

Book Reviews

Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum, by ELIAS ASHMOLE, reprint of the London 1652 ed., with introduction by Allen G. Debus, New York, Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1966, pp. xlix, 486, illus., no price stated.

Alchemy, like Astrology, is a close relative of Medical History—there are many *dramatis personae* whom they have in common from antiquity to the eighteenth century and some of these form the best possible company—to recall only Rhazes, Arnaldus de Villanova, Paracelsus, Cardanus and Van Helmont. Its influence is far reaching in the history of therapeutics and clearly emerges in the introduction of the ‘chemicals’ into the *London Pharmacopœia* of 1618. Paracelsus, the father of this ‘iatrochemistry’, had little patience with gold-making. He used, however, the term alchemy advisedly for his thoughts and labours in ‘transmuting’ chemical poison into medicine. Indeed, neither his world nor that of other iatrochemists of the time can be separated from that of the alchemists proper. All of these betray the stamp of their medieval sources. Boyle and Boerhaave recognized the importance of alchemy in the development of chemistry and today it seems even permissible to mention and to delve into the large *corpus* of alchemical writings by Isaac Newton. The facsimile reprinting of the rare volume under notice will therefore appeal to wide academic circles including medical historians and extending to the student of early English mystical poetry and indeed the late medieval and seventeenth-century English scene. For the collection of alchemical poetry here offered centres around the *Ordinall of Alchimey* by Thomas Norton (1477) and the *Compound of Alchemy* by Sir George Ripley (1471)—it is difficult to overrate their influence in the following two centuries when they were frequently cited, printed and translated. There is also Chaucer’s *Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale* (c. 1390) with the insight which it allows into alchemical practices at the time, and there are other charming pieces of mystical symbolism connected with late medieval attempts at unravelling the miracles and *magnalia* of Nature. The work, of course, forms a first-rate monument to the scholarship, wide antiquarian and ‘occult’ interests and literary influence of Elias Ashmole, F.R.S. (1617–1692)—a key figure, perhaps mostly for epitomizing the connection between the ‘secret’ tradition of alchemy and astrology and the founder-fathers of the scientific revolution incorporated in the Royal Society. How all this emerges from the history and significance of alchemy as a whole and in particular the English Paracelsians is beautifully and most competently described in the Introduction from the pen of Allen Debus. His original work in opening up the sources to the Paracelsian doctrine in English medicine and the Paracelsian compromise in Elizabethan England as well as on Robert Fludd and kindred figures from the twilight between mysticism, *magia naturalis* and science, enabled him to produce the present fine volume—an indispensable tool for research and an ornament for library and book collection alike.

WALTER PAGEL

The British Postgraduate Medical Federation: The First Fifteen Years, by FRANCIS FRASER, London, The Athlone Press, 1967, pp. vii, 69, port., 15s. 0d.

The organization and development of postgraduate medical education in London owes everything to the imagination and foresight of Sir Francis Fraser. In this book, Fraser describes his work as the first Director of the Federation, a position he held

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from 1945 until 1960. Francis Fraser was a man of high ideals. He was educated at Cambridge and Edinburgh, and had studied at the Rockefeller Institute in New York in 1912. Here he met several young men imbued with the same academic ideals as his own, among them Sir Arthur Ellis who wrote later, 'I have often thought what a remarkable act of faith it was that we should all have been there consciously attempting to fit ourselves for full time posts in medicine when no such jobs existed anywhere.'¹ Their faith was fully justified for Ellis became Professor of Medicine at the London Hospital and Francis Fraser was the first full-time Professor of Medicine at St. Bartholomew's. At the London undergraduate schools, however, full-time and part-time medicine have never achieved more than an uneasy symbiosis and when the opportunity came in 1934 of founding a postgraduate medical school in London, Fraser became the first Professor of Medicine. There he built up a first-rate department staffed by brilliant young men, almost all of whom were full university appointees. It was on this foundation that his successor, Sir John McMichael, was to establish the outstanding department which has done so much to foster the ideals of full-time work in postgraduate clinical education in Britain and all over the world.

In his book Francis Fraser has described a great deal more than just the period 1945–60. He outlines the early history of postgraduate medical education in London referring to the first steps made by Jonathan Hutchison as well as to the work of the Fellowship of Medicine and the West London Postgraduate College. The account of the foundation of the Postgraduate Medical School at Hammersmith Hospital in 1935 and its fulfilment of his ideals of full-time work is particularly interesting to all those involved in postgraduate medical education today. The main part of Francis Fraser's book, however, deals with the work of the Postgraduate Medical Federation. This was founded in 1945 as a result of a recommendation by the Goodenough Committee and when it started comprised the Postgraduate Medical School at Hammersmith Hospital and only four other institutes with satisfactory staff and accommodation sufficient to provide postgraduate education of university standard. By 1960, when Sir Francis Fraser retired, the Federation consisted of fifteen federated institutes staffed at least in part by full-time members of the university. Francis Fraser gives an excellent account of the work of the Federation during this period as well as providing interesting financial statistics relating to the budgetary arrangements under the university. The numbers of students attending the institutes have risen progressively through the years so that during the academic year 1959–60 a total of 1,354 postgraduates were enrolled from the United Kingdom and as many as 2,314 from overseas. The organization of this complex exercise owes everything to Francis Fraser's leadership and it is characteristic that his account should be factual, playing down his own outstanding contribution.

As Sir James Paterson Ross, Francis Fraser's successor at the Federation, points out in his Foreword, the responsibilities of the universities in postgraduate education are again under active review. Sir James echoes Fraser's comment that: 'All forms of postgraduate medical education are essential to the development of an efficient Health Service and the Ministry of Health is therefore deeply concerned, but they

¹ G. W. Corner, *A History of the Rockefeller Institute*, New York, Rockefeller Institute Press, 1964, p. 106.

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should be guided and controlled by the medical education authority—the Universities and the University Grants Committee’.

C. C. BOOTH

Louis A. Duhring, M.D., Pathfinder for Dermatology, by LAWRENCE CHARLES PARISH, Springfield, Illinois, C. C. Thomas, 1967, pp. xviii, 137, illus., \$4.40.

Duhring was one of the few American physicians of his time to become well known in Europe. His textbook on diseases of the skin (1877) appeared in an Italian edition (1882) and in a French also (1883); a little later there were Russian and Chinese editions. A collection of his papers on dermatitis herpetiformis were included in *Selected Monographs on Dermatology* published by the New Sydenham Society of London in 1893 on the invitation of Sir Jonathan Hutchinson. He also contributed to the *International Atlas of Rare Skin Diseases* prepared by Unna in Hamburg.

Louis Adolphus Duhring was born in Philadelphia in December 1845, a son of a prosperous German business man who had emigrated from Mecklenburg in 1818 and a Swiss mother. Although his father had written a book on education advocating public schools in a democratic country he was sent to a private school and then, at the age of fifteen, to the University of Pennsylvania. He was brought up to be bilingual in a family which used both English and German and to have a love for music in a home where almost every member played some instrument or sang. At the university he studied at first the arts, algebra, geometry and chemistry, but in June 1863, when seventeen, joined the infantry to fight for the Federalists in the civil war. He saw little action and in the autumn of 1864 entered the university medical school and later had clinical training at the Philadelphia Hospital. He became Doctor of Medicine in March 1867, the title of his thesis being *An Essay on Nervous Gout*. In order to become an intern or resident physician at the same hospital a written and oral examination was required, which Duhring passed. He started his internship in April 1867 and soon acquired an interest in dermatology. As a student he had received no training in this subject except to be told that ‘all skin diseases can be divided into two types: those that are helped by sulfur and those that are not’.

Early in 1868 his fiancée died. He never married, but later lived with his sister to whom he was greatly attached. In August 1868 Duhring arrived in Europe in order to study dermatology and went first to Vienna where Ferdinand von Hebra (1816–80) and his son-in-law Moritz Kaposi (1837–1902) were so greatly advancing the subject. From Vienna he went on to l’Hôpital St. Louis in Paris where Bazin (1807–78) and Vidal (1825–93) were working and which, fifty years before, the great Alibert (1768–1837) had made the world’s centre of dermatology. Thence Duhring went to London where he came under the influence of Jonathan Hutchinson (1828–1913), Charles Fagge (1838–83), Tilbury Fox (1836–79) and Erasmus Wilson (1809–84). Before returning to Philadelphia in the spring of 1870 he visited dermatological clinics in Norway, Germany and Turkey. He then ‘opened an office’ limiting his practice to dermatology. Specialization such as this was rare in the United States at the time, though there were a few skin clinics in Philadelphia. Duhring opened one of his own in 1871 and this proved most successful. In 1875 (not 1876 as in the text) he was appointed Clinical Professor of Skin Diseases at the University of Pennsylvania.