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everyone knows about, gastric acid, on ferments which may play a role in protein digestion, on the cells which provide the lining of the stomach, and on that remarkable substance still known only as the “intrinsic factor”, which is vital for the absorption from the intestine of the microgram quantities of the vitamin, B 12, which is necessary to prevent us developing Addisonian pernicious anaemia.

Horace Davenport’s book is a work of devotion and admirable scholarship. At the end of it all, however, I still do not know why the stomach secretes acid in such quantities. We do not really need it, as is shown by the many individuals who live to great ages without having any acid in their stomachs. Could it be that like the appendix, which we can all do without, stomach acid is vestigial in a biochemical sense? The answer to this question cannot be found in this book. Nevertheless, it does provide a fascinating insight into the ways of thought of generations of physiologists who have been, like Horace Davenport, committed to the ideal that “the proper aim of physiological research is to reach an understanding of normal and abnormal function in the human being”.

Christopher Booth, Royal College of Physicians of London

OVE HAGELIN (comp.), *Rare and important medical books in the library of the Karolinska Institute*, Stockholm, Karolinska Institutet Bibliotek, 1992, pp. 212, illus., SEK 400 (91–88194–027).

Third in a uniform series of catalogues compiled by Hagelin, this is the first to deal with the impressive rare book collection held by the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm. Earlier volumes (noticed in this journal, 1990, 34: 470, and 1992, 36: 240) presented highlights from the library of the Swedish Society of Medicine, many of whose older books strayed to the Karolinska Institute after 1816, when the latter left the premises it had shared for its first six years with the Society and the Collegium Medicum. Further moves and some splendid donations apart, the subsequent history of the Karolinska collection is presented in Hagelin’s informative preface as one of more or less beneficent neglect; no catalogue has appeared since those of Anders Johan Hagströmer (1753–1830) in 1811 and 1825. Faced with two kilometres of pre-1960 books arranged only by subject, Hagelin has bestowed a bibliographical kiss of life on just 93 sleeping beauties, chosen for their historical importance and visual appeal—excellent illustrations accompany each record. Only works not previously catalogued for the Swedish Society of Medicine have been included, so the result is too unbalanced to stand alone as a survey of the literature, but here we find, amongst others, the well-established classics by Vesalius, Bidloo, Gautier d’Agoty, and Cruveilhier, and particularly fine copies of Charles Estienne’s anatomical atlas (1545), Hans Weigel the Elder’s Vesalian fugitive sheets (1556), and Georg Bartisch’s comprehensive ophthalmological treatise (1583). The arrangement is roughly chronological, ending with Fleming’s announcement of the discovery of penicillin in the *British Journal of experimental Pathology* (1929).

After giving the author and short title, each record has a brief pagination statement which occasionally alerts the careful reader to a copy-specific imperfection. Information about the author, his (or in the case of *Notes on nursing*, her) work, and the provenance of the Karolinska copy is then combined to produce a short essay supported by a list of references. Typographically challenged—even the commonest French and German accents are absent—and with a few harmless lapses in the English idiom, these essays are nevertheless reasonably informative and thoroughly entertaining. They convey the compiler’s enthusiasm for his subject. Even the most familiar territory is covered with a sharp eye for significant detail, and a fine balance is maintained between the grotesque or amusing anecdote, that necessary bane of so much popular literature on medical history, and the telling observation that preserves our sense of wonder at the human achievement each book represents.

Gerald Beasley, Wellcome Institute

JEREMY TAYLOR, *Hospital and asylum architecture in England 1840–1914: building for health care*, London, Mansell Publishing, 1991, pp. xiv, 274, illus., £60 (0–7201–2059–4).

The hospital building is a Cinderella to both medical and architectural history. Orthodox medical historians may be interested in, say, the finance of the institution and the therapy practised there; few architectural historians have yet looked at the architectural merit—or otherwise—of the buildings in which medicine is practised. Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, in his brief survey of hospital architecture which

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forms one chapter of *Building types* (1976), lamented the lack of studies in this field. "There are", he wrote, "few 'types' as fruitful as the Hospital, if one wants to see how functional thought, i.e. medical convictions and discoveries, is reflected in plans and elevations; the pavilion type instead of the cruciform plan and the big blocks of today owing to antisepsis."

Dr Taylor is one of the few historians to have taken the hint. The nineteenth century was a most fruitful time for the development of the hospital as therapeutic instrument, rather than simply a—by turns more or less architecturally distinguished—container for outcasts from society. There was, towards the end of the century, much development of elegant variations on the pavilion plan form. This tendency led to a fashion for circular wards from the 1880s and, around 1900, the "X" plan. The latter is perhaps best exemplified at University College Hospital, London, designed by Alfred Waterhouse and his son Paul.

Such was the volume of theory behind these experimental hospital buildings that a writer in *The Builder*, a trade weekly, remarked in 1911, "The operating theatre is more a surgical instrument than a building."

Almost incidentally, the skirmishes of scholarship and fashion that characterize the nineteenth-century "Battle of the Styles" are considered when appropriate. The book has a gazetteer, arranged by architect and by location, which leads the reader to references and illustrations. Some temporarily forgotten specialist hospital architects are accorded potted biographies. The energetic user of Dr Taylor's gazetteer will quickly come to realize that urban and suburban hospitals "fitted in" with the style of their localities. Northwood, a pleasantly stodgy late-nineteenth-century dormitory suburb is host to the tuberculosis annexe to Mount Vernon Hospital. The Hospital, in particular the "Arts and Crafts" style chapel, is an exercise in discretion.

This book is an indispensable addition to the slender corpus on hospital design, which invites further study of the twentieth century, thus far only touched on by architectural historians, notably Adrian Forty in 'The modern hospital in England and France: the social and medical uses of architecture' in A. King's *Buildings and society* (1980). This last book is a surprising omission from Dr Taylor's bibliography, which seems somewhat truncated. Why mention only two of the special hospital numbers of the *Architect's Journal*, when several were published?

If there is fault to find, it is not with the text of the book, which is admirable, but rather with the oddly abrupt nature of various appendices. Perhaps an editorial or production decision has led to Dr Taylor not telling quite all he knows.

David Brady, Wellcome Institute

JEAN-PIERRE GOUBERT, ROSELYNE REY, JACQUES BERTRAND, and ALEXANDRA LACLAU, *Atlas de la Révolution française, 7: Médecine et santé*, Paris, Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1993, pp. 88, Frs 110.00 (2-71332-0999-4).

This is a most unusual work, being a handbook of information about medicine in France between about 1770 and 1820 rather than a monograph or a conventional overview. Although part of a series about the Revolution, the remit of the *Atlas* is much broader, encompassing patterns of disease, institutions, and professions from the first three decades or so of the nineteenth century as well as from the revolutionary period strictly speaking, and dealing with themes that go beyond the direct links between a specific event and medicine. Each chapter is devoted to a broad topic, such as sick people and illnesses, and the medical professions, but its contents are quite specific, with detailed sub-headings. The chapter on illnesses and the ill, for instance, provides information on dysentery in 1779 and 1792, and on measles and smallpox between 1776 and 1786. For each topic the material is presented in the form of maps, graphs, and a variety of tables, together with a short commentary. The result is a rather dense book, not a volume to be read once from cover to cover, but one to use repeatedly. The material needs to be studied closely and then contemplated in order to appreciate its complexity. The chapters are minutely referenced, and several present materials not easily available elsewhere, and there is also a useful bibliography.

Such a book is a wonderful resource for research and teaching; it should therefore be translated into English as a matter of urgency, and published in an inexpensive edition. It would be better still if