

Book Reviews

publications, the opportunity arose to establish *Zentralblätter* and *Handbücher* for the various growing medical specialisms; by 1914, 75 per cent of the firm's output was in engineering and medicine and a largish group of German scientists found additional employment as advisers on monthly retainers. Sarkowski provides a gripping account of the dangerous thirties when the firm's Jewish genealogy and its high profile of Jewish authors and editors made it vulnerable to the discriminatory Ayrán employment regulations.

"Scientists cannot do without the industriousness of a publisher," said Rudolph Virchow, whose *Archiv für pathologische Anatomie* was taken over by Springer in 1920. That industriousness is revealed in detail in the second volume written by Heinz Götz, a former pathologist and member of the firm's management since 1949 who writes from personal experience rather than as an historian. Available in German since 1992 (volume 2, 1994), the fine English translations by Gerald Graham and Mary Schäfer demonstrate Springer's commitment to English as the *lingua franca* of science and medicine. At the same time, authors and publishers have produced a useful and absorbing account of the growth of European and international science publishing. The first volume, in particular, will form a valuable source of information and interpretation concerning the growth and significance of science publishing up to 1945.

W H Brock, University of Leicester

Adrian Desmond, *Huxley: evolution's high priest*, London, Michael Joseph, 1997, pp. xiv, 370, £20.00 (0-7181-3882-1).

When in 1994 *Huxley: the devil's disciple* appeared, some reviewers criticized the fact that Desmond ended his biography of Huxley with the year 1870, i.e., twenty-five years short of the actual end of Huxley's life. In the book, no indication was given that a second volume was in the making, to cover the last quarter century of Huxley's remarkable career. With

this new book, Desmond provides an effective answer to the early criticism (in the U.S., Desmond's two-volume Huxley biography has been published, more sensibly, as a single, 800-page book).

Another criticism of volume one concerned the extent to which Desmond portrayed Huxley as severely disadvantaged by his working-class background, having needed to wrestle his way up the social ladder, obstructed all the way by the vested interest of a rigid class system. Critics pointed out that for all his angry vilification of the establishment, Huxley did rather well out of it, having been elected to the Royal Society at the early age of twenty-five and having secured three choice metropolitan chairs before he was forty. Now, in the second volume, this criticism, too, is being answered, in that Desmond highlights the honour and power that were accumulated by Huxley. The pushy Tom Huxley of volume one, who "clawed his way from the East End slums to the presidency of the British Association for the Advancement of Science", has become, in volume two, "Evolution's High Priest", and as Privy Councillor to the Queen, part of the establishment.

This change of focus does not mean that the British class system is wielded less forcefully as an instrument of historical explanation in Desmond's second instalment of Huxley's life. In fact, in an extraordinarily frank and partially facetious—one presumes—autobiographical paragraph (p. 263), Desmond attributes his preference for writing the history of science in the form of the social turmoil of individual lives, to the social niche that his own ancestry occupied in British society. And indeed, it is the social constructionism, combined with Desmond's detailed and rich knowledge of the sources, that gives depth to his analysis of Huxley's many activities and a stimulating zest to the narrative style.

During the last quarter of his life, Huxley was less preoccupied with producing sustained scientific research than with working out the consequences of Darwin's theory for social, political and religious life. Desmond depicts Huxley as the leading figure to bring about the

changes that took place from the early Victorian to the modern age. The perception of a divinely designed world was transformed to that of a godless universe, and in the process Huxley famously coined "agnosticism". Desmond follows Bernard Lightman in ascribing religious qualities to Huxley's agnosticism. Specifically and most intriguingly, he characterizes Huxley as a Cromwellian Calvinist, relying in part on Mario di Gregorio's ponderings on the subject. This characterization is casually woven into the fabric of the story, without much argument. Anglican opponents of Huxley may well have agreed: connecting Huxley with Calvinism would have been like debasing two enemies by a single equation. Not many thoroughbred Calvinists, however, would recognize in Huxley a kindred spirit or even a renegade son, and the issue needs more discussion. Such points of possible disagreement apart, Desmond deserves sustained applause for this latest show of his remarkable scholarly productivity.

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Elizabeth Lomax, *Small and special: the development of hospitals for children in Victorian Britain*, *Medical History Supplement* No. 16, London, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1996, pp. vii, 217, illus., £25.00 (worldwide), \$38.00 (USA) (0-84584-064-8). Orders to Professional & Scientific Publications, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JR.

Children's hospitals, once so numerous, have suffered massive closures and before the few remaining finally disappear it seems appropriate to examine the circumstances which produced them in the first place. Elizabeth Lomax has not only distilled the essence from the many "celebratory" histories, she has made much better use of hospital archives and of available statistics than any previous publication. She has given us a well researched and dispassionate, but eminently

readable account of this important aspect of Victorian medicine. She has sketched in the concern for the sick children as voiced by Charles Dickens and the unhappy contradictions inherent in the provision made for them. The worst mortality was among the infants, yet those under two years were not admitted. The fevers were the major killers, yet the small children's hospitals could not isolate them and, until the Fever Hospitals were opened, there could be no rational admissions policy. Children's diseases were perceived as medical problems, yet the wards were filled with surgical cases, mostly tuberculous glands and joints.

The fund-raising problems were less acute than for other special hospitals since they were seen as proper subjects of charity, governed by the upper classes and run by medical men of integrity. They had serious difficulties over the nursing, ultimately solved by bringing in educated upper-class women as Lady Superintendents, who recruited lady probationers as potential ward sisters. Dr Lomax, true to the American belief in the rigidity of the British class system, makes a great point about the powerful influence on the Governors exerted by these superior persons in contrast to the relatively impotent and irredeemably middle-class physicians. To be fair, she might have mentioned that Howard Marsh, the surgeon, and Thomas Barlow, the physician, both married their well-born ward sisters and happily proved that the divide was not unbridgeable.

The clash between the founders and the Governors is well illustrated in London, Manchester and Birmingham; it was a feature of all the special hospitals as the quest for respectability took over from the innovatory zeal of the originator. The Children's Hospitals in Britain were remarkable in that until 1900 they failed to produce specialist paediatricians to fulfil the founder's mission as they did in other countries. Why not? Dr Lomax notes this anomaly but hardly explores it, citing only the undoubted truth that the care of adults was more remunerative than that of children. Yet if the inclination of the British to seek out