

### *News, Notes and Queries*

The project was originated by Dr. J. Ch. Bürgel, professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Berne, who has worked extensively on scientific and social aspects of medicine during the Islamic "Middle Ages". The project is supported by the Swiss National Foundation, which had awarded a grant for two years to Mr. Harmut Fährdrich, M.A., Ph.D., from Los Angeles.

The object is the edition of eight Arabic texts from the ninth to the thirteenth century A.D. The emphasis is on writings of an introductory nature, not on discussions of specialized technical questions. The texts deal particularly with the following problems: the value of health; the usefulness of medicine; the doctor's importance and responsibility; the place of medicine within the framework of all sciences; the decay of medicine and the possibilities of its revival.

The original intention was simply to edit the Arabic texts on the basis of one or, if possible, several manuscripts each. However, the translation of at least some of the texts is clearly desirable, and ibn Jumay<sup>C</sup>'s *Maqāla* . . . (Treatise to Saladin on the revival of medicine) is now translated into English and is ready for printing. It is hoped that translations of ar-Ruhāwī's *Adab aṭ-Ṭibib* (The doctor's erudition) and ibn Hindu's *Miftāḥ aṭ-Ṭibb* (The key to medicine) will soon follow.

### INFORMATION REQUIRED

#### TRADE CATALOGUES

Dr. Audrey B. Davis, Curator, Division of Medical Sciences, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. 20560, U.S.A., is preparing for publication a bibliography of trade catalogues of medical, surgical and dental instrument manufacturers. Dr. Davis would be glad to hear from holders of collections of this material.

#### MUMFERGO PILLS

Dr. T. D. Whittet, Woburn Lodge, 8 Lyndhurst Drive, Harpenden, Herts., has come across the following entry in the Parish Register of Tadlow, Cambs.: "Goodman Parker reputed an hundred years old was buried on St. Michael's Day 1714." Affidavit—sworn the same day: "It was generally thought he prolonged his life by mumfergo pills". Dr. Whittet would be grateful for any information about mumfergo pills.

#### NATURAL HISTORY MANUSCRIPT RESOURCES OF THE BRITISH ISLES

A guide to the natural history manuscript resources of the British Isles is being prepared for publication by G. Bridson (Librarian, Linnean Society of London, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1V 0LQ) and A. P. Harvey (Librarian, Department of Palaeontology, British Museum (Natural History), London SW7 5BD). Libraries, museums, etc., are being surveyed by questionnaire. A problem of this survey is the wide distribution of material as shown by its presence in some unlikely locations, and many individuals will have come into contact with such items. They may also know of undocumented items in public and private collections and might be able to contribute valuable information. The compilers will be grateful for, and readily acknowledge, any such information.