

Book Reviews

one of the library's largest books. While admitting culpability, she demanded F700 for their return!

W. M. Schupbach
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JOHN A. ROSS, *A medical student in Paris in 1832: an eyewitness account of the year of the cholera pandemic*, Stamford, Lincs., Scientific Era Publications, 1981, 4to, pp. iv, 114, illus., £5.25 + 75p postage.

In late 1831, a young English medical student who had previously studied in Cambridge and Edinburgh arrived in Paris to further his education. During his stay of about seven months, this student – J. R. W. Vose – kept a notebook in which he recorded notes from lectures (including those of Cruveilhier and Andral) and clinical cases and autopsy findings from his hospital instruction, especially on Théophile Mayer's ward at La Charité. Vose's stay coincided with the cholera epidemic of 1832, and he devoted considerable attention to the symptoms, pathology, and therapy of cholera. The notebook is preserved in Liverpool, where Vose subsequently became a successful physician. It has been transcribed by Dr Ross, who also provides an introductory sketch of early nineteenth-century French medicine, details of Vose's career, and explanatory notes and references. The volume is profusely illustrated with portraits, maps, graphs, old medical and topographical engravings, and contemporary photographs. It is decently printed and reasonably priced.

Although the notebook itself contains no monumental insights, it is of interest for several reasons. It shows the young Vose learning the art of physical diagnosis, especially the percussion and auscultation so central to French "hospital medicine". The case histories reflect the continuing concern with therapeutics, despite the relative therapeutic pessimism that can also be discerned. The breadth of Vose's interests is also evident: pathology, medicine, pharmacy, obstetrics, gynaecology, and surgery all come within his ken. Finally, his notebook bears vivid testimony to the appalling mortality among young adults in the Paris where he studied: "A woman of unhealthy appearance, about 34 years of age"; "A female about 35 years of age was admitted . . ."; "A man about 36 years of age and said to have been of intemperate habits died at La Charité . . .". These and similar unfortunates frequent Vose's notebook, sombre reminders not just of the world we have lost, but of the years we have won.

We might wish that Vose's record of his months in Paris had been more reflective, but even as a simple narrative of facts learned, lectures attended, and patients examined, it is worth publishing. Dr Ross's editorial apparatus is full and, while there are a fair number of misprints and factual slips (e.g. Thomas Hodgkin once appears as Hodgkinson, Brunonianism comes out as "Bruonism", and Humphry Davy inevitably appears as "Humphrey"), they do not seriously mar the value of this pleasant little volume.

W. F. Bynum
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An explanation of the fashion and use of three and fifty instruments of chirurgery, gathered out of Ambrosius Pareus, the famous French chirurgion, and done into English, for the behoofe of young practitioners in chirurgery, by H[elkiah] C[rooke], London, printed [by Thomas Cotes] for Michael Sparke, 1634. A facsimile, Edinburgh, West Port Books, 1982, 8vo, pp. ii, 118, woodcuts, £6.50.

The unnamed editor(s) of this reduced-size facsimile reprint have left it for the reviewer to supply an important piece of information not in the introduction. The first (and more complete) edition of this work, printed in 1631, has already been reproduced, as number 141 in the well-known series *The English Experience*, Amsterdam and New York, Da Capo Press, 1969. What is in the introduction does nothing to redeem the book's superfluous nature, as it owes a total and unacknowledged debt to Janet Doe's *Ambroise Paré: A bibliography*, and to the *Dictionary of national biography*, whose errors, for example, in placing the publication of Crooke's *Mikrokosmographia* in 1616 instead of 1615, are here faithfully reproduced. In the

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end, the reader who desires the smaller, cheaper, and less-authoritative text, would be well-advised to buy this book. The rest of us can only lament the hundreds of important texts that still remain unavailable.

Faye Marie Getz
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PHILIP M. TEIGEN (editor), *Books, manuscripts, and the history of medicine. Essays on the 50th anniversary of the Osler Library*, New York, Science History Publications, 1982, 8vo, pp. [viii], 112, \$14.95.

On 29 May 1929, The Osler Library was dedicated and accepted by the Principal, Sir Arthur Currie, on behalf of McGill University. It was fitting that fifty years later a group of Oslerolators should assemble at McGill for a celebration at which five bibliographers, librarians, and historians, Charles Roland, Richard Durling, Estelle Brodman, Thomas Tanselle, and Eric Freeman, "examined the ways the history of medicine, librarianship and bibliography still occupy common ground" – and too often, as Eric Freeman suggested, fail to do so.

Naturally much is said about the Osler–Cushing–Fulton–Keynes axis directed towards bio-bibliography. No less tribute is paid to McKerrow, Pollard, and Greg, and those whose equal concern was with the printer and the physical aspects of the book itself. Their successors are engaged in descriptive and analytical bibliography on their journey to the chips and the computers – a little less humanism, a little more mathematics – which must simplify the accessibility of knowledge committed to the written word. But how long will the paper on which the word is written or printed survive?

The meeting was a happy one under the wise and courteous chairmanship of Lloyd Stevenson, who contributes the introduction. But it did end with some gloomy predictions for those whose bibliomania is near-neighbour to their bibliographia. Were these the obsequies for that adored object, the book as we know it? And there are worse anxieties; tapes, no less than paper, are not forever.

For me, who had seen the empty shelves of the Bibliotheca Osleriana three years before the books arrived, this book, the memorial of a memorable occasion, is a delight and I hope that it will give the vicarious pleasure of the celebration to many, many people.

Alfred White Franklin
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J. R. K. ROBSON (editor), *Food, ecology and culture. Readings in the anthropology of dietary practices*, New York, Gordon & Breach Science Publishers, 1981, 8vo, pp. ix, 143, illus., \$30.25.

There is little doubt that there are significant differences between the diets of hunter-gatherer peoples, past and present, and more "advanced" agricultural communities. It could be that later Palaeolithic societies were more versatile and experimental in their range and preparation of foods, but fundamentally diets must have been high in fibre with a seasonally fluctuating combination of fruits, carbohydrate plant foods, plus nut or animal proteins and fats. During the past two decades, interest in food has gone beyond "traditional" nutrition studies, and has drawn in a range of workers in the human sciences, including archaeology, sociology, and even psychology. Although the bibliography on this subject is becoming vast, there is in fact remarkably little in book form to recommend to those interested in the whole breadth of studies. This present collection of fourteen separate papers extends again the variety of recent publications, and as there is no great overlap with other current books, it can be seen as complementing the others.

In the introduction, Robson points out that we really know very little about food use beyond advanced societies, and yet if we are fully to understand the possible links between nutrition, human adaptability, and patterns of disease (especially such major categories as cancer, or cardiovascular and neurovascular diseases) then the whole spectrum of human food use must be