

Book Notices

JOHN R. MILLBURN, *Retailer of the sciences. Benjamin Martin's scientific instrument catalogues, 1756–82*, London, Vade-Mecum Press, 1986. 8vo, pp. 95, illus., £15 + £1 postage.

In 1976, John Millburn produced a valuable biography of the eighteenth-century instrument-maker Benjamin Martin. In 1986, Millburn added a useful *Supplement* to that life, and now he has produced a work dealing with the catalogues which Martin issued to sell his scientific instruments. From five of these catalogues that appeared during Martin's life, Millburn has compiled a 'Consolidated catalogue', which is described in chapter two. This contains 168 items, and these are listed with Martin's prices for the years, 1757, 1765, and 1780. Since the catalogues are undated, these years represent guidelines rather than exact dates.

Apart from his trade in philosophical instruments, Martin also sold things for medical use such as syringes for injection (which he ceased to market in later years), and syringes for cupping which, with glasses, cost a guinea. The 'Consolidated catalogue' is certainly valuable, but it is hard to see why facsimiles or transcriptions from catalogues which could be identified by the reader were not used. Perhaps of even greater interest than the 'Consolidated catalogue' is Millburn's inclusion of the inventory of Martin's stock, which was sold at auction after his death. A puzzle hangs over this material, since Martin was supposedly declared bankrupt just before he died, yet the auction reveals that he had a great number of valuable instruments in store. Like its two predecessors, this volume is a careful, well-produced mine of information about the business of instrument-making and -selling in the Enlightenment.

ALAN S. PARKES, *Off-beat biologist*, Cambridge, Galton Foundation, 1985, 8vo, pp. xii, 485, illus., £20.00.

In his eighty-six years, Sir Alan Parkes has led a full and eventful life, and in his autobiography he has chosen to deal with it in two distinct parts. The 485 pages of *Off-beat biologist* represents less than half of his life story, and is more or less wholly devoted to his scientific experiences. A companion volume *Biologist at large*, is promised, which will be devoted to the personal side and his travels. Some may regret this rather artificial division—it is difficult to know, for instance, what Parkes's domestic circumstances were when he was having to doss down in a laboratory on a camp bed to ensure that readings of experiments were taken on time. On the other hand, this pattern does ensure that the reader is not diverted from a continuous story, from Sir Alan's fluke entry into post-first-world-war Cambridge through his researches into mammalian reproduction (particularly endocrinology and cryobiology) to his later work on animal conservation and captive breeding; there are also chapters devoted to conferences and symposia, special lectures, scientific publications, bioethics, and on research and the scientist. For anybody who wants to know "how things really were" in pre-war research in several of the major centres in Britain, this exhaustive account will give them the facts, as well as pithy comments. Today's complainants would do well to ponder Marrian's letter to the MRC in 1932 asking for a £50 increase in his annual expenses of £150 (one presumes that it was granted). Certainly, in this book Sir Alan justifies his conclusion that "looking back on the pattern from the vantage point of advanced age, the one consistent thread has clearly been the inquiring mind coupled with driving power and a lot of luck in stumbling into relatively undeveloped fields in which it was possible to make a contribution without profound basic knowledge of anything".

MARTIN ROTH and JEROME KROLL, *The reality of mental illness*, Cambridge University Press, 1986, 8vo, pp. 128, £22.50 (£7.50 paperback).

A lively polemic against anti-psychiatry, arguing that to deny the reality of mental illness runs counter to all our common perceptions and so must be ideologically freighted. Historically, it is correctly stressed that mental illness was not an "invention" of nineteenth-century psychiatry, just as medical treatments for mental illness have a long pedigree. Foucault and Szasz are particularly taken to task for their ahistorical pronouncements.

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EDWARD R. TUFTE, *The visual display of quantitative information*, Cheshire, Connecticut, Graphics Press, 1983, 4to, pp. 197, illus., \$32.00.

For the visually illiterate, this book is a splendid introduction to quantitative graphics. It is not conceived as a history but it does use scores of interesting historical examples, many from science and medicine, including John Snow's famous map of the Broad Street area. The author's main aim is didactic and critical, to teach his readers how to recognize good graphics and identify distortions produced by clever artwork. In this regard, the author advances the view that the "figures are boring" cry is an interested claim, made by designers to promote their trade. Although the author does not pursue the cognitive issues raised by graphic information, anyone interested in the history of the laboratory sciences or epidemiology will find this work a valuable starting-point.

BOOKS ALSO RECEIVED

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

Bibliography of the history of medicine, No. 21 (1985), Bethesda, Md, US Department of Health and Human Services, 1986, 4to, pp. ix, 371, [no price stated].

WINIFRED BRINSON, *Deafness in the adult. What hearing loss means and what can be done to help*, Wellingborough, Thorsons, 1986, 8vo, pp. 238, £5.99 (paperback).

LUIS S. GRANJEL, *Retablo historico de la urologia Española*, Salamanca, Instituto de Historia de la Medicina Española, 1986, 8vo, pp. 161, illus., [no price stated] (paperback).

CARL J. PFEIFFER, *The art and practice of western medicine in the early nineteenth century*, Jefferson, NC, McFarland; Folkestone, Bailey Bros & Swinfen, 1986, 8vo, p. xix, 238, illus., £29.95.

WALTER RAAFLAUB, *Ernst Mayer 1883-1952*, Berne, Hans Huber, 1986, 8vo, pp. 127, SFr.32.00 (paperback).

URSULA WEISSER, *Die Geburt der Physico-medica aus dem Geist der Leopoldina*, Erlangen, Palm & Enke, 1985, 8vo, pp. v, 98, illus., DM.30.00 (paperback).

Zürcher Medizingeschichtliche Abhandlungen, Zurich, Juris Druck:

No. 182: HERMANN SCHMID, *Kurt von Neergaard 1887-1947. Professor für physikalische Therapie*, pp. 75, SFr.19.00.

No. 183. R. CHRISTIAN MÖHR, *Der Chirurg Paul Clairmont 1875-1942*, pp.99, SFr.25.00

No. 184. ELLEN JORISCH-WISSINK, *Der Kinderpsychiater Moritz Trauer (1882-1963)*, pp. 75, SFr.19.00.

No. 185. JULIUS HENRI SCHULTZ, *Albert Molls Ärztliche Ethik*, pp. 99, SFr.27.00.