

Book Reviews

Great Moments in Medicine and Pharmacy: a History of Medicine and Pharmacy in Pictures, by G. A. BENDER and R. A. THOM, Detroit, Northwood Institute Press, for Parke, Davis & Co., 1966, 2 vols., pp. 421, 238, \$12.00, \$10.00.

An astonishing amount of work has been put into these two colourful books by an author-artist team employed by Parke, Davis & Co. Using reproductions of oil paintings (by Robert Thom) as the core of his 85 chapters George Bender has produced two very readable histories of pharmacy and medicine which will be much appreciated by sixth formers, nurses, medical students and, indeed, by anyone who desires a painless introduction to medical history. The author and painter travelled half a million miles in search of material; between them they made on the spot sketches, located little known repositories of illustrations and went to great pains to avoid inaccuracies in the background detail of their pictures and texts. Expert advice was given by Drs. Ackerknecht and Urdang.

Oversimplifications are bound to occur in books of this character but we should remember (when we meet them for instance in the chapters on Paracelsus and Vesalius) that the author's prime aim is to stimulate interest in his subject, not to present a new standard textbook for the scholarly world. It is rather a pity that the paintings, though full of colour (perhaps because of this), do not always carry entire conviction; the women look undeviatingly 20th Century Fox whether they be Babylonian, Greco-Roman or lunatic. On the other hand there is enough background realism to offset this disadvantage, and most readers will find the colour appealing.

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