

## Book Reviews

FREDERICK BURKHARDT and SYDNEY SMITH (editors), *The correspondence of Charles Darwin. Volume 1 1821–1836*, Cambridge University Press, 1985, 8vo, pp. xxxix, 702, illus., £30.00.

“What changes I have had”, wrote the twenty-two year old Darwin, “hunting Foxes in Shropshire, now Lamas in S America”. Changes there were. While Cambridge friends rusticated in their vicarages (sons of the gentry staffed the church and professions), Darwin—blank cheque in hand—bubbled at the prospect of entomologizing in tropical countries “red-hot with Spiders”. His sisters feared the experience would finish him for the parsonage. More than anything, the first volume of *Correspondence* illustrates this cossetting world of wealthy Whiggism: an indulgent world in which “the Dr.’s” draft covered everything. (“I shall . . . be giving ye Dr. a practical proof shortly that I am alive by sending for some money”, announced elder brother Erasmus from Cambridge.) Charles found diversion from the social whirl of the Shrewsbury manors—the hunt balls, concerts, shoots, and gaiety and dissipation—only in “the Science”, beetle-hunting.

For medical historians, there are vignettes of student life in Edinburgh, Cambridge, and the Great Windmill Street school (attended by Erasmus in 1826–7). Edinburgh and a medical career had been chosen for Darwin by his sixteenth birthday, although Erasmus (case-hardened in Cambridge) prophetically wondered whether Charles would ever stomach dissection. Charles entered Edinburgh in October 1825, indignant that “the Dr.” (there was a certain formality towards father) still regarded him as a “boy”. While his sisters plied him with Shropshire gossip, their flirtations and favourite “*Shootables*”, Charles responded with cameos of his medical teachers—Duncan (“so very learned that his wisdom has left no room for his sense”), and Monro *tertius* (“I dislike him & his Lectures so much that I cannot speak with decency about them”). Erasmus’s observations are equally revealing: his horror at Glasgow students playing football in college, and the contrasting decorum in Great Windmill Street (no scrapes, no applause, and no impatience when Mayo “got animated about some old bones & kept on for an hour & a half”).

The letters testify to Darwin’s wealthy Whig entrée into polite society: at Edinburgh (where he partied with professors) and at Cambridge. (Sedgwick turned up so often at the Mount that it was thought Susan Darwin was sweet on him.) And, of course, it led to his place as self-financed gentleman-companion to FitzRoy on the *Beagle*. Ultimately, it is the light these letters shed on the social mores of the minor Whig gentry, their attitude to reform, to the Church, and to the exploitation of nature, that must play a key role in future reassessments of the social origins of Darwinism. This first indispensable volume, edited with precision and incisively annotated, provides a secure basis for the social retooling of the Darwin Industry.

Adrian Desmond  
Department of Zoology  
University College London

JUANITA G.L. BURNBY, *A study of the English apothecary from 1660 to 1760*, London, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, *Medical History* Supplement number 3, 1983, 8vo, pp. [vi], 128, £9.00.

An agreeably produced book at a moderate price that is also innovatory and interesting can be greeted only rarely in any field, but Dr Burnby’s survey is just that. The emergence of the apothecary as a medical practitioner rather than as a provider of medicines is of considerable importance in the early modern period, as his range of drugs expanded along with the numbers of his clients, their prosperity and their expectations of medical attention. The apothecary’s status in society, and above all the contemporary view of his place in the medical pecking order, varied considerably. The apothecary could be only a small retailer, with an artisan clientèle, indistinguishable from his fellow minor tradesmen in a community. On the other hand, however, he might be a wholesale distributor of drugs, with a regional network of customers, or have eminent upper-class patients. Such men married well, lived in large town