

Book Reviews

ANTHONY DENT (editor), *The horse through fifty centuries of civilization*, London, Phaidon Press, 1974, 4to, pp. 288, illus., £8.95.

For more than five thousand years until about sixty years ago, the history of the horse was the history of man. Although the dog has been man's best animal friend, the horse has been much more a part of his civilization than any other of his domesticated animals. As a means of transport in commerce, agriculture, recreation, warfare, and sport, and even as food, the horse has been man's foremost ally. In medicine it has provided physiologists, pathologists, immunologists and others with an experimental animal of great value and potential. And even today when its traditional role in association with man has lapsed, the horse as a manufactory of biological products continues to serve.

Anthony Dent, an authority on the history of the horse, provides here an anthology of readings on this subject, supported by a splendid array of excellent illustrations; there are 236 in all, with thirty-two in colour, but some do not relate to the adjacent text. It begins with a survey of 'The age of the horse', then, in chronological sequence from the Hittites to the early twentieth century, the history of man's association with the horse is told by citations from contemporary documents selected by Julian Hall, and each briefly introduced. Unfortunately, the full references to the extracts are not given, and this diminishes the usefulness of the book as a source of reference. Also, as so often happens in British and American anthologies, material readily available in English predominates and this leads to imbalance.

Nevertheless the book can be highly recommended as an authoritative text on the horse as both a zoological entity and a social necessity in human history. Mr. Dent, as well as presenting accepted fact, also deals with issues concerning the horse, both biological and historical, which have not yet been resolved; in this regard more could have been made of the significance of the introduction of the stirrup. His opinions on such problems add a stimulating element to an elegant and informative book.

GUENTHER B. RISSE (editor), *Modern China and traditional medicine*, Springfield, Ill., Charles C Thomas, 1973, 8vo, pp. viii, 167, \$8.95.

In April 1972 a symposium on Chinese medicine was held in Madison, Wisconsin, and this book contains expanded forms of the papers presented, each with a bibliography, in addition to a general bibliography. There is first an excellent historical background of traditional Chinese medicine and of traditional medicine in modern China. Then follows a section on acupuncture, and one on health care delivery in modern China.

The increasing interest in China, as relations with the West grow, was one of the stimuli for the symposium. It is clear that the achievement in medicine and public health is held by the Chinese to be one of the greatest advancements made possible by the Maoist regime. Acupuncture anaesthesia, the bare-foot doctor, family planning, and post-traumatic reconstructive surgery are the highlights. It is valuable to have discussions of these aspects of modern Chinese medicine gathered together, although most of the information can be found elsewhere. There is no adequate explanation given for the apparent success of acupuncture, and three years later it is still awaited.

Book Reviews

Dr. Risse's well-edited book can be recommended to all those interested in the Orient, and to those who wish to link their knowledge of ancient Chinese medicine with that of the present day.

ROBERT CLAIBORNE, *Climate, man and history*, London, Angus & Robertson, 1973, 8vo, pp. 444, illus., £3.25.

The effects of climate on history as a serious study is not as new a subject as is sometimes suggested, but it is now one of the "new ways" in history, popular especially with the French school, the members of which usually publish in the *Annales*. Robert Claiborne, who is a journalist and neither meteorologist nor historian by profession, first published his book in the U.S.A. in 1970, and he assembles in it a survey of how climate has affected the evolution and history of man. It is, therefore, a contribution to general history, climatology, palaeo-climatology, ecology, and to the history of science and medicine.

The author begins with a general account of climate ('Climate past and present'), which is itself a valuable survey, and this is followed by 'Climate and emerging man', 'Climate and civilization', and 'Climate and history'. Palaeometeorology is of importance to medical historians because of the possible effect of climate on disease, but this is not detailed here. In historical times it becomes of increasing interest to him, and a detailed survey of the meteorological aspects of the history of diseases would make a fascinating study, as D. J. Schove has already indicated in his work on the effects of weather on epidemics.

Although, as Mr. Claiborne admits, there is a great deal of information available on his topic in books and articles, this is the first major work devoted to it. It is written in an attractive style, but documentation of the text is very limited, and the bibliography lists only publications in English, with but seven referring to possible medical historical sources, on diet and on sickle cell trait. Nevertheless, as an introduction to the subject it can be warmly recommended, and its price is modest.

LUIS S. GRANJEL, *El ejercicio medico y otros capitulos de la medicina española*, Universidad de Salamanca, 1974, 8vo, pp. 280, (no price stated).

There are three distinct parts to this book. The first contains four studies. These deal with the practice of Spanish medicine in the Renaissance, in the seventeenth century, and with sanitary legislation in the nineteenth. In each the author is concerned with the organization of medicine and with its practitioners, professional and non-professional. The fourth discusses medical ethics, based on a book of 1668 by Diego de Aroza. The second part has essays on Spanish medicine and literature, such as medical aspects of writers and of their works, the third has a study of hydrotherapy in Spain in the seventeenth century, the life and work of Sorapán de Rieros, and Spanish translations of Hippocrates.

Most of these scholarly articles have appeared elsewhere, between 1971 and 1973. They are fully documented, being based exclusively on Spanish sources, and are worthy representatives of the very important and energetic Spanish school of medical history.