

Book Reviews

Thomas Bartholin On the Burning of his Library and On Medical Travel, translated by CHARLES D. O'MALLEY. Lawrence: University of Kansas Libraries, 1961; pp. viii + 101. \$2.25.

Thomas Bartholin (1616–80) was the outstanding leader of Danish medicine during the seventeenth century, and his medical writings are well known. Two of his smaller works are here translated into English for the first time. Bartholin lived at Hagestedgaard, some distance from Copenhagen, where he wrote, and collected together a library. While attending the funeral of his former teacher, Poul Moth, he was informed that his home had been destroyed by fire, together with his books and manuscripts. *On the burning of his library* was Bartholin's description of the tragedy, and although the author consoled himself while describing his misfortune, he obviously suffered grievously. The book was first published in Latin in 1670, and contains descriptions of previous libraries destroyed by fire, followed by details of Bartholin's numerous manuscripts and of his personal collection, of which he lists 129 items.

The second work here translated. *On medical travel*, was addressed to his two sons and a nephew in 1674 when departing to study abroad, and was based on Bartholin's own experiences during his travels in France and Italy between 1640 and 1645. It was first printed in Latin in 1674, and emphasizes the importance of travel in education for medical men: 'While the variety of things to be learned and to be seen in travelling is so great that they cannot be recounted in a few lines, nevertheless they can be comprised in two categories of importance: things and men. . . . Let medical knowledge especially be drunk with delight.' He recounts his own experiences of thirty years earlier, giving advice on places to visit, on health, food and drink. Altogether a fascinating travel book by a medical man to be added to those more generally known.

These two items are of interest not only because Thomas Bartholin was their author, but as reflecting on life and times during the seventeenth century, and revealing their author as a remarkably erudite man. Professor O'Malley is to be congratulated upon making them available to a wider public by translating them for inclusion in the Library Series of the University of Kansas Publications.

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