

Book Reviews

FELIX PLATTER, *Tagebuch (Lebensschreibung) 1536–1567*, edited by Valentin Löttscher, Basle, Schwabe, 1976, 8vo, pp. 579, illus., S.Fr.120.00.

We already know a good deal about the Swiss, Felix Platter, the elder (1536–1614), because the account of his experiences as a medical student at Montpellier is available in English (*Beloved son Felix. The journal of Felix Platter a medical student in Montpellier in the sixteenth century*, translated and introduced by Séan Jennett, London, F. Muller, 1961). The present book is an excellent presentation of the diary in its original early new high German, amply supplied with scholarly apparatus in the form of abundant footnotes, a detailed introduction, accounts of other episodes after 1567 and his finances, well-reproduced and plentiful illustrations and maps, an iconography, and a comprehensive index. Those who wish to check or follow further material in the English version may do so in this definitive edition of the journals, providing they can read sixteenth-century German. It is also an important contribution to the history of Renaissance medicine and provides a very high standard of scholarship that others who wish to edit diaries of any period will do well to emulate.

SALLY GREGORY KOHLSTEDT, *The formation of the American scientific community. The American Association for the Advancement of Science 1848–60*, Urbana, Chicago and London, University of Illinois Press, 1976, 8vo, pp. xiii, 264, 32 11., illus., £7.70.

The British Association for the Advancement of Science was founded in 1831, to be followed eventually in 1848 by its American equivalent, the A.A.A.S., now known as the “Triple-A.S.”. This book is the first systematic and detailed study of the early days of the latter, and the author seeks to show that its internal development reflected the stress that existed between the amateur and the professional American scientists then. The major theme of her book is, therefore, the scientific community’s struggle to establish its identity and the problems encountered, some due to a too close comparison with the British Association. In order to understand more readily the first few years of the A.A.A.S., Dr. Kohlstedt has studied its early members collectively, at this time almost every American scientist being affiliated. She also includes a biographical directory of 337 of them, and this itself provides a valuable source of information. The élite were at Harvard or Yale, and medical men were significantly numerous.

It is clear that American professional science learned much from Europe, but also from its own experience with unique geographical conditions. This scholarly work highlights many aspects of its pioneering struggles, and is itself a pioneer in a field awaiting further investigation.

V. V. KOVANOV, *In the name of life. Reflections of a Soviet surgeon*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, [London, Central Books], 1976, 8vo, pp. 327, illus., £1.50.

For those interested in Soviet medicine this autobiography will be most attractive. It has, however, suffered in translation, for difficulty with medical terms has been encountered and occasionally the narrative is incomprehensible. The author makes frequent use of historical material but his knowledge of it is indicated by a reference to “Claudius” Galen (p. 55).