

Book Notices

Danielle Gourevitch, *La Mission de Charles Daremberg en Italie (1849–1850)*, Mémoires et Documents sur Rome et l'Italie Méridionale No. 5, Naples, Centre Jean Bérard, 1994, pp. 138, illus., no price given (2–903189–44–7).

In 1849–50, the distinguished medical historian and librarian Charles Daremberg, accompanied by the orientalist Ernest Renan, visited Italy to collect information on manuscripts. Sponsored by Napoleon III and advised by the Académie des Inscriptions and the Académie de Médecine, the two scholars met with varied success. On his return to Paris, Daremberg worked up some of his notes into a travel book, but it was never published. From among the Daremberg papers Mme Gourevitch has now edited what remains of this book, covering the year 1849, and provided it with an introduction and copious annotation. Medical historians, seeking to learn more about Daremberg's discoveries and methods, will perhaps be disappointed in its revelations, but devotees of Augustus Hare will recognize a kindred spirit in these delightful vignettes of the Rome of Pio Nono.

L H Collier (ed.), *The history of the Medical Research Club, 1891–1991*, London, The Wellcome Trust for the Medical Research Club, 1995, pp. 95. Enquiries to Dr J M Best, Department of Virology, UMDS, St Thomas' Hospital, London SE1 7EH.

The Medical Research Club was founded in the companionable 1890s, when men like Almroth Wright, Charles Sherrington, Victor Horsley and Sims Woodhead decided they needed yet another forum in which they could read papers to one another. The objects of the Club were to demonstrate and discuss "General and Special Pathological Science", and some tantalizing titles appear under that heading: a pre-Majorite 'The incidence of greyness' in

1904; 'On the therapeutic use of oxygen passed through alcohol' in 1910, and 'Deficiency of marigolds as a diet for guinea-pigs' in 1921. Details of some of the more conventional papers, and their authors, account for most of this commemorative volume which is composed of three sections. That by G W M Findlay and G A H Buttle covers the first sixty years of the Club's existence, towards the end of which, in 1947, the first woman member was elected. Almost half of the chapter is devoted to The Rules: their formulation (a grammar subcommittee was formed to supervise the English), interpretation, modification and implementation. The remainder discusses some of the early presentations to the Club, memorable and otherwise. In the latter category was the suggestion by Alexander Fleming in 1929 that penicillin might be helpful in isolating the influenza bacillus, which attracted little interest and no discussion. In the former category was the dramatic announcement in 1933, picked up by the popular press, by Wilson Smith, C H Andrewes and P P Laidlaw of the isolation of a virus from influenza patients that could be propagated in ferrets. The second and most substantial section by G S Wilson deals with the next twenty-five years, and includes obituaries of Sherrington, Dale and Florey, three of the Club's six Nobel Laureate members. The final section by L H Collier finishes in 1991 by which time over half the Club's communications were on immunological or virological subjects and an active campaign was begun to recruit members from under-represented specialities.

BOOKS ALSO RECEIVED

(The inclusion of a title does not preclude the possibility of subsequent review. Items received, other than those assigned for review, are ultimately incorporated into the collection of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine.)