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volumes will expand this topic and deal with others. They will no doubt be of the same lofty standard of scholarship so that medical historians will be further indebted to Linacre College and to its enlightened Principal, Mr. J. B. Bamborough.

E. ASHWORTH UNDERWOOD, *Boerhaave's men at Leyden and after*, Edinburgh University Press, 1977, 8vo, pp. vii, 227, illus., £8.00.

Herman Boerhaave (1688–1738) taught medicine at Leyden from 1701 until his death, and such was his success that he attracted students from all over Europe, especially from Britain where medical education was backward on account of devotion to ancient authority, religious barriers, and incompetent individuals. It is well known that his students helped to found the Edinburgh Medical School, but their influence elsewhere in Scotland, England, and Ireland has been much less appreciated.

Dr. Underwood, who, in his retirement, is still contributing importantly to the history of medicine, has studied carefully the careers of Boerhaave's 746 English-speaking students who matriculated at Leyden, with the result that our ideas of this great teacher's influence on medicine in these islands must now be considerably altered. Thus, by their membership of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of London, Edinburgh, and of Ireland, and of the Royal Society, and by several appointments in the universities and in the London hospitals, their effect on medicine, especially in the capitals, was considerable. No other teacher, except perhaps Johannes Müller and Osler, has contributed similarly to the development of medicine by way of his pupils.

The author first considers the students' Leyden period, then their subsequent careers. He has examined an enormous amount of material and presents new and important data which will demand a re-evaluation of medical practice and education in the eighteenth century. His text is fully annotated, the index is excellent, and the illustrations and book production are elegant. All historians of medicine will have to know of this work and they will find it a continual source of valuable and accurate information. The only pertinent criticism would be of the title, which does not specify that the book concerns only Boerhaave's British students.

MARKUS FIERZ, *Girolamo Cardano (1501–1576). Arzt, Naturphilosoph, Mathematiker, Astronom und Traumdeuter*, Basle and Stuttgart, Birkhäuser Verlag, 1977, 8vo, pp. 140, S.Fr.19.80.

This book, written originally for students, is an excellent introduction to the life and works of Cardano. In seven short chapters it describes his life and his activities as physician, philosopher, mathematician, astronomer, and interpreter of dreams. The language is clear and economical, there is no jargon, and the most abstruse ideas are set forth with a simplicity that makes them easily intelligible. Throughout the text, which is based on Cardano's own writings rather than on secondary sources, relevant passages from Cardano's books are incorporated, thus giving character and savour to the author's comments. Other studies dealing with the same subject have not been neglected and the footnotes bear ample witness to the care which Fierz has given to the elucidation of many topics. In so short a book it was not to be expected that a full discussion of Cardano's views on medicine would be included, but a fairly

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comprehensive idea of his methods and his clinical attitudes is presented by dealing at length with the regimen of health prescribed for John Hamilton, archbishop of St. Andrews. In spite of its brief compass, this book is a mine of instruction and is to be highly commended. M. Fierz' modesty, expressed in the foreword, is also something to be admired.

F. F. CARTWRIGHT, *A social history of medicine*, London and New York, Longman, 1977, 8vo, pp. 209, £2.95 (paperback).

Reviewed by Christopher Lawrence, M.B., Ch.B., M.Sc., Medical Historian, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, and the Science Museum, London.

The social history of medicine is the ideal Procrustean victim. It obediently submits to amputation or elongation to fit the historian's preconceptions. The final size of the subject in the present case is determined by the author in his first sentence: "The primary purpose of a social history of medicine must be to describe how the practice of medicine has affected the health and development of people". Given this framework, Dr. Cartwright displays the truncated corpse with considerable erudition. The work contains excellent chapters on the growth of modern medical education, the hospital system, and the National Health Service and pointedly draws out their contributions to national health. Especially detailed are the chapters on the major epidemic and endemic diseases of civilization and their demographic and economic effects. He displays admirably the progress made towards the eradication of epidemics in the Western world and the not altogether untainted blessings of modern medicine. His decision to forage in the history of ideas is more questionable. Chapter one for example is a remarkable farrago of speculative anthropology, audacious historicism, and old-fashioned error. The flavour, however, is entertaining: "The remedial custom of 'eating the god' which started as ritual cannibalism, the consuming of a sanctified human to absorb divine power, developed into the beginnings of a pharmacopoeia" (p. 1). In general though, this is an easily readable and factually correct account of much British medical history. It should form a useful adjunct to any teaching programme.

It is impossible, however, not to lament such curtailment of the subject in a series designed for a wide audience. Once again medicine is presented as something superimposed on society and whose only important function is healing the sick by the best methods available at the time. There is no suggestion, for instance, that disease might be socially rather than pathologically defined, or that ideas about sickness or the body might be products of a very specific social organization and not just the best ideas available at the time. In consequence the author fails to recognize how such ideas might serve to legitimate the social order in question. Nor in his dealing with epidemics does he show how they prove a threat to the mechanisms of social control and that the apparently bizarre preventive measures taken during such outbreaks are often much more than merely well-intentioned applications of misguided medical theory. The topics of specialization and professionalization are treated purely with reference to medicine itself not with regard to the context of Victorian Britain and professionalization in other fields. It is, in short, more often a history of medicine *and* society, rather than medicine *in* society.