

Book Reviews

A Catalogue of Printed Books in the Wellcome Historical Medical Library. II—Books printed from 1641 to 1850 A—E, London, The Wellcome Historical Medical Library, 1966, pp. xi, 540, £10 10s.

The second part of the Wellcome Catalogue of Printed Books, of which this volume is the first instalment, covers a period much less fully explored by bibliographers and historians than the first volume which stopped at 1640. The limits of this new part of the Catalogue are arbitrary dates of convenience, starting before the foundation of the Royal Society and ending in the formative period of chemistry and cytology a decade before the impact of Darwin, for the Wellcome collection covers the matrix of natural science from which medicine cannot be divorced. On the other hand the authors listed in this first volume (the catalogue being alphabetically arranged by author-entry) are a fortuitous selection included because their initial falls between A and E. These include, besides authors native to the period, editions printed then of earlier and even ancient writers, providing a useful historical record of continued interest in these classic writers. The cataloguing formula is admirably concise and informative, indicating pagination, format and imprint. Naturally there are a few mistakes in such a large-scale work, but I have noticed none of importance.

A vast fund of medical and near-medical literature is here made accessible, this volume alone listing some 18,000 items, and it is particularly instructive to note the ample provision of unfamiliar German books and of continental versions of English classics, such as an Italian translation of Baillie's *Morbid Anatomy* or a Portuguese one of Currie's *Medical Reports*. There are splendid series of editions of, among others, Bartholin, Boerhaave, Robert Boyle, William Buchan, Cheselden, Culpeper, Thomas Denman, Kenelm Digby, as well as copies of such uncommon but important books as Arent Cant *Impetus primi anatomici* 1721, or William Briggs *Ophthalmographia* 1676. Several non-scientific writers appear for whom, as Dr. Poynter says in his Preface, 'explanation but no excuse might be expected', such as Bernadin de St. Pierre, 'Concordance' Cruden, George (as well as William) Cruikshank, Daniel Defoe, and John Evelyn. Dr. Poynter and his chief cataloguer Mr. H. R. Denham have been generous in recording the special points of individual books, their inscriptions, bookplates, etc.

No library is ever complete, and the publication of a catalogue brings an added benefit by drawing attention to desiderata. For instance the rich array of Sir Charles Bell's publications lacks one or two high-spots, while the varied writings of that interesting character Jean de Carro, the apostle of vaccination and promoter of Carlsbad, are very thinly represented. These lacunae may perhaps have been filled, just as Dr. Poynter points out that the fine collection of Americana in English and Spanish has been notably increased since the Catalogue was completed in 1962.

W. R. LEFANU.

History of the Trustees of the Hunterian Collection, by SIR VICTOR NEGUS, Edinburgh and London, E. & S. Livingstone, 1966, pp. viii, 140, plates, 30s.

When John Hunter died in 1793, his estate consisted chiefly of his unique collection