

Book Reviews

Labour Front's Institute for Work Psychology. His integration of empirical research and ethical discourse is a model for the investigation of such areas. This integration stands in marked contrast to the world of psychologists themselves who—like other civil servants and professional people—substantially separated questions relating to professional practice from questions about what that practice meant in the context of the state. This book is therefore a profound study of the politics of professional culture.

Roger Smith, Lancaster University

GALEN, *On semen*, ed., transl. and commentary by Phillip De Lacy, *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*, 5, 3, 1, Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1992, pp. 291, DM 220.00 (3–05–001863–1).

This new edition of Galen's major exposition of his views on generation breaks fresh ground in many ways. It is the first to incorporate a wide range of manuscript information, particularly so in Book II, where a ninth-century Arabic translation provides many important corrections and additions to the earlier standard Greek text. The editor's shrewd use of the fourth-century Greek excerpts in the medical *Synopses* of Oribasius also improves the Greek in many places, although their contribution in terms of new ideas or passages is much less. Secondly, the text is accompanied by a fluent English translation and a brief commentary dealing largely with the philosophical and medical problems within the text. It is a pity that more space was not allotted here to explaining many of the stylistic changes and emendations, a few of which may be unnecessary (e.g. the comment on 110, 14–16 imputes an unlikely motive to the Latin translator Niccolò).

In these two books, Galen attacks Aristotle and his followers for their views on the male and female contributions to generation, positing himself that both male and female seeds were required for conception. His arguments, drawn from experiment and logic, formed a powerful critique of Aristotle's idea of a male seed imposing itself on and shaping female material, and they continued to foster debate at least until the seventeenth century. On the whole, Galen is more impressive than his opponents, whose weaknesses he exploits to the full. How many of his examples and arguments are his own is more difficult to determine, and De Lacy is rightly reluctant to see Galen as the sole contestant in the battle against Aristotle and his followers. Yet Galen does employ a variety of observations, particular of inherited characteristics, that seem to be his own, and the general accuracy of his logic is continually impressive. He is even willing to recognize that the function of certain structures, especially the so-called "glandular-helpers" (the seminal vesicles or the prostate), is not yet settled, a somewhat unexpected touch of open-mindedness.

This new edition will be of great assistance to all students of the history of embryology, for they will be able to rely on the text and translation with greater confidence than on the older edition and Latin translation of Kühn, and in the notes and introduction find a succinct survey of the whole of ancient theories of conception and embryology. Those interested in the transmission of Galen's text, in both Greek and translation into Arabic or Latin, will also gain much from the editor's careful listing of the manuscripts and their interrelationships. In short, Professor De Lacy has once again been of inestimable service to his fellow-Galenists.

Vivian Nutton, Wellcome Institute

ROSALBA DAVICO (ed.), *The autobiography of Edward Jarvis (1803–1884)*, *Medical History*, Supplement No. 12, London, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1992, pp. xli, 162, £23.00, \$38.00 (0–85484–115–6).

Top physicians suffer from the autobiographical itch, and numerous lives have been written in self-vindication by quacks and the misunderstood; but there is no surfeit of records of the doings of the great mass of the respectable middle ranks of the medical profession. That forms one reason why Rosalba Davico's edition of the hitherto unpublished autobiography of the New England practitioner, Edward Jarvis (1803–1884), deserves a warm welcome. Born the fourth child of a respectable but hardly affluent New England yeoman farmer, Jarvis was sent off to learn a trade, and

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did not even receive a proper education until the death of elder siblings promoted him in the family fortunes. After a spell of school-teaching, Jarvis, who had aspirations to become a preacher, finally gained a medical training, but quickly discovered that this was no freeway to fame. Barely lucrative practices near his native Concord (Massachusetts) were followed by an uncomfortable spell at Louisville, Kentucky, whose frontier ways and slave culture clearly offended our hero's principled New England sensibilities. The rest of Jarvis's career was spent in and around his native Massachusetts, where, failing to gain the remunerative practices to which he thought he was entitled, he sought and found consolation in pursuit of the more intellectual and scientific aspects of medicine, making himself an expert in psychological medicine, in public health, and, above all, in the evolving field of medical statistics. Opportunities to address learned societies on both sides of the Atlantic on topics similar to those that fascinated William Farr (by whom he was somewhat overawed on finally meeting him in person) seem to have formed the highspots of his career.

Jarvis dictated his autobiography (which is written in the third person) to his devoted wife, Almira, when in his seventies; and, as Rosalba Davico points out in her ambitious Introduction, the after-the-event apologetic nature of the work needs, therefore, to be offset by reference to other sources (which she does) if we are to gain an balanced picture of his existence. Albeit writing in a calm and dignified tone, Jarvis does not disguise the sense of frustration and failure that attended much of his medical career. As he never seeks to hide, he was continually passed over for advantageous practices, sometimes for sectarian religious reasons, and he never gained the challenging asylum superintendent's appointment that he clearly believed would exercise his talents. Personal considerations apart, Jarvis's text affords a splendid commentary upon the over-stocked and intensely competitive character of the American medical market-place at mid-century (as admirably analysed in Paul Starr's *The social transformation of American medicine* [New York, Basic Books, 1982]), and reveals the patient-driven nature of preferred medical philosophies and therapeutics.

Historians of Britain will also find Jarvis's comments on Old World medicine quite illuminating, not least the reverence that Jarvis evidently felt due to figures like John Conolly. It is hard to imagine a more succinct and telling verdict upon public lunatic asylums than this response upon visiting Hanwell:

This is a huge establishment of stone . . . Here hundreds are gathered and crowded. The rulers prefer such large asylums. They think them economical. They save the pay of more superintendents, physicians, and other upper officers; but they diminish the healing powers of the hospital . . . The economy is not wise, or successful. (p.128.)

This well-edited, annotated, and indexed text affords many pleasures, historical and personal. It is, not least, a rather humbling experience to encounter the reflections of a dedicated practitioner whose prolonged labours yielded no great wealth or fame, and whose setbacks and achievements could be distilled in old age into a dignified philosophy of personal realization.

Roy Porter, Wellcome Institute

ADAM J. HIRSCH, *The rise of the penitentiary: prisons and punishment in early America*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1992, pp. xvi, 243, £20.00, \$35.00 (0-300-04297-3).

This book consists of two extended essays on the subject of the penitentiary in early America. The first, longer, and more useful essay concerns the origins of this institution; the second examines its relationship to the contemporaneous institution of slavery. On the first question, Hirsch makes a vigorous and convincing case for the earliness of the American penitentiary's origins, and for its roots in English experience of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Focusing on Massachusetts, Hirsch valuably corrects David Rothman's highly influential and long-standing picture (based largely on Pennsylvania and New York) of a comparatively sudden emergence of the modern prison in America in the Jacksonian period; instead, he shows how much of it was discussed, legislated and institutionalized between the 1780s and the 1820s. He also—unusually for a U.S. historian—carefully examines the English background, and finds that the model of the house of correction for