University of Wisconsin, now presents an unbiassed account intended for the general reader, of the career of this remarkable person, Mrs. Ellen Gould White (1827–1915), as it concerns her activities as a health reformer and religious leader.

Mrs. White's religious beliefs were based on visions which she claimed were divinely inspired. Whether they were original with her has been contested, but the fact remains that her sect today has over two million believers in various parts of the world.

As a health reformer she advocated vegetarianism, hydropathy, the building of sanatoria, dress reform, sexual advice, and, like many of these multi-faceted, nineteenth-century advocates, she was involved with phrenology. The author deals with each of these themes, setting them accurately in their contemporary setting and using for his material a good deal of previously unavailable sources. He has, therefore, not only given us an excellent account of a fascinating and influential lady, but has also provided an important contribution to lesser-known aspects of the history of nineteenth-century medicine.

MARGERIE G. BLACKIE, *The patient not the cure. The challenge of homoeopathy*, London, Macdonald & Jane's, 1976, 8vo, pp. [7 11.], 247, illus., £4.95.

One usually becomes suspicious when a concept or system has to be defended vociferously against majority opinion. Why, if homeopathy is so successful, do its practitioners have to extol its virtues in the form of a challenge? If it is so much more effective than allopathic medicine, why are we not all purveying it?

Dr. Blackie introduces her book with a long survey of the history of homeopathy. There is a lengthy account of Hahnemann and his early followers, but no attempt is made to understand the historical reasons for their new system. The rest of the book deals with the modern practice of homeopathy, and included are the inevitable case histories demonstrating the inadequacies of allopathic medicine.

What is really needed is an unbiased account perhaps by a medical historian who can survey the evolution of homeopathy in Britain since the late eighteenth century. Why has it survived? What has been the influence of royal patronage? What are the social, rather than the medical, aspects that have allowed it to flourish or which may stunt its growth? Is there anything in it other than great attention to the healing powers of nature and to adequate doctor/patient rapport?