

Book Reviews

instalment of a new classic. This applies equally to the text and to the footnotes which contain vital information on the extensive literature which the author has used in his new and masterly appraisal of savants and facts.

WALTER PAGEL

American Medical Bibliography, 1639–1783, by F. GUERRA, New York, Lathrop Harper (Publication No. 40, Department of History of Science and Medicine, Yale University), 1962, pp. 885, 187 plates, 10 gns.

With the publication of this bibliography Dr. Guerra has achieved miracles of transmutation and compression; he has put into our hands a guide in which we can trace, almost day by day, the medical life of colonial America. Books, broadsides, almanacs, newspapers, periodicals, Congressional and provincial decrees—all are recorded in this one volume-work which also contains a luxuriant growth of indexes, tables and bibliographies.

Bibliographical appraisal of this book is best left to specialist journals. As a historical source, it is doubly effective as a chronicle of events and a stimulator of suggestive lines of research. We can trace, for instance, early signs of American nationalism in the rise of medical botany and the preference for home-grown remedies. In the *Boston Evening-Post* we can read of an Indian herb-cure for cancer; it is also revealing to follow the progress of one Edward Joyce who advertised himself in 1762 as able to cure 'venereal diseases in any stage' and, by 1768, was offering his 'Great American Balsam, made in Long-Island, superior by Trial to any imported from Europe'. Or in search of American eclecticism, there is the case of two negroes emancipated for their discovery of antidotes against the rattlesnake bite, scurvy, yaws and pox. There are amusing side-lights, too, none more so than the incident of the 'Granado-shell' tossed into Cotton Mather's room, bearing the legend: 'Cotton Mather I was once one of your Meeting; But the cursed lye you told of —— you know who; made me leave you, You dog, and Damn you, I will Enoculate you with this, with a Pox to You'.

Eighteenth-century America's greatest contribution to medicine was, as Dr. Guerra himself says, in epidemiology. On the other hand, a count of the number of references to surgery (31) and amputations (5) reveals, where many histories might not, the relative poverty of colonial American experience in this field. The emphasis on hygiene is seen very clearly, from Dr. Guerra's analysis of periodicals, to have owed a great deal to the War of Independence, and to the concurrent popularity of Benjamin Rush's gospel of cleanliness, diet and exercise. During this period hospitals were vitally necessary to both military and civilians, the interests of the one coinciding with those of the other.

Dr. Guerra conceived and carried through his work on a grand scale, as befits a grand theme; the high standard of printing and binding only add to the book's distinction.

E. GASKELL

Scientific Books, Libraries and Collectors, by JOHN L. THORNTON and R. I. J. TULLY, 2nd revised edition, London, The Library Association, 1962, pp. 406, illus, 68s. (51s. to members of the L.A.)

Historians of science and librarians alike will welcome the reappearance in print of this valuable work. Picking one's way through the vast primary and secondary literature of past science, to present a coherent and compact account, is no mean achievement. In many ways it is a more demanding task than to seek the illusory goal of encyclopaedic comprehensiveness. At every stage the authors had to evaluate