

## Book Reviews

but there has been neglect of systematic study of the development of medicine, and of medical services, in the smaller geographical areas – the large town, the city, or the country.

It was, therefore, a pleasure to prepare to welcome to a very meagrely furnished shelf in the library Anning's *History of medicine in Leeds*. Regrettably, the welcome has to be somewhat qualified, for Anning's book is less a history of medicine in Leeds than a history of a number of medical institutions in Leeds. A great part of it is devoted to the General Infirmary at Leeds, the medical and surgical practice carried on there, and those associated with it. There are also, however, interesting accounts of the Dispensary and the House of Recovery, and these are of particular value, since these forms of medical institution have roused the interest of fewer medical historians than have the voluntary hospitals.

Seven of the thirteen chapters in the book have already appeared in various journals, and one in a published congress report. The form adopted – the reprinting of previous articles – does lead to some repetition, which can be irritating; and it is a pity that the form of reference used in the final chapter follows the convention of the journal in which it originally appeared rather than that adopted in the remainder of the volume.

These blemishes, however, are not major ones, and there are many things of interest for the general historian, medical or non-medical, as well as for those concerned with the history of Leeds itself. The note on cholera in the chapter on the House of Recovery, for example, draws attention to a report in the *Leeds Intelligencer* of June 1831 that rags from continental hospitals were being imported through Hull for the manuring of hop gardens, and a case of cholera occurred in Hull the following month. The account of operations undertaken in the General Infirmary in 1823 demonstrates, sometimes in horrifying detail, the immense fortitude required of surgical patients before the days of anaesthesia, and the chapter on the use of alcohol in the Infirmary shows that a primitive controlled trial could be proposed in 1883, and medical audit in 1896.

The non-medical historians of Yorkshire and Leeds will be particularly grateful to Dr. Anning for having brought these articles together in an easily accessible form, but medical historians also will find profit and pleasure from reading Dr. Anning's new book.

W. B. Howie  
Aberdeen

I. G. JONES, *Health, wealth and politics in Victorian Wales*, University College of Swansea, 1979, 8vo, pp. 39, [no price stated], (paperback).

Professor Ieuan Gwynedd Jones in his E. Ernest Hughes Memorial Lectures of 1978 examines the thesis that, in Victorian Wales, a preoccupation with health and amenities stimulated political activity. He illustrates its divergencies in the communities of industrial Morryston and rural Bala.

When in 1859 Mr. Henry Hussey Vivian bought an abandoned zinc spelter works at Morryston with the intention of restarting the furnaces, Mr. William Jowett was

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alarmed. He was so alarmed that he sought the advice of the Secretary of State of the Home Department to see whether the Public Health Act of 1858 could be invoked to prevent the pollution and danger to public health he feared would inevitably follow. His earlier approaches to Vivian had been rebuffed with the riposte that no one else had complained. Jowett replied that no one dependent on him dared do so openly; “but apply the Ballot and then see how matters stand”.

At about the same time, George Price Lloyd was petitioning the same Secretary of State on behalf of the ratepayers of Bala for the sewerage, water, and lighting facilities available under the 1858 Local Government Act. In this he was opposed by R. W. Price, one of the richest landowners in Merioneth; “for”, said Mr Price, “there does not exist within the said Town any occasion for the said Act, owing to the poverty of the Inhabitants and the small amount of rateable Property.”

In the event, it was the quiet rural community and not the working class of industry which led the way in radical public health reform. Professor Jones, in these two interesting lectures, discusses the various forces that led to this apparently paradoxical result.

John Cule  
Llandysul

ARTHUR DONOVAN and JOSEPH PRENTISS, *James Hutton's medical dissertation. (Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, vol. 70, pt. 6), Philadelphia, 1980, 4to, pp. 57, \$8.00 (paperback).*

In 1749, James Hutton submitted an inaugural dissertation, *De sanguine et circulatione microcosmi* for his medical doctorate at Leiden. Because it has never been translated, it has been almost unused by historians of the Scottish Enlightenment and historians of geology (an article by François Ellenberger being an honourable exception), though various historians have drawn attention to the fact that its title already seems to offer harbingers of Hutton's later interests in circulation, and in micro-macrocosm relations. From now there is no excuse for neglect, for Professors Donovan and Prentiss have produced a splendid edition, reprinting the dissertation in Latin, translating it into English (with necessary technical annotations) and providing an illuminating introduction.

At first sight it is surprising that the editorial introduction chooses to say almost nothing about the relations between this early dissertation and Hutton's later geological, chemical, physical, and metaphysical writings. It is, however, a subtle and wise decision. It might have been very tempting to try an entirely new interpretation of Hutton's geology predicated upon reading the geology back into the medical dissertation. But as the editors see, that would have proved almost wholly misleading. There are many intellectual chasms separating the Hutton of 1749 from the Hutton of the *Theory of the earth* (1795), not least the science and philosophy he was to pick up from Black, Smith, and Hume. Rather, what the editors have sensibly done, is to locate the dissertation in its contemporary contexts, principally Boerhaavian medicine, eclectic traditions of chemistry popularized by encyclopaedias and writers such as Peter Shaw, and the increasing anarchy amongst schismatic “Newtonians”. They use Hutton's dissertation as a lens through which to focus attention upon the