

### Book Reviews

fully, and the factors that promoted the League and those that determined its downfall are carefully identified and skilfully dissected out. A broad approach is adopted throughout, so that Dr. Ledbetter's book is not only an important addition to the birth control movement, but also to the history of social change in general.

*Naval history. Part One: the Middle Ages to 1815*, London, H.M. Stationery Office, 1976, 4to, pp. xi, 209, illus., £12.00.

The Catalogue of the Library of the National Maritime Museum is in the process of publication, and this is the fifth volume. It is an elegant and scholarly production, and Mr. Michael Anderson, the Librarian, is to be congratulated on its excellence.

There are five sections: medieval, sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth (up to 1815) centuries; and a section on 'General works'. These are subdivided by localities and naval wars, and altogether there are 2,318 items, many with brief annotations. As well as printed books, reference is also made to periodical articles. A comprehensive index is provided and there are twelve well-chosen plates.

Like its predecessors, this catalogue will be a remarkably useful source-book, and, as it includes a number of references to naval medicine, it will also be of value to historians of medicine.

SIEGHARD NEUFELDT, *Chronologie Chemie 1800–1970*, Weinheim and New York, Verlag Chemie, 1977, 8vo, pp. viii, 359, illus., DM.78.00.

Each year is taken in sequence and the important contributions to chemistry during that year are recorded. The subsequent development of the idea or technique is briefly given. Thus one of the entries for 1929 is Fleming's classic paper and the work of Florey, Chain, and others is recorded, up to the first synthesis of penicillin in 1973. Accurate references to the primary sources are given, but without article titles. In the appendix outstanding additions to chemical knowledge are considered chronologically (Dalton, Berzelius, Kekulé, van't Hoff, Röntgen, etc.); there are lists of Nobel Laureates in physics, chemistry, and physiology or medicine, and of like honours, important literature on chemical nomenclature, lists of chemical societies, journals, and history of chemistry literature. There follow name and subject indexes.

The author, therefore, provides a most valuable source-book for the historian of chemistry. It will also be useful to the historian of medicine because of the biochemical, pharmacological, and pharmaceutical material it contains.

EDWARD FORD, *Bibliography of Australian medicine 1790–1900*, Sydney University Press (Hemel Hempstead, Prentice Hall International), 1976, 8vo, pp. xv, 348, illus., £21.00.

Sir Edward Ford, the distinguished Australian medical scholar, has produced a most outstanding and important source-book. It contains, as far as possible, detailed annotated entries for every work on Australian medicine, domestic or overseas, from the period of national development, 1790, to 1900. Ancillary topics, such as nursing, dentistry, domestic, and fringe medicine, are included. Items are in alphabetical order and include notes on the author and the book, pamphlet, or broadsheet, and the location of copies. There is a subject index and a chronological list of publica-

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tions to 1850. In addition the book is elegantly produced, with sixteen plates illustrating the title-pages of unusual or rare publications.

This essential reference work will complement Ferguson's *Bibliography of Australia* and Dr. Bryan Gandevia's bibliography of the history of Australian medicine.

MARCEL DETIENNE, *The gardens of Adonis: spices in Greek mythology*, translated by Janet Lloyd, Hassocks, Harvester Press, 1977, 8vo, pp. xxxv, 184, illus., £10.50.

Although the main thesis of this structuralist study of the myth of Adonis, the representation of illicit seduction, is unconvincing, and several of its arguments from analogy or polar opposition appear far-fetched, the evidence here assembled for the use and abuse of spices in classical antiquity is full of interest and entertainment. The aphrodisiac properties of perfumes and the opposite effect of garlic need no mythological explanation, but why the cold and wet lettuce gained its reputation as the anti-aphrodisiac food *par excellence* cannot easily be divined even by comparison with the misfortunes of mint or the malodorous rue.

The translation is fluent, but several irritating Gallicisms and misprints remain.

BRIDGET ANN HENISH, *Fast and feast. Food in medieval society*, University Park and London, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976, 8vo, pp. [vi], 279, illus., £11.25.

The author bases her scholarly study of medieval attitudes towards food on a variety and multitude of thirteenth- to fifteenth-century English primary sources. The religious and social ideas shaping these attitudes are dealt with, and the points of view of the host, guest, cook, and servant are taken into account. There are chapters on meal times, fast and feast, cook and kitchen, methods and menus, laying the table, manners, and entertainment provided for the medieval feast. This work will become a necessary reference book for those studying medieval medicine and also for historians of nutrition, food, and social attitudes. It can be highly recommended.

JEAN DE BLONAY, *1870: une révolution chirurgicale. Les origines et le développement de la chirurgie civile et militaire moderne*, Vevey, Delta, (Paris, A. Lesot), 1975, 8vo, pp. iv, 148, illus., [no price stated].

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870 to 1871 marked the end of an era in European and world politics. But it also affected science, technology, and the arts, and surgery too was revolutionized by the experiences derived from the handling of military casualties. This is the author's claim, and it would be interesting to seek its substantiation as far as Britain is concerned. The author is a surgeon, and has consulted a great deal of literature to document this radical change, and his text is liberally illustrated. Unfortunately documentation of the text is quite inadequate, although there are 132 rudimentary references, mostly in French and German.