

Book Reviews

ANTOINETTE MANN PATERSON, *Francis Bacon and socialized science*, Springfield, Ill., C. C Thomas, 1973, 8vo, pp. ix, 191, \$10.95.

It is claimed that in this book Bacon “. . . is evaluated from within the boundaries of his own time . . .”, surely the only valid method available to the historian. The author is a philosopher and takes for her main theme the five ways in which she contends Bacon has been misunderstood: Bacon promised but did not provide a new method for the natural sciences; his statements on “anticipations” is usually misunderstood; the role of Italian natural philosophers in Bacon’s achievement is misunderstood; Bacon’s reconstruction of science was a reformed method of tradition with the sciences in direct interplay; the role of contemporary encyclopaedists has not been understood and Bacon’s support for them deserves recognition.

Professor Paterson tackles these problems in four chapters: method of learning reformed; method of tradition reformed; learned governor; the age of transformation (1400–2000). In so doing she gives an accurate exposition and account of Bacon’s work, frequently using his own words, and avoiding the outlandish claims of previous writers that have distorted him by making him the philosophical and scientific symbol of a new method. Like Aristotle, Bacon may not be responsible for all that appeared under his name and the roles of his brother Anthony and Queen Elizabeth in this are important.

The arguments and theses put forward are convincing enough, but no doubt will be refuted by some. A summary of them would have been valuable. Likewise more documentation would have been welcome, despite the author’s stated reasons for restricting it. There is, however, a ten-page bibliography.

J. H. REYNER in collaboration with GEORGE LAURENCE and CARL UPTON, *Psionic medicine. The study and treatment of the causative factors in illness*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974, 8vo, 4 11., pp. 139, illus., £2.00.

No doubt this book will be greeted with howls of derision, cries of incredulity and gales of laughter by the orthodox medical profession, especially over Dr. Laurence’s statement “. . . I am disappointed with the lack of progress in medicine. . . . Every day countless treatments and cures are advertised, but the majority of these are based on new synthetic chemicals—and causation has been ignored. . . .” Causation for these authors lies in the land of mysticism and parapsychology, that is *psi* function: dowsing, the etheric body, homeopathy, miasms and toxins, the unitary theory of disease, and other phenomena. There are to be found here fascinating aspects of disease previously undreamed of; thus infectious diseases can be classified in terms of their colour relationships and a diagnosis can be arrived at by the blood-spot which in one patient “. . . showed both syphilitic and tubercular miasms particularly affecting her brain and central nervous system [*sic*], but in addition she had an atypical bacillus coli in the bowel . . . and cellular dehydration”. (p. 123).

From the historical point of view fringe medicines are of great interest, beginning as they did in the late eighteenth century when a satisfactory theory of disease was lacking and therapy was limited and of little value. That they persist two hundred years later presents an important problem, which demands historical, scientific and sociological study.