

### Book Reviews

I may be prejudiced) that in the Oxford *History* our contributors often – not invariably – tended towards the “problems and solutions” form of analysis. The French treatment certainly has the merit, for which it has been praised, of presenting at least in some contexts a greater wealth of technical detail. All who are interested in technology (but not medical technology!) will wish to refer to these excellent volumes and have indeed done so for a good many years past.

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JÜRGEN PÜSCHEL, *Die Geschichte des German Hospital in London (1845 bis 1948)* (Studien zur Geschichte der Krankenhauswesens, vol. 14, edited by Axel Hinrich Murken), Münster, Murken-Altrogge, 1980, 8vo, pp. 207, illus., DM. 18.00 (paperback).

In 1843 Dr. J. H. C. Freund, physician (later director of the German Hospital), and the pastor of one of the German congregations in London, Sydow, were convinced of the urgent need for a hospital where the German language would be spoken. The existence of about 50,000 Germans in London, most of whom were workers who spoke English badly or not at all, justified large-scale planning for a hospital where patients could make themselves understood and need not live in isolation. Negotiations with the mother country were taken up by the ambassador, Freiherr Christian von Bunsen, and resulted in a response from German royalty and other donors that exceeded all expectations.

In 1845 the German Hospital in Dalston was opened with thirty-six beds. Administration was on the lines of the English voluntary hospital: admission, however, was granted on the condition that the sick applicant was German-speaking; governors' letters were not required. With a dispensary for out-patients and growing numbers of beds, entrance to needy English patients of the district was eventually also granted. This helped to increase sympathy for the “ex-territorial” hospital among citizens in the neighbourhood and farther afield; numbers of English subscribers and individual donors grew, up to the time of World Wars I and II, when prosperity declined.

The medical staff and visiting consultants were either born Germans or German-speaking Englishmen. Nurses were recruited from Pastor Fliedner's Deaconess schools in Kaiserswerth and Darmstadt, later from Bodelschwing's institution in Bethel. This fact explains why, at a time before the introduction of Florence Nightingale's nursing reforms, standards of cleanliness and nursing care were higher than those at other hospitals, whose mortality figures were many times greater. Dr. Püschel bases this revealing comparison on hospital records and Ruth Hodgkinson's quotations from Nightingale reports.

Before the second world war the German Hospital had 224 beds, a convalescent home, a wing for paying patients, a nurses' home, specialists, and allocated beds in specialist hospitals. According to Dr. W. Pagel, it was “the most modern and best equipped hospital in London”.

The post-war incorporation into the National Health Service caused an almost total

## Book Reviews

disappearance of national characteristics, except for the name.

Whilst most hospitals' histories are written by members of staff whose warmth in partially remembered narrative and anecdotal detail appeals to readers, this book seems at first glance somewhat dry. Also, one looks in vain for specialized case histories. On the other hand, meticulous attention is given to a vast amount of primary sources, among them ninety-nine volumes of hospital records and a list of ninety-five secondary sources in English and German. There is an instructive report of new architecture analysed with regard to Nightingale principles of ventilation and calculation of bed space. Statistical diagrams illustrate lucidly the rise and fall of patients' numbers and their national mixture. An index of doctors provides the optimum of available biographical detail. Clarity of style and structure distinguish this book as an exemplary monograph in the series of *Studies in the History of Hospitals*.

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DIETER JETTER, *Geschichte des Hospitals, Band 4: Spanien von den Anfängen bis um 1500*, Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1980, 8vo, pp. viii, 239, illus., DM. 74.00 (paperback).

This exhaustive survey of medieval hospitals in Spain (and in neighbouring Morocco) lives up to the high standards of its predecessors, and its maps and plans will be extremely valuable. Professor Jetter ranges widely from the Greek temples of Asclepius, through the Romans and their legionary hospital at Leon, to the Visigoths, Arabs, and the Christian monastic and charitable orders. He brings out the differences between the type of building favoured by each group, and stresses the multiplicity of functions of the medieval pilgrim hostels (cf. J. Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 1975, pp. 198–202). The discussion of the literary evidence is at times unnecessarily complicated by a desire to include all mentions of a particular point in the secondary literature, errors and all, often before the actual evidence is given, but it is well to be reminded of the chaos that can follow from an uncritical reliance on second-hand information. For the sake of completeness, I offer the theory of Schulten that there was a hospital at the Roman siege camp of Numantia, and, more solidly, a dedication to four healing gods at Leon, including Aesculapius and Salus (AE 1967, 223). Professor Jetter has amply fulfilled his aim, and there is no longer any excuse for scholars North of the Pyrenees to remain in ignorance of the variety and magnificence of the hospitals of medieval Spain.

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DIETRICH KURZE (editor), *Büchelin wye der Mensch bewar das Leben sein. Eine Mittelalterliche Gesundheitslehre in Lateinisch-Deutschen Versen*, Wiesbaden, Guido Pressler, 1980, 8vo, pp. 173, illus., DM. 96.00.

Judging from the thick plastic slip jacket, the royal blue cover, the fine, thick paper, numerous photographic plates, facing-page facsimiles, vast margins and excellent typeface, the reader may be forgiven for expecting something of greater moment than