

Book Reviews

D. GERAINT JAMES (editor), *Circulation of the blood*, London, Pitman Medical, 1978, 4to, pp. [viii], 495, illus., £25.00.

The four hundredth anniversary of William Harvey's birth was celebrated on 1 April 1978, and the publication of this book is one of the many events planned to celebrate the occasion. There are three historical papers in this commemorative volume: a biographical study of Harvey by the editor; an account of the Harveian Society of New York by Professor A. G. Bearn; and an essay on 'Respiration and the pulmonary circulation in the century of genius' by Dr. Raymond Hierons. The rest of the book is comprised of authoritative surveys of various aspects of the cardiovascular system in health and in disease. Many of them contain historical data, but, as in the historical articles, this is of uneven value and not always accurate. Nevertheless, they provide excellent accounts of the present-day standing of many circulatory topics. The book is handsomely produced, and each contribution is elegantly illustrated and adequately documented.

JACQUES BARZUN and HENRY F. GRAFF, *The modern researcher*, 3rd ed., New York and London, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977, 8vo, pp. xx, 378, £4.95 (paperback).

The first edition of this book appeared in 1957 and it received an enthusiastic reception from students and scholars of history. It purports to help both, and the advice is detailed and helpful, the sub-title being 'The classic manual on all aspects of research and writing'. It will probably be of less value to the beginner, but to the teacher and thesis-writer it will continue to be an essential guide to the writing of good history and to the techniques of historiography. The authors divide their book into three sections: first principles; research and writing; unlike previous editions there is also a small section on lecturing. Predictably, the so-called "psychohistorians" and "clio metrics" in this edition are criticized cogently and at some length.

Clearly this modestly priced book should be read by all those who are dealing with historical research and teaching the discipline. It can be warmly recommended, and, like its previous versions, it will receive wide acclaim.

ERICH HINTZSCHE (editor), *Albrecht von Hallers Briefe an Auguste Tissot (1754-1777)*, Berne, Stuttgart, and Vienna, Hans Huber, 1977, 8vo, pp. 535, illus., S.Fr. 128.00.

The Swiss, Haller (1708-1777), was the most outstanding medical scientist of the eighteenth century, and over the years the late Professor Hintzsche has published a number of monographs on him. His fellow-countryman S. A. A. D. Tissot (1728-1797) is renowned more for his clinical achievements, but, like Haller, wrote extensively and is remembered for a number of books on popular medicine. These letters, from a scientist to a popularizer of medicine, are of very great interest, because they contain important material, not only about the writer and the recipient, but also about the eighteenth century in general, its medicine, its doctors, and many other aspects, often previously unknown. The majority are in French, the remainder being in German. They are fully transcribed, and Professor Hintzsche has provided a linking commentary which adds immeasurably to the value of the collection, as does the extensive index.

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In all, this is an important addition to the history of eighteenth-century medicine and must be consulted by all those working in the area. It is a pity that Professor Hintzsche did not survive to see the scholarly and elegant end-result of his extensive labours.

DEREK L. PHILLIPS, *Wittgenstein and scientific knowledge. A sociological perspective*, London, Macmillan, 1977, 8vo, pp. xiv, 248, £10.00

Ludwig Wittgenstein has had a large influence on philosophical thought during the past half-century. His impact on the traditional questions debated by philosophers of science is much more difficult to perceive. Professor Phillips believes that Wittgenstein's work has great relevance for philosophy of science. Accordingly, he uses certain key ideas of Wittgenstein as the basis of his own attempt to elaborate a philosophy of discovery applicable to both the natural and social sciences.

Philosophers have historically viewed natural science from what Phillips calls the positive stance. Following Comte, philosophers of our own day such as Nagel, Hempel, and Lakatos have assumed that science is objective and cumulative, and that scientists discover laws which exist independently of the discoverer. This view of science has recently been challenged with what Phillips calls the relativism of men such as Kuhn, Feyerabend, and Toulmin. These philosophers have stressed the human and social aspects of science; they believe that the implicit as well as explicit assumptions and values held by scientists have a significant influence on the questions scientists ask and the answers they come up with.

Although more sympathetic to the relativistic than the positivistic position, Phillips attempts to steer a middle course. Using Wittgenstein's discussions of the relationship between language, thought, and reality, Phillips develops a view of science which, while treating it as language-bound (and since language systems differ, it follows that science can never be completely objective), recognizes ways in which science can be evaluated and tested.

This is a stimulating book, written without jargon or needless obscurity. It contains an excellent exposition of Wittgenstein's thought, and sensitive and informed critiques of Kuhn, Lakatos, Feyerabend, and other contemporary philosophers of science.

JOSÉ DE ACOSTA, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (Sevilla, Juan de León, 1590), with introduction, appendix, and anthology by Barbara G. Beddall, Valencia, Albatros Ediciones (Hispaniae Scientia), 1977, 8vo, pp. 129, 1–536, 18 ll., [no price stated].

Father José de Acosta (1539 or 1540–1600) was a renowned Jesuit missionary in Peru (1572 to 1586), who is famous for the book here reprinted in facsimile. There is also a biographical introduction, an analysis of the book, a list of plants and animals mentioned in it, and a selection of extracts from it, all in both English and Spanish. In his seven "books" or chapters, Acosta presents, in the first four, a complete survey of natural history, and, in the last three, a moral history dealing with the religious and social activities of the inhabitants, their writing and calendars, and a historical background. This book is most welcome, and it is to be hoped that further Spanish classical writings will be made available in this same excellent format.