

Book Reviews

FRANÇOISE LEHOUX, *Le cadre de vie des médecins Parisiens aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles*, Paris, A. & J. Picard, 1976, 8vo, pp. x, 611, [no price stated].

The object of this book is to present the social background of the doctor, and the author has, therefore, based it on details of the estates of seventy-three individuals, including doctors, their wives, or their widows, from sixty-six families. Thirty-three of the seventy-three are from the sixteenth century and forty from the seventeenth; the last of the group died in 1665. From this material the author has been able to extract an immense amount of data. She deals in turn with the doctors' origins, their university studies, marriages, families, abodes, belongings, household effects, clothing, personal resources, landed properties, books, wills, and deaths. The documentation is voluminous, so that on most pages the footnotes exceed the amount of space occupied by the text.

The end-result is a remarkable analysis of the physician and his domestic background, the like of which has never been revealed before. We now have a much clearer idea of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Parisian doctor, whereas previously we knew a lot about his practice by way of the books he wrote but little about the man himself and his life. The author can, therefore, be warmly congratulated on the enormous industry that must have been needed to sift and extract appropriate information from the documents which form the basis of her study. A comparable investigation of London physicians would be equally valuable, if in fact the requisite manuscripts exist, and if a scholar with equal stamina can be discovered. Meantime this book can be strongly recommended to medical historians, both on account of its contents and of the research methods employed.

CHAUNCEY D. LEAKE, *An historical account of pharmacology to the twentieth century*, Springfield, Ill., Charles C Thomas, 1975, 8vo, pp. xi, 210, \$12.50 (\$8.95 paperback).

For several decades Professor Leake has contributed importantly to the history of medicine. Being a pharmacologist, his greatest interest has been in the history of drugs and in this excellent book he displays his remarkable knowledge of this field.

He begins with a brief introduction and overview, with a valuable discussion of the literature, and then progresses from "protopharmacology" (prehistoric and codified empirical drug lore) to the present century. There is some imbalance here, because the period up to 1900 occupies 118 pages and the rest only 69; one would expect the reverse to be the case. The problem seems to lie in the title, for it might have been better to have used the term "drug therapy" rather than "pharmacology", because although the latter has come into its own in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in the early periods the uses of drugs rather than their actions form the main theme. Instead of "complicating footnotes" most of the references are embedded in his text, which is an unusual practice, and there are at the end of the book a few citations of the more recent literature.

Dr. Leake has produced a stimulating book which he admits has to be disjointed on account of the material he is dealing with. It is directed at the layman as well as the professional and is primarily concerned to tell the fascinating story of "the development of our knowledge about drugs" (p. x).