

### Book Reviews

MICHAEL McVAUGH, *Arnaldi de Villanova Aphorismi de Gradibus*, Arnaldi de Villanova Opera medica omni, II, Barcelona, Granada, Seminarium Historiae Medicae Granatensis, 1975, pp. xiv, 338, \$18.00.

The chair of the History of Medicine at Granada is of very recent origin, but already it has made its mark on the world of scholarship, due entirely to the indefatigable efforts of its incumbent, Professor Luis García-Ballester. The present volume is the second in the series which, under his aegis, will publish all the medical works of that remarkable character, Arnald of Villanova, whose writings have been buried for too long in ancient folios difficult of access. No better editor for this particular text could have been found than Michael McVaugh, who for the past fifteen years has concentrated his attention on the theories connected with the quantification of medicine during the medieval period. This subject cannot be recommended for bedside reading and it is only because the editor has a complete grasp of the material and a very lucid manner of explaining its intricacies that it is at all intelligible to the ordinary reader. In a way it is a pity that the series should have been introduced by a text which makes such demands upon the student, who must sooner or later flounder in the morass of mathematical and philosophical terms, and one could have hoped that Arnald could have made his appearance in a more engaging garb. However, that said, it must be agreed that the high level of scholarship displayed in this volume is a most promising augury for the series as a whole.

The book falls into three parts: an introduction followed by six chapters on the various theories of pharmacy in the Middle Ages; the actual text of the *Aphorismi de gradibus* with a commentary by the editor; two appendices giving the texts of al-Kindi and Averroës for comparison, and a full bibliography with an index of manuscripts (missing from the reviewer's copy). The opening introductory matter deals successively with the conceptual background to medieval pharmacy, the theories current in the thirteenth century, the mathematical pharmacy of the Arabs with the conflicting views of al-Kindi and Averroës, Arnald's original contribution to this discussion, and the interesting revival of al-Kindi's ideas by the natural philosophers of the Merton School at Oxford in the fourteenth century. In the course of these chapters the editor takes the reader step by step from the initial question whether compound medicines are necessary to the more complicated problems connected with the principles, both mathematical and philosophical, on which those compounds are to be based. On the way he tosses off some *obiter dicta* of more than passing interest and importance, as, for instance, that Bacon and John of St. Amand were at Paris together, that the *de gradibus* attributed to Bacon belongs to a later period, and that the *Colliget* of Averroës was translated, not in 1255, but thirty years later, details that show the thoroughness with which the editor has approached his task. On the other hand, in the fourth chapter which deals specifically with Arnald's works there is no mention of the suggestion put forward by D'Arcy Power that the *Regimen sanitatis ad inclitum regem Aragonum* may have owed something to Bacon's treatment of a similar subject. The actual text of Arnald's *Aphorismi de gradibus* is about half the length of the editor's explanatory remarks and is fairly easy-going once the reader has mastered the technical terms and phraseology. Surprisingly enough the text is based on a manuscript from Merton College, Spain apparently supplying no

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manuscript at all and France only one of doubtful value. The editor has wisely confined himself to registering only those variants which have significance for the understanding of the text and in this way has eliminated much useless matter from the *apparatus criticus*.

The printing and layout of the book are excellent and there are few misprints, a tribute both to the printers and the proof-readers. All concerned in this enterprise deserve high praise, but none more than the actual editor, who has set the standard for other writers in the series to maintain.

C. T. ANDREWS, *The first Cornish hospital*, privately printed, 1975, 8vo, pp. 5 11. +225, illus., £3.75. [Copies obtainable from the author: 9 Tremorvah Barton, Truro, Cornwall TR1 1NN.]

Histories of relatively obscure provincial hospitals tend to be parochial, superficial and lacking in general interest because they are usually written for a local audience. This book, however, is quite different. It gives a vivid story of the Royal Cornwall Hospital from its foundation in the last few years of the eighteenth century to the 1930s, and has been well researched and well written. Moreover, the evolution of the hospital is depicted against a background of the working-class people it was created to serve. It is, therefore, a significant contribution to the history of hospitals and can be enthusiastically recommended as such. The nursing as well as the medical services are also considered, so that those interested in the history of nursing, together with historians of medicine, will find Dr. Andrews' book most valuable. As A. L. Rowse in his introduction says, it is an admirable book. In addition it has been written by a man who has himself been no mean contributor to the hospital's history and renown.

JOHN STUART BATTS, *British manuscript diaries of the 19th century; an annotated listing*, Fontwell, Centaur Press, 1976, 8vo, pp. xi, 345, £10.00.

The diary's usefulness as a historical source is obvious, but the way in which relevant ones may be found is not. Matthews' *British Diaries* of 1950 covers the period of 1442 to 1942, but Dr. Batts has limited his list to the nineteenth century because of the increasing interest in this period, the greater availability now of its manuscript materials, thanks mainly to archival services, and the number of diaries available. Only manuscript diaries are recorded here, and there is some overlap with Matthews, but with corrections and additions where necessary. The format follows that of *British diaries*, with a chronological listing, 1800 to 1899, the date being the year that the diary was begun; within each year the arrangement is alphabetical. Each entry gives a brief note on the author and his dates, the contents of the diary and its present whereabouts. At the end there are indexes of diarists and of subjects, where at least forty-six members of the medical profession are listed: doctors (7), physicians (9), and surgeons (30). It would be interesting to know why surgeons are so articulate.

Clearly this book will become an essential source-book for all historians of the nineteenth century, and each will be indebted to Dr. Batts for being made aware of all these treasures.