

Book Notices

[EXHIBITION CATALOGUE], *Albrecht von Haller, 1708–1777*, Berne, Burgerbibliothek, 1977, 8vo, pp. 64, illus., [no price stated].

In October 1977, the 200th anniversary of Albrecht von Haller's death was commemorated by a symposium in Berne, Haller's birthplace. In conjunction with this symposium, Dr. Hans Haerberli, Dr. Urs Boschung and Herr Erwin Oberholzer prepared an exhibition on Haller containing manuscripts, works of art, books, metals, and other artefacts documenting the various facets of his incredibly productive life. This printed catalogue describes the objects which were on display. It contains, as coloured frontispiece, a fine portrait of Haller by Johann Rudolf Studer, and a useful bibliography of recent work about Haller.

A. RUPERT HALL and NORMAN SMITH (editors), *History of Technology*, 2nd annual volume, 1977, London, Mansell, 1977, 8vo, pp. [vi], 259, illus., £12.50.

A collection of eight articles dealing with a variety of topics: early suspension bridges; aspects of technology in Roman, Islamic, and Spanish cultures between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries; the vocabulary of technology; and the operating of early machinery. As in the first volume, each of the essays achieves a high standard of scholarship imposed by the editors. This serial is well on its way to becoming an outstanding component of the literature of the history of technology.

JOHN D. KEYS, *Chinese herbs. Their botany, chemistry, and pharmacodynamics*, London, Prentice-Hall International, 1976, 8vo, pp. 388, illus., £10.50.

More than two hundred and fifty herbs recognized by Chinese practitioners to be of medical value are described and illustrated in this book. The place and time of growth, a botanical account, the pharmacological contents and actions, and the therapeutic applications of each are given. There are also appendices listing mineral drugs, those of animal origin, a collection of Chinese prescriptions, a list of toxic herbs, and there is a glossary of botanical terms. However, it is not clear what value the book can have outside China, other than as a curiosity.

RICHARD LE STRANGE, *A history of herbal plants*, London, Angus & Robertson, 1977, 8vo, pp. xxii, 304, illus., £8.00.

Recently there has been a steady flow of books dealing with herbs. This one is claimed to be "a definitive book" and "a world-wide historical survey of some 750 herbs used by man through the ages". They are listed in alphabetical order, and each entry contains a description, a history, and an illustration. Unfortunately a great deal of the historical material is undocumented and the bibliography is only a reading list. There are useful indexes of botanical and vernacular names. On the whole, there seems to be little here that cannot be found in similar publications.

ERWIN H. ACKERKNECHT, *Kurze Geschichte der Medizin*, 3rd rev. ed., (1st. ed., 1955), Stuttgart, Enke, 1977, 8vo, pp. viii, 235, DM.16.80 (paperback).

Another edition of this well-known short history of medicine, considered by most to be the best available. Would that the English translation could be up-dated and made widely available.

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JOHN BROWN, *A memoir of Robert Blincoe, an orphan boy*, Firle, Sussex, Caliban Books, 1977, 8vo, pp. vi, 100 [facsimile], £6.00.

Brown's book appeared in 1828, after his death by suicide in 1825, and this is the third reprint of it. It is an important social document because it provides a classic account of working conditions in the cotton factories of the early nineteenth century, as well as Blincoe's personal experiences in a workhouse. It is claimed to be "one of the first working-class autobiographical memoirs ever to be published" and is, therefore, a noteworthy contribution to the history of industrial medicine, as well as to the economic and social history of nineteenth-century Britain.

CHARLES SHAW, *When I was a child*, Firle, Sussex, Caliban Books, 1977, 8vo, pp. viii, 258 [facsimile], £7.50.

Appearing first as a series of anonymous articles (1892–93), this book was first published pseudonymously in 1903. Its author, Charles Shaw (1832–1906), gave an autobiographical account of his traumatic childhood in the workhouse and of his work in the potteries. His story was used by Arnold Bennett in *Clayhanger*, and its reprinting now provides the economic and social historian with an important source of information on the worker's life in the Industrial Revolution. It is also of value to the historian of medicine, for there are many topics which supply first-hand details of the social background to disease.

GEORGE CHEYNE, *An essay of health and long life*, (London, 1724), facsimile edition, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977, 8vo, pp. xx, 232, £12.50.

SIR RICHARD BLACKMORE, *A treatise of the spleen and vapours: or, hypochondriacal and hysterical affections. With three discourses on the nature and cure of the cholick, melancholy, and palsies*, (London, 1725), facsimile edition, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977, 8vo, pp. xxxiv, 284, £12.50.

These are facsimile reproductions of the originals with no new material added, published in limited editions of 250 copies each. As they are both becoming scarce, these reprints will be welcomed.

American pharmacy in the Colonial and Revolutionary periods. A bicentennial symposium, Madison, Wis., American Institute of the History of Pharmacy, 1977, 8vo, pp. 48, illus., paperback [no price stated].

The four papers printed here were presented at a bicentennial symposium, held at New Orleans on 5 April 1976. They discuss pharmacy in British Colonial America, Franco-Spanish Louisiana, and in the American Revolution, and the medical and pharmaceutical care of the Hessian troops in the latter. They are well illustrated and well documented.

DOROTHY L. BARNES (compiler), *Rape: a bibliography 1965–1975*, Troy, N.Y., Whitston Publishing Co., 1977, 8vo, pp. xxi, 154, \$15.00.

A virtually comprehensive list of books and journal articles concerning all aspects of rape. Items are unannotated, and book titles are arranged alphabetically by author; article titles are set out alphabetically by title, subject, and author.

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HEINZ BALMER, *Albrecht von Haller*, Berne, P. Haupt, 1977, 4to, pp. 88, illus., S.Fr./DM.29.00.

The great Swiss doctor, botanist, bibliographer, encyclopaedist, and poet was born in 1708 and died on 12 December 1777. This excellent biography is to commemorate the latter. It deals first with his life in general, and then with his special activities and personality. It is elegantly illustrated, but the literature referred to is entirely in German.

MARJORIE NICOLSON, *Science and imagination*, Hamden, Conn., Archon Books (Shoestring Press), 1976, 8vo, pp. ix, 238, \$27.00.

In 1956 six of Professor Nicolson's well-known essays were collected together and published under this title. They consisted of her work on the effects of scientific discovery upon the literary imagination of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, dealing mainly with the telescope, the microscope, and astronomy. The book is now reprinted with no new material added.

ANN BECK, *Medicine and society in Tanganyika 1890–1930. A historical inquiry*, in *Trans. Amer. Philosoph. Soc.*, 1977, New Series, vol. 67, part 3, 4to, pp. 59, \$5.00.

Professor Beck has worked for many years on the history of medicine in East Africa, and this monograph is a further addition to her publications on her chosen topic. She evaluates the role of medicine in German East Africa and Tanganyika, and presents the extremely limited medical services as an integral part of Colonial history. One of the main interests in this work is the comparison that can be made between two varieties of administration, German and British, and the methods that were adopted for tackling identical problems.

HENRY CLARKE, *Drawings of Wakefield*, Wakefield Historical Society, 1977, 4to, pp. 97 + maps, illus., £3.60 (paperback).

Henry Clarke (M.D.[sic]Durh., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., L.S.A., 1874) was surgeon at Wakefield Prison from 1876 to 1908. His ninety-eight drawings, here elegantly reproduced with a separate list of legends, first appeared in 1889, and form a remarkable record of late nineteenth-century Wakefield. The edition is limited to one thousand, and will no doubt become a prized item to those interested in topography.

ANTONY BRETT-JAMES, *Life in Wellington's army*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1972, 8vo, pp. 358, illus., £5.00.

The renowned military historian, Mr. Brett-James, follows his book on *The British soldier in the Napoleonic wars 1793–1875* with one on all aspects of the Peninsular War and Wellington's armies. It is a scholarly treatise, replete with fascinating information concerning the social as well as the professional daily life of the officers and men when not in battle. There are chapters on billets, bivouac life, rations, pastimes, field sports, chaplains and religion, army wives, etc. Chapter 16 (pp. 250–270) deals with 'The wounded and sick', and in it there are perhaps too many accounts of the harrowing battle surgery of those days, without sufficient general principles and conclusions.

Nevertheless, this book is an important contribution to military history, and it will be of great value to those who deal with the medical aspects of it.

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MARC CRAMER and JEAN STAROBINSKI, *Centenaire de la Faculté de Médecine de l'Université de Genève (1876–1976)*, with bio-bibliographies by Marc -A. Barblan, Geneva, Éditions Médecine et Hygiène, 1976, 8vo, pp. xvi, 165, illus., S.Fr. 26.00 (paperback).

A detailed scholarly survey of the activities of the School, each chapter dealing with a medical specialty, ranging from anatomy and histology to legal medicine. There are also useful details of the founders and other outstanding men who have worked there, although, as there is no index, it is not easy to locate them.

DAVID H. SCOTT, *Walter C. Alvarez: American man of medicine*, New York, Van Nostrand, 1977, 8vo, pp. 380, £7.30.

When aged sixty-seven, Dr. Alvarez, a respected American physician born in 1884, became editor of *Modern Medicine*. A selection of his contributions to this journal has now been collected together, revealing the wide range of Dr. Alvarez's interests and knowledge. Titles of essays range from 'How it feels to go raving mad' to 'Facing the dying patient'. A number deal with historical topics, but all are at a superficial and non-documentary level. Nevertheless, they provide enjoyable and instructive reading.

MARTIN J. S. RUDWICK, *The meaning of fossils. Episodes in the history of palaeontology*, 2nd ed., New York, Science History Publications, 1977, 8vo, pp. [xiv], 286, illus., \$15.00 (\$6.95 paperback).

The reappearance of Professor Rudwick's book confirms its excellence and the fact that it was written for historians of science as well as palaeontologists and geologists. Its first edition was received enthusiastically, and this one should achieve additional plaudits. In a 'Preface' the author examines some of the criticisms levelled at the first edition, but unfortunately has been able to make no substantial changes to the text or to the references. The number of outstanding books on the history of geology are few, but this one can again be warmly recommended.

JOHN T. HITCHCOCK and REX L. JONES (editors), *Spirit possession in the Nepal Himalayas* (translations of French articles by Harriet Leva Beegun), Warminster, Wilts., Aris & Phillips, 1976, 8vo, pp. xxviii, 401, illus., £10.00.

Recently sixteen anthropologists have carried out field-work on spirit possession and shamanism amongst the Nepalese. This book contains the results of their investigations, and it examines the social, medical, religious, and psychical aspects of a fascinating phenomenon. After introductory papers, there are articles on spirit possession in Eastern and Western Nepal, and in adjacent areas, followed by discussions of spirit possession and the literary tradition. Each is a scholarly contribution, and altogether this book is an important addition to our knowledge of primitive and therefore, palaeo-medicine. It is a fascinating study that should be of wide interest.

SIR MICHAEL WOODRUFF, *On science and surgery*, Edinburgh University Press, 1977, 8vo, pp. viii, 154, £4.00 (£1.50 paperback).

A collection of eleven essays, most of which have been published elsewhere. A certain amount of historical material occurs in many of them.