

Book Reviews

disease. One first-class original contribution, by John Brooke, compares the images of Whewell and Priestley as nineteenth-century caricatures embellished by twentieth-century sociologists. McEvoy summarizes his well-documented analysis of Priestley. Many of the other papers, based on exegesis of particular sides of Priestley's complex thoughts, connect perhaps too little with the original significance of the man: his chemical experiments and indeed with the catalogue at the back of the book. However the volume does provide an impression of the intellectual anatomy of this eccentric and elusive figure. One does begin to look at the well-reproduced pictures of his apparatus with a better sense of his Faustian world. Historians looking for a fascinating project should read the book and dream.

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F. J. J. VAN ASSEN and others (editors), *Een eeuw vrouwenarts*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1987, 8vo, pp. 313, illus., Dfl. 39.00.

As part of its centenary celebrations, the Dutch Society of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (NVOG) produced a memorial book with the title *One hundred years of women's doctors* (the German "Frauenarzt"). It contains a history of the Society, based on the minutes of its meetings, as well as articles dealing with the development of the speciality in The Netherlands and its former colonies, Indonesia, Surinam, and the Dutch West Indies.

Although the book's editors include some historians of medicine, almost all the contributions were written by members of the Society, themselves doctors, which makes for a sympathetic but generally "whiggish" approach towards the past. The book was obviously written, in the first place, for Dutch obstetricians and gynaecologists. Its significance for the historian of medicine is principally as a source of anecdotes and personal reminiscences, but it is an interesting historical document in itself. Striking, for example, is the attitude to midwives to which the articles attest. Unlike most of their colleagues abroad, Dutch obstetricians have retained a positive attitude and have consistently argued that midwives' education be maintained at a high level. It is apparent that they have done so throughout the history of the NVOG. Female obstetricians and gynaecologists who have figured in the Society's past have not been forgotten and a special chapter is devoted to them. Wherever patients are mentioned, the tone is considered and respectful. This book then seems to me to be a true witness to the unique, woman-friendly character of Dutch obstetrics that persists despite growing demands for a more technical approach.

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JANE TURNER CENSER (editor), *The papers of Frederick Law Olmstead*, vol. IV, *Defending the Union: the Civil War and the U.S. Sanitary Commission 1861-1863*, Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986, 8vo, pp. xxv, 757, illus. £26.50.

Frederick Law Olmstead was one of the many gifted nineteenth-century amateurs who spread their talents over several areas. Best known for his description of the *ante bellum* South and for the creation of Central Park in New York City, he also planned parks and estates for Louisville and other American cities. Olmstead was drawn to the United States Sanitary Commission by his abolitionist zeal and his association with Henry W. Bellows, a Unitarian minister largely responsible for the organization of the Commission. The Sanitary Commission grew out of the desire by voluntary women's associations to aid the war effort in the North. Its original purpose was to serve as a central agency to gather and distribute food, clothing, and medical supplies to the Union soldiers, but the physicians who dominated the executive board also envisioned it as an agency to gather statistical and medical information on the troops. Olmstead, the first secretary of the newly-founded Commission, saw it as a means for teaching self-discipline,

sanitary science, and personal hygiene to the common soldiers. He appointed medical inspectors who, in the process of gathering information, would also serve as exponents of sanitation. The Union Army was woefully unprepared for hostilities, and the Medical Corps, under an octogenarian surgeon-general who had seen service in the War of 1812, was in a deplorable condition. Realizing that the limited funds and supplies of the Sanitary Commission could not possibly compensate for the inadequacies of the Medical Corps, Olmstead and his cohorts lobbied Congress for a medical corps reform bill. Their efforts were successful, and in April 1862, one year after the start of hostilities, an able surgeon-general was appointed.

The Medical Corps was not alone in being unprepared; the Olmstead papers reveal general confusion and disorganization in the first years of the war. They also show an equally unbelievable amount of callousness and lack of concern for the welfare of the soldiers on the parts of both officers and surgeons. Like earlier intelligent men, Olmstead recognized the correlation between the health of troops and their fighting qualities. With this in mind, the Commission worked to improve the calibre of army surgeons, distributed large amounts of fresh food, medical supplies, and blankets, inspected hospitals, aided sick and discharged soldiers, and gathered statistical information. By the time he resigned in 1863, Olmstead had created an effective administrative organization, contributed significantly to reforming the Medical Corps, and helped make the Sanitary Commission an important force for sanitary reform both in the armed services and in post-war America as a whole.

The editor has written an excellent introduction and provided a series of biographical sketches of the leading figures. Detailed footnotes make the correspondence and papers clear to even the most uninformed reader. For medical historians, the papers shed new light on the clashes between the Sanitary Commission and the many other voluntary civilian aid groups. In addition to providing insights into many areas of American history, this volume is essential reading for any student of Civil War medicine.

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JOHN P. SWANN, *Academic scientists and the pharmaceutical industry: cooperative research in twentieth-century America*, Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988, pp. xi, 249, illus., £22.50.

Systematic information about the relations between academic scientists and industry is hard to find. Many senior scientists act as consultants to many firms, but the terms under which they serve are seldom known and it is uncertain how far industry profits from their help. One may assume that industry would not make such arrangements without benefit to itself, but the extent to which universities profit from such contacts or suffer from the diversion of their most expert staff is more questionable.

At a time when governments are withdrawing some of the support to which universities became accustomed in the 1950s and 1960s, a well prepared account of one facet of such relationships is most welcome. By drawing on the papers of several important institutions and businesses in the United States, Swann has provided much previously unpublished knowledge and a wealth of illustration of the relationships involved. They began when the industry had such a reputation for unethical practices that the American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics refused membership to scientists employed by industry, and required its members to resign if they accepted such a post. It was difficult, however, to prevent respected members of the Society from acting as consultants to industry or to limit their involvement, and ultimately less sterile attitudes prevailed.

Consultancy took place at many levels. The most general is illustrated by the work of the formidable organic chemist Roger Adams in Illinois with Abbott Laboratories, and that of the great physiologist and pharmacologist A. N. Richards in Pennsylvania with the rapidly expanding American firm of Merck, which became independent of its German originators at the time of the First World War. Both men became directors on the main board of the companies