

Book Reviews

HENRY BLUMENTHAL, *American and French culture, 1800–1900. Interchange in art, science, literature, and society*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1976, 8vo, pp. xv, 554, \$17.50.

There was close collaboration between France and America in the nineteenth century and this scholarly book surveys the social and cultural interchange that took place, mainly by way of individuals. As the title suggests, the author's study is a wide one, including demographic and social aspects, institutional differences, socio-economic aspects, religious influences, philosophy, literature, drama, music, art, architecture, and co-operation in the natural and the medical sciences. The last two (pp. 361–467) are presented competently, and in the case of medicine it is interesting to observe the degree of French influence in the early part of the century, despite the competing role of British medicine. Professor Blumenthal is using "medical sciences" to describe clinical as well as pre-clinical subjects, including dentistry and pharmacy, and he has covered the literature on his topic with great thoroughness and records it accurately. There is an extensive bibliography as well as copious footnotes.

Throughout, the aim of the book is to discuss the two-way influences, and this objective is adequately achieved. It can be recommended strongly to students of medical history dealing with the nineteenth century, who will learn from it a lot about both American and French medicine from an authority on French nineteenth-century history. Similar studies in depth of the inter-reaction between America and other European countries, especially Britain, would be welcome.

JAMES BORDLEY III and A. McGEHEE HARVEY, *Two centuries of American medicine 1776–1976*, Philadelphia, W. B. Saunders, 1976, 4to, pp. xv, 844, illus., [no price stated].

The authors' purpose is to present, for the interested layman as well as for the medical man, an account of the remarkable development from 1776 to 1976 of American medical education and the prevention and treatment of disease. They divide the period into three: 'The first century—1776–1876' (100 pp.); 'Period of scientific advance—1876–1946' (282 pp.); 'Period of explosive growth—1946–1976' (382 pp.). There is a valuable list in an appendix of the major events in American medical history and the enumeration of spectacular advances and breaks-through is impressive, and is in part illustrated by the Nobel prizes awarded to Americans. The references, which are of the technical type and not historical footnotes, reveal a limited use of the literature of medical history.

During the first century (1776–1876) little advancement was possible, but towards the end of the nineteenth century American medicine was acquiring a scientific basis, and medical education and research were being firmly established on new foundations. Since then the advance has been extraordinary and it is with this that the book is mainly involved.

The first part is not outstanding and there are a number of errors, including the portrait of J. Y. Simpson on p. 83 labelled as that of J. Marion Sims. However, as the authors reach the twentieth century so their text improves. They are both distinguished physicians, now retired, and it is only natural that the best part of their

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book is the last period which covers their own professional lifetimes, 1946 to 1976.

In the first two sections the material is divided into more general topics such as medical education, medical practice, research, preventive medicine, and governmental control, whereas the third although dealing with some of these is devoted mainly to special subjects: drugs, cardiology, genetics, biochemistry, etc. However, the accounts of these specialties tend to be reviews of the literature. And this seems to be the main criticism of the book, that not enough consideration has been given to what Professor Richard Shryock, probably the most outstanding of American historians of medicine, termed the "external factors", called collectively "social".

Nevertheless the book achieves its authors' purpose, and for excellent surveys of the American contributions to various aspects of medicine it can be warmly recommended.

HERBERT LEVENTHAL, *In the shadow of the Enlightenment. Occultism and Renaissance science in eighteenth-century America*, New York University Press 1976, 8vo, pp. x, 330, \$15.00.

The author studies the influence of activities like witchcraft, alchemy, astrology, and of concepts such as the Ptolemaic universe, the humours, elements, spirits, and the Cabala. Thus his book begins with a section on 'The occult world', followed by 'The natural world', and 'The Elizabethan world picture in decay'. This account of the survival of occultism and the influence of Renaissance science forms a unique work dealing with the way in which the old prevailed as the new developed. Dr. Leventhal incorporates material previously unused and has many new interpretations. The influence of antique science on medical practice could have received a lengthier treatment but, nevertheless, this work will be of interest to historians of medicine as well as those of science. A more sustained handling of this fascinating topic seems warranted, in order to extend Dr. Leventhal's commendable research and excellent book.

STANLEY M. GURALNICK, *Science and the ante-bellum American college*, Philadelphia, American Philosophical Society, 1975, 8vo, pp. xiv, 227, \$5.00 (paperback).

Science taught in fifteen leading northeastern colleges c. 1820 to 1860, is the subject of this detailed analysis. It was an important part of the curriculum and the author has uncovered a great deal of data from primary sources, for little has been written on this topic. Particular attention is paid to mathematics, physics, astronomy, and chemistry, but broader issues of science and education are also explored. There is little about medicine and this deserves an independent inquiry.

The variety of factors influencing science and the teaching of it is a fascinating aspect of a scholarly and well-written book. There are several useful appendices, including one containing brief biographies of fifty-nine science teachers in the colleges surveyed. Dr. Guralnick has provided only an introduction, albeit an excellent one, to an important yet neglected aspect of American education. It will, no doubt, inspire further research, and its low price will ensure a deservedly wide distribution.