

Book Reviews

[C. VAN DER MEER, J. V. MEININGER and J. SCHOUTEN], *Circa tiliam. Studia historiae medicinae Gerrit Arie Lindeboom septuagenario oblata*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1974, 8vo, pp. viii, 302, illus., Dfl.76.

There are fifteen contributions to this *Feestbundel*, including a biographical account of Professor G. A. Lindeboom, F.R.C.P., and a bibliography of his publications in medicine and medical history. Predictably, some of the fifteen deal with Boerhaave: his influence on Japanese medicine (Achiwa, in English); and on London hospitals (Underwood, in English); his correspondence with J. J. Scheuchzer (Belloni, in German). The remainder are on a wide variety of topics: Belgian postgraduate students (Elaut, in Dutch); witchcraft and medicine (King, in English); Van Swieten and surgery (Lesky, in German); Nuck (Luyendijk-Elshout, in English); psychosomatic medicine (Meininger, in Dutch); a Dutch naval surgeon, N. de Graaff (de Moulin, in Dutch); percussion and auscultation at Padua (Premuda, in German); Camerarius and the art and curio cabinet (Putscher, in German); Descartes and the formation of the foetus (Rothschuh, in German); Harvey and the circulation of the blood (Schouten, in Dutch).

These papers are all of a high order of scholarship, some profusely illustrated, and each thoroughly documented. This, together with the high quality of book production, makes the volume a fitting tribute to Holland's most outstanding medical historian. The title derives from "tilia" the linden or lime tree (Lindeboom).

FLORENCIO L. PÉREZ BAUTISTA, *Sociedad y Medicina en la novela realista española* (Cuadernos de Historia de la Medicina española, monografías 27), Universidad de Salamanca, 1974, pp. 140, [no price stated].

Readers with little knowledge of Spanish medicine and even less of Spanish novels may well wonder what interest this book holds for them. The answer is, that it gives a detailed and vivid picture of the medical profession in Spain during the nineteenth century. From this it emerges that the popular view of the physicians was less than complimentary: their fees were exorbitant, their ignorance was abysmal, and their behaviour far from exemplary. It may come as a surprise to many to learn that as late as 1877 the licentiate in medicine was awarded at the early age of twenty-one, the common response being; "Here's one of the doctors of the Revolution. Prepare yourself for Extreme Unction". When no doctor was at hand, it was usual to send for the vet or to carry the patient to the apothecary's shop, where, amidst a heterogenous mass of groceries and vegetables, he would be sure to find an "infallible cure". It was freely bandied about that "A druggist who cannot make a fortune these days must have a supernatural vocation to beggary". Small wonder that folk medicine reigned almost supreme, not merely in the rural and mountainous districts, but in urban centres, where it was tainted with magic. As late as 1972 a national congress was held at San Sebastian in which one of the key discussions centred round medicine and witchcraft, such is the persistence among the populace of the belief in "curanderos", "algebristas", and other charlatans, a sorry aftermath of the failure of doctors to carry out their job successfully.