

Book Reviews

BETSY C. CORNER and CHRISTOPHER C. BOOTH (editors), *Chain of friendship. Selected letters of Dr. John Fothergill of London, 1735–1780*, Cambridge, Mass., Belknap Press, 1971, 8vo, pp. xxiv, 538, illus., £14.95.

In view of the regard Fothergill (1712–1780) held for North America as well as for Britain it is entirely appropriate that his letters should be edited by an American, the late Betsy C. Corner, wife of the distinguished anatomist and embryologist George Corner, and Professor Christopher Booth, lately of the Royal Postgraduate Medical School of London. Moreover this combination of a historian and a medical man, each knowing a good deal about the other's discipline, has proved ideal for the task, and illustrates well the fruitful symbioses possible in medical history.

In the mid-eighteenth century Fothergill was one of a small group of leading London physicians. But he was also a philanthropist, horticulturist, educationalist, a firm supporter of American freedom, a patron of the sciences, an outstanding Quaker who funded a variety of educational establishments, and a subsidizer of books. His contributions to medicine were also far from inconspicuous.

In the light of this vast breadth of interest Fothergill's correspondence is, therefore, of concern to a wide circle of specialists, and in addition provides a remarkable survey of his times which will be of great value to historians of eighteenth-century medicine and of eighteenth-century cultural history in general. One also learns a great deal about Fothergill's personality, although little of his medical practice.

The editors have selected about two hundred (1735–1780) of his four hundred extant letters, transcribing them accurately and providing profuse and valuable annotations. The collection is letter-editing at its best and its high standard of scholarship will, it is to be hoped, influence and guide those contemplating similar publications. What seems to some a relatively easy task is in fact a most difficult and arduous one, but one in which the late Mrs. Corner and Professor Booth have been entirely successful.

SAUL JARCHO (editor), *Essays on the history of medicine selected from the Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, New York, Science History Publications, 1976, 8vo, pp. xi, 346, illus., £10.50.

Under the enlightened editorship of Dr. Saul Jarcho the *Bulletin* is one of the few modern medical journals that carries historical articles and notes in all its issues. This book is a selection of the many that have appeared between 1967 and 1975. There are thirty-four altogether and they are in four groups: 'Ancient and modern medicine' ranging from Greek Antiquity to the twentieth century; 'Medicine in New York'; 'Paleopathology'; 'Medical numismatic notes'. The range of topics is therefore extensive so that all tastes and needs are catered for, and having been published under the scholarly eye of Dr. Jarcho, each is a useful contribution to the history of medicine.

The variety of subjects, and authors, together with the excellence of the papers and their scholarly production, help to create an important book that, without doubt, will have wide appeal amongst both professional and part-time medical historians. Once more Dr. William B. Ober and his Library Publications Committee must be congratulated for adding yet another outstanding title to the History of Medicine Series of the New York Academy of Medicine.