

Book Reviews

Medieval and Renaissance Medicine. BENJAMIN LEE GORDON. London: Peter Owen, 1960; pp. xii+843. Illustrated. 63s.

In the preface to *Medieval and Renaissance Medicine* the author, Dr. Benjamin Lee Gordon, says that he hopes that this book 'will fill the gap between Claudius Galen and Thomas Sydenham'. He has achieved his purpose in filling the gap by shovelling in, so to speak, a vast quantity of information gathered from many different sources, some admittedly of uncertain origins.

The tracing of any original source is made more difficult first by the fact that this weighty volume has no subject-index, only an index of names; and secondly by the inconvenient plan of collecting together the references for each chapter under the heading of 'Notes' and lumping these all together at the end of the book.

One gets the impression that this book has been put together rather hastily. Someone should have noticed that several identical sentences appear on pages 112 and 433.

Spelling of proper names must always be a difficulty in a book such as this and a certain amount of latitude must be allowed, but there are limits. Admittedly the name of our greatly esteemed historian Sir D'Arcy Power is likely to present difficulties on the other side of the Atlantic, but he becomes scarcely recognizable as 'D'Arey, Sir. P.' in which disguise he appears on page 798.

These are exasperating trifles. The good stuff is there too! For instance, the chapters dealing with Jewish contributions to medicine in the Middle Ages and with Scholasticism and Medicine. In fact, this book is really a mine of information but without a subject-index and with such inconveniently placed references the hidden treasure is unnecessarily difficult to find.

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