

## Book Notices

**David F Smith** (ed.), *Nutrition in Britain: science, scientists and politics in the twentieth century*, Studies in the Social History of Medicine, London and New York, Routledge, 1997, pp. x, 277, illus., £50.00 (0-415-11214-1).

It is rare to read a review of a collection of essays that does not describe its contents in such terms as “uneven” or “varying in quality”. David Smith is to be applauded for having produced a volume to which such terms do not apply. The editor has collected eleven papers of almost uniform high quality. Presumably what has made this possible is the fact that each of the essays is a small-scale detailed empirical study, none of them at any time launching into wholesale historiographic revision or elaborate theorizing. Even the editor’s introduction is content to do little more than summarize the chapters. The papers cover the whole century from Fletcherism (the chewing fad of the Edwardians) to food campaigns in the 1990s. They address institutions (the Dunn laboratory, King’s College of Household and Social Science, the National Birthday Trust), nutrition science, commodities (milk), publicity (films) and government policy. It would be inappropriate to single out any of the accomplished pieces in this most valuable work on a subject which might well be ripe for the ambitious reinterpretation this book eschews.

**O L Wade**, *When I dropped the knife: the joys, excitements, frustrations and conflicts of a life in academic medicine*, Durham and Cambridge, Pentland Press, 1996, pp. xxv, 243, illus., £17.50 (1-85821-418-1).

Owen Wade is a third generation British clinical scientist. The first generation was presided over by Sir Thomas Lewis. Many of the second, such as Sir George Pickering or Sir Edward Pochin, had worked alongside him. Some of the third, Owen Wade included, were

taught by him when they were medical students. Born in South Wales, and an undergraduate at Cambridge, Wade studied clinical medicine under Lewis at University College Hospital during the Second World War. After holding various positions and aspiring to be a surgeon, Wade “dropped the knife” and worked on the Medical Research Council’s Pneumoconiosis Research Unit in South Wales. A position as Senior Registrar in Birmingham ensued, coupled with research based on cardiac catheterization, Wade himself being a subject. The obligatory American experience followed and then a chair of a new department of therapeutics and pharmacology in Belfast. Wade finally returned to Birmingham and had the misfortune to be appointed Dean of the Medical School during the notorious smallpox outbreak of 1978 when the Professor of Medical Microbiology cut his own throat. Much of Wade’s later professional career was spent rationalizing doctors’ prescribing habits. There is much in here for anyone interested in the insider’s world of third generation clinical science. Famous and infamous folk pop in and out, although London does not figure very large. The attitudes of scientists to clinical scientists and of clinical scientists to “ordinary” doctors are knowingly and unknowingly revealed. The reader will not miss quite a lot of score settling. There are no references and, irritatingly, no index.

**Terry Gould** and **David Uttley**, *A short history of St George’s Hospital and the origins of its ward names*, London and Atlantic Highlands, Athlone Press, 1997, pp. xvii, 191, illus., £16.95 (hardback 0-485-11504-2), £8.95 (paperback 0-485-12126-3).

This book is a labour of love by two former consultants at St George’s Hospital, London, compiled with the active encouragement of the hospital’s Special Trustees, who were anxious to record for posterity the names of its

benefactors since the establishment in 1733. The authors admit to being driven by concern about the new and imbalanced hospital service ethos, with its focus on figures not people. As a result, the text is strong on personalities. It is much weaker, however, on the implied promise of the first half of the title. The sixteen pages devoted to a summary of St George's 264-year existence is of necessity a fairly perfunctory account. The remainder of the text is taken up with biographical notices on the sixty or so individuals, both lay and medical, who are commemorated in the hospital's wards, wings and units. The list includes numerous familiar figures, such as John Hunter and Edward Jenner, and many whose fame is more local. The vignettes employ a clear and lively prose, with snippets of information on the history of the institution scattered throughout the text. The Trustees categorized the book as "informative and engaging"; its appeal, however, will be largely confined to those with a special interest in St George's.

**Gerard L'E Turner**, *The practice of science in the nineteenth century: teaching and research apparatus in the Teyler Museum*, Haarlem, Teyler Museum, 1996, pp. 360, illus., Dfl 150.00 (+p&p Dfl 10.00) (90-71835-07-3). Orders to The Teyler Museum, Spaarne 16, 2011 CH Haarlem, The Netherlands.

In 1973 Gerard L'E Turner's catalogue of Martinus van Marum's instruments in the Teyler Museum, Haarlem, was published. These instruments had been acquired under van Marum's curatorship, 1784–1837. The present catalogue contains all the nineteenth-century instruments acquired after 1837. Although a museum, Teyler's was once a working institution and all the instruments it acquired were used for teaching and research. The collection is therefore not exactly representative of nineteenth-century science but measures the interests of successive conservators. The second conservator after van Marum, Wolkert S M van der Willigan, had a particular interest in the standard of length, and

the museum contains many devices pertaining to this subject. The collection has been catalogued according to subject, such as time-keeping, weights and measures, heat, optics and so forth with, in many instances, various sub-categories, although it is not clear why similar instruments have been catalogued in any particular sequence (chronological criteria have obviously not been applied). This is of no great significance, however, since the collection is so rich and diverse, there are relatively few objects catalogued by the same name. Applying his usual high standards, Professor Turner has detailed where possible, the dates of objects and their manufacturers. He has given a description of the objects and supplied a photograph taken by himself. This is a thoroughly professional job of which the museum and cataloguer can be proud.

**M D Grmek**, *Il calderone di Medea. La sperimentazione sul vivente nell'Antichità*, transl. Claudio Milanese, *Lezioni italiane* 14, Roma-Bari, Editor Laterza, 1996, pp. xi, 147, Lire 18000 (88-420-5060-1).

These elegant lectures discuss the use (and occasionally abuse) of experimentation on living subjects in Classical Antiquity, from Alcmaeon and the Hippocratic Corpus in the fifth century BC through to Galen in the second century AD. Professor Grmek considers both the theory of experiment and its actual practice, paying particular attention to Aristotle, the Hellenistic physicians and Galen. Not only does he relate their ideas to those of later scientists, like Harvey and Bernard, but he offers important insights into their cultural context. There are significant corrections to standard opinions, e.g., on the famous first Aphorism of Hippocrates, and provocative sidelights, e.g., on Roman attitudes to medicine. More might have been said about Galen's belief in the demonstrative method, but Professor Grmek has chosen to focus on his actual practice in anatomy and pharmacology. It is a pity that for three programmatic statements of Galen, pp. 76, 91, and 94,

reliance should still be placed on a Renaissance forgery, the commentary on *Humours*, and that, p. 142, the pseudonymous treatise *On the voice* is confused with the fragments of the lost genuine treatise on the same theme.

**Danielle Jacquart**, *La science médicale occidentale entre deux renaissances (XIIe–XVe s.)*, Variorum Collected Studies Series, Aldershot, Variorum, 1997, pp. xx, 310, £55.00 (0-86078-621-8).

Danielle Jacquart has long been admired for her expertise in the history of medieval medicine and for the elegance of her exposition. This volume brings together several of her most important articles, which fall into three groups: the transmission of classical and Arabic medicine to the West in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; Gerard of Cremona and his influence; and aspects of medical practice among leading doctors of the fifteenth century, including Jacques Despars and Michele Savonarola. All display the author's sensitivity to language and meaning in her reconstruction of the creation and development of a Latin professional vocabulary. Since many of these articles were originally published in journals or books rarely found in a history of medicine library, their presence within one cover is particularly helpful.

*Alle de Brieven van Antoni van Leeuwenhoek. The collected letters of Antoni van Leeuwenhoek*, vol. 14 (1701–1704) edited by Drs L C Palm, transl. C Dikshoorn and E Kegel-Brinkgreve, Lisse, Swets & Zeitlinger, 1996, pp. xii, 395, illus., \$233.00, Dgl 395.00 (90-2651450-6).

This volume presents the correspondence of Antoni van Leeuwenhoek from August 1701 to March 1704, a total of 23 letters, 21 from Leeuwenhoek. More than half of Leeuwenhoek's letters are addressed to the Royal Society or to members of the Society including Hans Sloane, John Somers, and John Chamberlayne. The other recipients are

Frederik Adriaan van Reede van Renswoude, Hendrik van Bleyswijk, Petrus Valckenier, and the landgrave Karl of Hessen-Kassel. Topics of particular medical interest include Leeuwenhoek's discussion of the circulation of blood in eels (letters 228 and 237), the spermatozoa of spiders (232) and young cocks (231), and advice to John Chamberlayne about cleaning teeth with a mixture of salt and tobacco ash (238). In another letter to the Royal Society, Leeuwenhoek described an apparatus made of bent glass piping and cork plugs which he designed to facilitate the inhalation of smoke and vapours (he stated that the traditional method of rubbing balsam on the chest was ineffective) and he offered his views on the lungs' susceptibility to disease, providing observations on the blood vessels in the lungs of healthy and sick sheep (234). Finally, this collection contains Leeuwenhoek's bequest of 26 microscopes to the Royal Society (228). This is a beautifully produced, well-annotated, and carefully indexed volume and is an excellent addition to the edited works of the Dutch microscopist.

**Arnauld Gilles**, *The flower of remedies against the toothache, 1621. The first French text on dentistry and the diseases of the teeth*, transl. Jacques R Fouré, ed. Milton B Asbell, Boston, Dental Classics in Perspective, 1996, pp. x, 30, \$25.00 (0-88135-174-1). Distributed by Science History Publications/USA, P.O. Box 493, Canton, Mass. 02021, USA.

The first in a series of limited editions produced under the series title 'Dental Classics in Perspective' is a facsimile edition of Arnauld Gilles's brief treatise of 1621, accompanied by an English translation by Jacques Fouré.

The first part of *La fleur des remèdes* takes the form of an anatomy of the teeth, in the manner of Urbain Hémarde's *Recherche de la vraie anatomie des dents* of 1582. This very brief consideration of form and function is followed by an analysis of the causes of pain and the ways in which the teeth may become

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damaged, necessitating their removal: and the writer argues at length that this operation should be performed only by those who, like him, have made it their sole business. The second half of the treatise is composed of a number of recipes for drugs which will cure the ache caused by the cold, cause rotten teeth to fall out, cure strong toothache, whiten the teeth and fasten loose ones.

Jacques Fouré's style of translation does not make for a particularly smooth read and, given its direct nature, seems a little inconsistent. This little book will, nonetheless, be of interest to the collector of cures—but it is not, as the translator claims, a “text on dentistry”.

### 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.)

**Udo Benzenhöfer**, *Paracelsus*, Reinbek bei Hamburg, Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1997, pp. 156, illus., DM 12.90 (3-499-50595-9).

**John K Crellin and Jane Philpott**, *Trying to give ease: Tommie Bass and the story of herbal medicine*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1990, pp. xii, 335, £15.95 (paperback 0-8223-2017-7). The 1990 edition was reviewed by David Allen in *Medical History*, 1991, 35: 364-5.

**John K Crellin and Jane Philpott**, *A reference guide to medicinal plants: herbal medicine past and present*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1990, pp. v, 551, £21.95 (paperback 0-8223-1019-8). The 1990 edition was reviewed by David Allen in *Medical History*, 1991, 35: 364-5.

**Daniel A Dombrowski**, *Babies and beasts: the argument from marginal cases*, Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1997,

pp. 221, \$39.95 (hardback 0-252-02342-0), \$14.95 (paperback 0-252-06638-3).

**Louis Galambos and Jane Eliot Sewell**, *Networks of innovation: vaccine development at Merck, Sharp & Dohme, and Mulford, 1895-1995*, Cambridge University Press, hardback 1995, paperback 1997, pp. xii, 273, illus., £37.50, \$39.95 (hardback 0-521-56308-9), £13.95, \$15.95 (paperback 0-521-62620-X). The hardback edition was reviewed by Jennifer Stanton in *Medical History*, 1997, 42: 254-5.

**Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das, Margaret Lock** (eds), *Social suffering*, Berkeley and London, University of California Press, 1997, pp. xxvii, 404, £35.00, \$48.00 (hardback 0-520-20993-1), £13.95, \$17.95 (paperback 0-520-20995-8).

**Karl-Heinz Leven**, *Die Geschichte der Infektionskrankheiten. Von der Antike bis ins 20. Jahrhundert*, 6 Fortschritte in der Präventiv- und Arbeitsmedizin, Landsberg, ecomed Verlagsgesellschaft, 1997, pp. 164, illus., DM 58.00 (3-609-51220-2).

**José M López Piñero, et al.**, *Bibliographía médica hispánica, 1475-1950, volumen V, libros y folletos, 1851-1900*, Valencia, Instituto de Estudios Documentales e Históricos sobre la Ciencia, 1996, no price given (84-370-2349-1).

**Charles E Rosenberg**, *No other gods: on science and American social thought*, rev. ed., Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997, pp. xxii, 311, £40.00 (hardback 0-8018-5608-6); £14.00 (paperback 0-8018-5598-5).

**A M G Rutten**, *Ondergang in bedwelming. Drugs en giften in het West-Romeinse Rijk*, Rotterdam, Erasmus Publishing, 1997, pp. 119, illus., Hfl. 42.50 (90-5235-118-X).

**Peter Sawyer** (ed.), *The Oxford illustrated history of the Vikings*, Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. xvii, 298, illus., £25.00 (0-19-820526-0).