

## Book Reviews

H. R. DENHAM (compiler), *A catalogue of printed books in the Wellcome Historical Medical Library*, Volume III: *Books printed from 1641 to 1850, F–L*, London, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1976, 4to, pp. xvi, 565, £25.00 (\$55.00).

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The substantial work under notice fully rewards the patience with which it has been expected. It is a further landmark on the royal road which leads from F. N. L. Poynter's *Catalogue of the incunabula* (1954) to the *Catalogue of printed books before 1641* (1962), the *Catalogue of western manuscripts on medicine and science* (S. A. J. Moorat, 1962–73), and the predecessor of the present work dealing with the printed books 1641–1850, letters A to E (1966). These catalogues provide an epitome to the incalculable service which the Wellcome Library and Institute for the History of Medicine have offered to scholars, institutions, and the public at large these twenty-eight years under the never-failing vision and guidance of F. N. L. Poynter, followed after his retirement in December 1973 by their present Director, Dr. Edwin Clarke. To give a first idea of the importance of this third volume it is sufficient to quote the names of Harvey, Helmont, and Kircher, who partly belong to the second instalment, the old and later classics with new editions and translations after 1641, and such luminaries as J. P. Frank, Glisson, de Graaf, Hales, Haller, Friedrich Hoffmann, Hooke, the Hunters, Jenner, Laënnec, Larrey, Lavoisier, Linné, and Lower, whose *monumenta* are here listed in first and subsequent editions. The layout is in principle the same as before, but there are some felicitous alterations such as the recording of pseudonym authors or those with different original names under the adopted rather than their real names. One of the most gratifying features is the significantly increased number and volume of bibliographical notes including information on contents where there could be any doubt or argument—the result of much painstaking and devoted *ad hoc* research by the compiler, the chief cataloguer Mr. Denham, and his colleague Mr. H. J. M. Symons. Of such notes those on the following have impressed the reviewer: Gadbury (pp. 78–79), Gautier d'Agoty (p. 97), Samuel Hartlib (p. 216), John Howard (p. 306), Hecquet (p. 232), Kirchweger (author ? of the *Aurea catena*, 1723, p. 396), Dan. Langhans (pupil of Haller, p. 446), Le Clerc (p. 469), Leeuwenhoek (pp. 476–477), Lémery (p. 487), Lessius (p. 499), Lozeran du Fech (p. 554) and Joh. Lange of Hamburg (p. 444). Of association copies we mention Franklin's *Experiments on electricity*, 1769, with James Lind's signature and a note on Franklin's Epitaph by the cataloguer, Garmann *de miraculis mortuorum*, first and second edition with Robert Southey's autographs, Harvey, *Opera* 1766 presentation copy by Akenside to J. Dyson. Of *rara et rarissima* there are not a few: Galvani, Guericke, Glisson, Hahnemann, Laënnec (*Vers vésiculaires*, ?1809), Lower, Jenner (several with autographed presentation), Fauchard, and others. Additionally there are the rich holdings of the works of Floyer, J. P. Frank, Franklin, Galen, Glauber, Haller, Heister, Hippocrates, Fr. Hoffmann, Kircher, Martin Froben Ledermüller, Linné, Harvey's *Exercitationes duae* in both "first" editions (Cantabr. et Roterod., 1649) apart from most of the other editions of his works up to 1850, and the bulk of alchemical literature, mostly from the celebrated Ernst Darmstaedter-collection. It is impossible to go here into detail, also with regard to desiderata such as the 1643 Harvey-Walaeus

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(Padua), Fontana on Irritability (p. 37); the original editions of the theoretical and psychological works of P. C. Hartmann (p. 217); Dom. Jean Larrey, *Recueil*, of 1821, including the most "modern" parts on acu-puncture (*moxa*)—the English translation of his separate work on the subject being represented; the German translation of James Lind (*Versuch über auserlesene Mittel, die Schiffleute auf der Königlichen Flotte gesund zu erhalten . . . mit einem Anhang vom Scharbock*, Kopenhagen 1766) with the interesting annotations and parts by Joh. Christian Lange; the works of Ferdinand Jahn of whom there is only that on Sydenham, much of the secondary literature on Van Helmont—to mention but a few which occurred to the reviewer. Surprise findings are certain to catch the eye, such as an edition of Joh. Trithemius' *Steganographia* as late as 1721 (by Wolfgang Ernst Heidel, p. 233). The collations are invaluable and the omission of those for one-volume books with distinct parts and all the pluri- and multi-volume books and numbers of plates, however regrettable, must have had good technical reasons, such as notably the avoidance of delay in publication and an uncomfortable swelling of the volume. The items by authors with extremely similar names and years of publications are not rare and here the most careful and meticulous identification with biographical notes provided by the cataloguer will be of inestimable value and go far in protecting the scholar against confusion (e.g. the ten Gmelins, p. 127, including two Johann Georgs; Georg Franck v. Franckenau 1644–1704 and Georg Friedrich 1669–1732; Robert Hall 1763–1824 and 1764–1831 p. 197; no less than four Helvetius, pp. 242–244). Joh. Michael Faust (1663–1707) on p. 13, author of a commentated edition of the *Pandora* (1706), however, is not unlikely to be identical with the author of the two dissertations (Strassburg, 1684 and 1688) listed separately as if by two different persons.

No more than these few glimpses into a mine of information and treasures can be given. If there has ever been a first-class work of reference promising delightful hours of browsing for browsing's sake, here it is.

MING WONG, *La médecine chinoise par les plantes*, Paris, Editions Tchou, 1976, 8vo, pp. 284, illus., [no price stated].

Dr. Wong presents an account of traditional Chinese medicine in action. To introduce it there is a lengthy section on its development from the earliest times; then the general principles of herbal therapy are discussed, and the plants themselves. There is also a section on specific diseases and the treatments used. Acupuncture and moxibustion are given special attention.

It is of great interest to observe the practice of a type of medicine which was universal in the West until about forty years ago. We now employ the purified active principles of drugs, and gradually this itself is being replaced by synthetic preparations of great efficacy. It seems doubtful that the crude herbs alone can be as helpful, so that success with them must depend on part on supra-cortical influences on the patient, as must surely be the case with acupuncture.

Apart from the historical content it seems unlikely that many will be interested in a herbal pharmacopoeia. This, of course, applies to the orthodox practitioner, but there may be others in the fringe or marginal varieties of medicine who will derive benefit from this book.