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HUGH L'ETANG, *Fit to lead?*, London, Heinemann Medical Books, 1980, pp. 211, £4.50 (paperback).

In *Fit to lead?* Hugh L'Etang continues the theme which he developed some years ago in a book entitled *The pathology of leadership*. It is an unfortunate fact that illness, age, alcohol, fatigue, and medication can frequently cloud judgment, and that individuals in power suffer from these human frailties. The consequences can be immense, as Dr. L'Etang amply documents. His "patients" include Richard Nixon, J. F. Kennedy, Winston Churchill, Adolf Hitler, Anthony Eden, and many others whose medical and psychiatric histories he examines in terms of topics such as heart disease and high blood pressure, alcoholism, diabetes, dementia, and chronic overwork.

There is a natural tendency for those in power to cover up or deny aspects of their medical histories which the public might find disturbing. Consequently, Dr. L'Etang is often forced to draw his inferences in piecemeal data, and occasionally he lets inference and innuendo get out of control. Nevertheless, his central thesis is completely justified: the public deserve reliable medical information about those whose decisions can affect their lives. Unfortunately, power itself can be addictive, so there is frequently a conflict of interest between the psychological needs and drives of the powerful and the wider interests of society.

Dr. L'Etang, editor of *The Practitioner*, has a sure hand with detail and a sharp eye for "arm-chair diagnosis". His study raises issues of considerable importance and deserves to be widely read, not least by our masters.

DOUGLASS W. TAYLOR, *The Monro Collection in the Medical Library of the University of Otago*, Dunedin, University of Otago Press, 1979, 8vo, pp. 157, illus., \$35.00

In 1841 David Monro, a son of Alexander Monro *tertius*, emigrated to New Zealand. Eventually his father bequeathed to him his museum and library. The former remained in Edinburgh whilst the latter eventually found its way to the Antipodes, and is now in the Medical Library of the University of Otago. It consists of medical books acquired by or presented to the three Alexander Monros, and those bought by David Monro; and, as well as the Monros' own works and a variety of medical texts from the sixteenth century onward, the collection also includes a number of manuscripts relevant to the history of medicine in eighteenth-century Edinburgh.

Douglass Taylor's catalogue is clearly the result of a labour of love. He has been meticulous in the extreme, and generous and scholarly in the information he provides about the manuscripts. For the historian rather than the bibliophile they constitute the riches of the collection, and I am puzzled as to why Dr. Taylor has not provided a separate list of them rather than let the reader search each page of the catalogue in turn. All manuscripts may be unique, but clearly all are not equal. Though the lectures of the Monros on anatomy and physiology are rare enough, the notes of *primus* on James Crawford's lectures and *secundus'* common-place book are gems of medicine that may prove invaluable for reconstructing the history of medicine in Edinburgh. Dr. Taylor is to be thanked and congratulated for having brought them so thoroughly to light.

HOWARD BRODY, *Placebos and the philosophy of medicine: clinical, conceptual and ethical issues*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1980, 8vo, pp. vii, 164, £8.10.

The word *placebo* has been used with roughly its present meaning for almost two centuries, and doctors have known for far longer that it is possible for them to alter the course of a patient's illness with medications and procedures which have no action directly capable of achieving that end. Placebos *do* work: they can cause objective improvement in instances of serious disease and often produce side-effects, withdrawal symptoms, and other unpleasant sequelae of pharmacologically active medicines. Explanations of the placebo phenomenon thus

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must include some implicit or explicit account of the mind-body problem, and the use of the placebo involves ethical issues, since patients must be deceived by their doctors. (Even in double-blind studies the doctors know that *some* of their patients are receiving physiologically inert substances such as coated sugar or bread pills. Placebos do not work if the patient knows he is being given one.)

In this little volume, Howard Brody examines both the philosophical and ethical ramifications of placebos. As a family physician with a Ph.D. in Philosophy, he is well qualified for this task. Philosophically, Brody identifies himself with thinkers such as H.T. Englehardt, M. Grene, and others who have recently attempted to circumvent the dilemma of Cartesian dualism by developing the concept of the *person*. His discussions of his subject's ethical dimensions are more eclectic and seek to encompass both utilitarian and deontological modes of analysis. His conclusions are analytical rather than normative and invite further philosophical refinement and clinical research. Although only small sections of the work are directly historical, historians of medicine could do worse than ponder the message of this crisply written little book.

H. A. SNELLEN, *E. J. Marey and cardiology: physiologist and pioneer of technology (1830–1904)*, Rotterdam, Kooyker Scientific Publications, 1980, 8vo, pp. 264, illus., [no price stated] (paperback).

E. J. Marey has probably suffered historical neglect because he had both the good and bad fortune to be a contemporary of Claude Bernard. Yet, though both were experimental physiologists, Marey's talents extended in directions other than those of Bernard. He was without doubt a technical wizard, devising a range of physiological gadgetry to pursue obscure areas of cardiovascular dynamics. Yet he was not merely a particularist for he was interested in the question of animal movement in general, for the investigation of which he developed cinematographic techniques. This well-produced volume contains reprints of some of Marey's more significant researches in cardiology. The French reprints are prefaced by a valuable English summary by Professor Snellen, who has also provided as an introduction the only biography of Marey available in English. It is, however, difficult to see whom the book is aimed at; Marey's works are not that difficult to obtain and the choice to reprint in French rather than English precludes them from general use in the classroom. Nevertheless, for the enthusiast the book is a welcome addition to the literature on the history of cardiovascular physiology.

JOHN CULE, *Wales and medicine. A source-list for printed books showing the history of medicine in relation to Wales and Welshmen*, Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, 1980, 8vo, pp. xvii, 229, £7.50 (£4.00 paperback).

Dr. Cule's source-list is divided into two parts. The first, which extends chronologically to 1948, records the scientific and literary books and papers of Welsh medical men; books about medicine in Wales and the Border; and books on medicine in Welsh. Welshness is widely interpreted to cover authors of Welsh descent, or who were for some time domiciled in Wales. The second part, an Appendix, brings the list up to 1979 with books and papers on Welsh medical history and philosophy, but excluding strictly medical and surgical scientific works written after 1948. In addition, there are many subject headings in the text which are neatly cross-referenced to particular authors. The layout and proof-reading of the book are excellent, and make it easy to discover whatever bibliographical information is required. It is therefore all the more surprising to record that the book bears the same title as a collection of essays edited by the same author in 1975. Where so much has been made clear, it is a pity that a source of confusion should have been needlessly introduced.

KURT MÜLLER, HEINRICH SCHEPERS, WILHELM TOTOK (editors), *Leibniz à Paris (1672–1676)* (Studia Leibnitiana Supplementa XVII, XVIII), Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1978, 8vo, pp. 242, 170, DM. 88.00.

These trilingual conference papers examine Leibniz' three-year sojourn in Paris from 1672 to 1676, which also included his first visit to England, though not his first contacts there. Volume I

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covers his mathematical thought, which matured dramatically during this period, and his scientific ideas. Professor Hall's paper on his contacts with English mathematicians, and Mrs. Hall's on the fruitful influence exerted by the Royal Society are of particular interest. Volume II deals with Leibniz' thought in various fields of philosophy, including philosophical theology.

Edinburgh's Infirmary: The 250th and 100th anniversaries of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh and the 100th Anniversary of the Simpson Memorial Maternity Pavilion, (A Symposium arranged under the auspices of the Scottish Society of the History of Medicine on 27 October 1979 in the George Square Lecture Theatre, Edinburgh), Edinburgh, Lothian Health Board, 1979, 50p.

This slim volume of essays was published to commemorate the founding of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh in 1729. It is most valuable for its inclusion of a paper by Rosalie Stott on the role of the Incorporation of Surgeons in the development of medicine in Edinburgh. Short and without footnotes as the paper is (clearly editorial policy), its point is to challenge the orthodox view that the medical teaching was all that mattered in Edinburgh. Rather, she claims, only when Cullen arrived was medical teaching deliberately brought into line with what the surgeons had long since been doing: teaching systematically. An expanded version of this argument ought to find its way into the literature.

MICHAEL GELFAND, *Midwifery in tropical Africa – the growth of maternity services in Rhodesia*, supplement to *Zambesia*. *The Journal of the University of Rhodesia*, 1978, 8vo. pp. viii, 87, illus., [no price stated].

This is the latest of Professor Gelfand's contributions to the medical history of Rhodesia and is largely based on original sources in the National Archives of Rhodesia. In his earlier account of the history of the health service for Africans (*A service to the sick*, 1976, reviewed in *Med. Hist.*, 1977, 21: 212) maternity services were only briefly touched upon. In fact maternity services for the African population hardly began in Rhodesia until the 1920s and the bulk of the book under review deals with midwifery for the Europeans, from the first European birth in Mashonaland in 1892 up to modern times. From their earliest years in Southern Rhodesia the white settlers strove to increase the size of their population in relation to the Africans and every effort was made in their towns, large and small, to provide modern nursing homes staffed by trained midwives. One of the earliest European midwives was a completely untrained and illiterate German woman, Mrs. Krienke, who practised in Salisbury in the 1890s. In this informative book Professor Gelfand traces the development of maternity services from these primitive beginnings until, in the 1950s, over 97 per cent of European births took place in hospital and the infant mortality rate was actually lower than that in England. The book contains some well-chosen illustrations and reproductions of a number of interesting documents.

K. DAVID PATTERSON, *Infectious diseases in twentieth-century Africa: a bibliography of their distribution and consequences*, Waltham, Mass., Crossroads Press, 1979, 4to, pp. xiii, 251, \$25.00.

This bibliography consists of 3,481 references arranged under disease headings, plus an author and a geographical index. The author states that "citations have been chosen to show the history, distribution, incidence, prevalence and consequences of communicable diseases, and their behaviour", for the whole of Africa south of the Sahara, and that "all the significant diseases caused by micro-organisms, fungi and metazoans, have been dealt with". This can scarcely be achieved in a bibliography of less than 3,500 references and inevitably some important diseases are most inadequately covered and others not mentioned at all. Thus there are only six references to pneumonia, seven to pertussis, and seventeen to typhoid fever, and one looks in vain, for example, for references to any of the diseases caused by the haemolytic streptococcus or mycobacteria other than the tubercle bacillus. The *Salmonella* receive only meagre mention in the section devoted to 'Dysentery and Diarrhoea' which is a hotchpotch of references not only to the *Shigella* but to amoeba, rotaviruses, etc.

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LOIS N. MAGNER, *A history of the life sciences*, Basle and New York, Marcel Dekker, 1980, pp. xi, 489, illus., S.Fr. 53.00.

Lois Magner works in a history department and is interested in Darwin and feminist thought. Sufficient credentials at first sight to have suggested that this might not be a whiggish volume. It is, however, the author's training in biochemistry saving the day. The book is the product of extremely wide research in the earlier secondary literature; it is very comprehensive and surprisingly free of factual errors. It shows little familiarity with more recent work though, and it is hard to see what it adds to older material. The approach is generally biographical and displays how various individuals did or did not contribute to the seemingly unproblematical concept "science".

CHARLOTTE ERICHSEN-BROWN, *Use of plants for the past 500 years*, Aurora, Ontario, Breezy Creeks Press, 1979, 8vo, pp. xxii, 510, illus., \$24.95

The author sets for herself an ambitious task: chronicling all the uses of plants, native to eastern North America or introduced by either aboriginal peoples or settlers from Europe. Direct quotations (in English) from sources as diverse as an Icelandic medical manuscript of 1475 to *The barefoot doctor's manual* are grouped chronologically under each plant and the plants in turn are grouped more or less by habitat. Many species are represented by line drawings and are briefly described. The trees and shrubs have been moved to separate sections and as the author states: "where different species, growing in different habitats, were used for the same purpose, I have placed them together." Amateur collectors, to whom this book is directed, may be justly excused for finding this egregious arrangement bewildering.

Historians are not better served. The lengthy introduction, desultory in both style and purpose, reflects a view of social history North America should have been rid of with James Fennimore Cooper. From the body of the book, however, may be gleaned a sufficient amount of the curious and surprising to help excuse what comes before. Moreover, one must applaud the industry of the author and her friends, who have no doubt spent years assembling the contents. If Erichsen-Brown had then limited herself to what is obviously her chief interest, medical uses of North American plants, this would have been a better, shorter book. But the intrusion now and again of material about the useful plants of China or of Noble Savages engaged in the delicate arts of the forest do nothing to mitigate countless errors in spelling and grammar, all together revealing a lack of the polish, discipline, and perspective that ought to be demanded of serious scholarship.

KAMRAN S. MOGHISSI (editor), *Controversies in contraception*, Baltimore, Md., Williams & Wilkins, 1979, 8vo, pp. xi, 238, [no price stated].

The use of contraceptives involves a number of ethical, demographic, and medical issues. It is the medical controversies which are the subject of this collection of essays. Its authors summarize current knowledge of the risks, side-effects, dosages, and indications for a variety of oral and mechanical forms of contraception.

JEAN D. DAWES and J. R. MAGILTON, *The cemetery of St. Helen-on-the-Walls, Aldwark*, (The archaeology of York, vol. 12; The Medieval cemeteries, 1) York, for York Archaeological Trust by the Council of British Archaeology, 1980, 8vo, pp. 120, illus., £9.50 (paperback).

This careful publication of over 1,100 burials from a medieval York cemetery in use from the tenth to the sixteenth century can be warmly recommended to students of palaeopathology and medieval society. The findings from York have been compared with other population statistics and burials from elsewhere in the North over the whole spectrum from the Iron Age onwards. They suggest that medieval man was taller than his "Anglo-Saxon" predecessor and of roughly the same height as his successors down to this century. One peculiarity may be that these burials show, as well as the expected high child mortality, a greater life expectancy for men over thirty-five than for women. Serious injury as a cause of death is here surprisingly rare, and more might have been said about no. 5556, where syphilis is conjectured.

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WOLFGANG GENSCHOREK, *Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland*, Leipzig, S. Hirzel, 1976, 8vo, pp. 202, illus., M. 24.00.

Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland (1762–1836) is known chiefly for his work on the prolongation of life, published in countless editions in numerous languages. He advocated moderation in all things, early rising, regular habits, and other details of personal hygiene by no means taken for granted in the eighteenth century. His doctoral thesis had been on the use of electricity in cases of suspended animation. His first textbook was on the influence of the life force on the origins of diseases and the form they take. The book under review regards the social background of Hufeland's life from the Marxist point of view. This does not affect the description of his work and ideas, and the book is a good introduction to the subject.

NANCY DISHER BAIRD, *Luke Pryor Blackburn. Physician, governor, reformer*, Lexington, Ky., University Press of Kentucky (The Kentucky Bicentennial Bookshelf), 1979, 8vo, pp. viii, 128 [no price stated]; and *David Wendell Yandell. Physician of Old Louisville*, University Press of Kentucky, etc., 1978, 8vo, pp. xi, 116, \$4.95.

These two small books are biographies of nineteenth-century Kentucky physicians. Blackburn was, in addition, a governor of the state. More interesting is the charge that he attempted to spread yellow fever in the northern cities during the Civil War. Yandell, by contrast, led a quiet life at the University of Louisville. Neither of these books is intended as a bold historical work. But both are well researched, adequately documented, and written in the appropriate biographical style: "On a rainy September evening . . ." (*Blackburn*, p. 1).

DIETRICH TUTZKE (editor), *Geschichte der Medizin*, Berlin, DDR, VEB Verlag Volk und Gesundheit, 1980, 8vo, pp. 248; illus., M. 15.00.

This well-illustrated book should not be dismissed as unbalanced, tendentious, dogmatic, and partisan, an impression strengthened by its bibliography of marxist sheep and bourgeois goats, for there is much to ponder in Georg Harig's survey of medicine before 1700 and the clear account of social medicine in East Germany and Russia since 1945 concisely documents medical progress. A comparison with similar "imperialist" statistics would have shown also the qualitative extent of these changes. The pathos of plate 51 is diminished by a wrong caption.

P. W. VAN DER HORST, *Aelius Aristides and the New Testament*. (Studia ad Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti 6), Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1980, 8vo, pp. ix, 115, Dfl. 36.00.

The orations of Aristides (117–180) are a major source for the understanding of religious healing in classical antiquity. In this competent study Dr. van der Horst presents linguistic and thematic parallels between Aristides and the New Testament, and shows that the miracles of Asclepius were described and received in the same language as those of Jesus. His results will encourage those who ascribe the spread of Christianity in part to its success as a healing religion and who view the second-century resurgence of Asclepius-cult as a competitive challenge to Christian belief.

CYRIL ELGOOD, *A medical history of Persia and the Eastern Caliphate*, Amsterdam, APA-Philo Press, 1979, (1st ed., 1951), 8vo, pp. xvi, 617, illus., Dfl. 120.00.

Dr. Elgood's history fully deserves its reissue together with a few of the author's notes and corrections. Although its enthusiastic positivism is a little dated and many of its judgments on medieval Arabic medicine are now open to question, its account of the Persian acceptance of Western medical thought and institutions remains valuable. No other area of the Middle East has received equivalent attention, and it is to be feared that the greater growth of nationalism will hamper any production of a much-needed critical account of the Arabic medical heritage as it developed or declined after the thirteenth century A.D.

CHARLES LICHTENTHAELER, *Chronologische und gedankliche Bezugssysteme in und um 'Über die alte Medizin'*, Geneva, Librairie Droz, 1980, 8vo, pp. 30, [no price stated].

The dating and interrelationship of Hippocratic texts is very problematic, but this attempt to

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give a context to 'On ancient medicine' is, on the whole, more subtle in its execution than most. It dates the tract to the second quarter of the fourth century B.C., and ascribes it to a lay sophist, well acquainted with philosophical and medical jargon. Even if not entirely convincing in its arguments (cf. G. E. R. Lloyd, *Magic, reason and experience*, 1979, pp. 89, 95, 135), it offers a clear and optimistic way of resolving some of the difficulties at which it points.

JOHN CULE, *A doctor for the people. 2000 years of general practice in Britain*, London, Dordrecht, Boston, Update Books, 1980, 4to, pp. iii, 145, illus., £13.50.

Dr. Cule gives us both more and less than his title suggests. His broad range of interests from old Welsh law to Renaissance pharmacopoeias enables him to paint an unusual and attractive picture of medicine before 1800. However, where the source material is more extensive, as with the modern period, which ends with the formation of the National Health Service, his pointillist method tends to a dogmatic bittiness, which is not helped by the proliferation of minor factual errors. A similar division can be made among the illustrations, where those that accompany the later chapters do not add much to our understanding of the text. On the other hand, the plates of medieval manuscripts and early printed books are not only beautiful but also unfamiliar. The Welsh Mostyn 88, from the National Library of Wales, is clearly a manuscript that demands further study of its part in the transmission of medieval medical ideas.

APULEIUS, *Herbarium Apulei, 1481; Herbolario volgare, 1522*, Milan, Edizioni Il Polifilo, 1979, 2 vols., 8vo, pp. cxxii + 566, illus., L. 85,000.

This reprint of two early printed herbals is prefaced by brief introductory essays (in both Italian and English) by E. Caprotti and W. T. Stearn. The new indexes at the end of the *Herbolario* are of particular value as they include botanical identifications of the plants discussed, many of them newly suggested by Professor Albergoni of Milan.

LUIS SANCHEZ-GRANJEL SANTANDER and LUIS S. GRANJEL, *El colera y la España ochocentista*, (University of Salamanca, Trabajos de la Catedra de Historia de la Medicina, 4), University of Salamanca, 1980, 8vo, pp. 52, [no price stated]. (paperback).

The two short studies contained in this book were prepared for the seventh Spanish National Conference on Microbiology (Cadiz, 1979). The first concerns the medical literature on cholera published in nineteenth-century Spain, a total of 210 monographs. The second deals with the early history of microbiology in Spain and the contribution of Jaime Ferran (1852–1929), whose controversial cholera vaccine, based on live cholera vibrios, was developed in 1885. The brevity of these studies, which are without footnotes, permits only a cursory investigation of their subjects, but there is a useful bibliography of secondary sources.

FRANK SMYTH, *Cause of death. The story of forensic science*, London, Orbis, 1980, 8vo, pp. 256, illus., £5.95.

The investigation of a murder is an integration of techniques practised by a number of specialists: pathologist, toxicologist, psychologist, together with fingerprint and fraud experts, amongst others. The author of this book, who is a journalist, surveys the whole field of crime detection. It makes entertaining, if at times harrowing, reading and no doubt it may be of value to those interested in the history of forensic science. However, there is no documentation and it is likely that its main audience will be ghoulish readers fascinated by violent death.