studied soil science. He moved to the Rockefeller Institute because Oswald Avery was seeking an enzyme which would attack the polysaccharide capsule of virulent pneumococci and Dubos offered to find a soil organism which would do so. He succeeded, and went on to seek other antibacterial activities. The search yielded *Bacillus brevis*, from which Dubos and Rollin Hotchkiss isolated the first clinically effective antibiotic, tyrothricin, and identified its two components, tyrocidine and gramicidin. A year later Ernst Chain and Howard Florey published their first account of penicillin. Dubos continued to study competition between species and became a wise and much appreciated publicist on ecology and environmental issues.

To commemorate the discovery of gramicidin, a symposium was held at the Rockefeller University in October 1989. The speakers had worked early in the field of antibiotics, including Rollin Hotchkiss (gramicidin), Sir Edward Abraham and Norman Heatley (penicillin), Theodore Woodward (chloramphenicol), George Mackaness and Bernard Davis (anti-tuberculous agents). Their accounts are full of revelations of laboratory details which do not appear in published papers but which are often the essence of success or failure of a particular project. Also they illuminate the warmth and depth of Dubos's own philosophy of science and of life. Unlike the proceedings of most symposia, this one richly deserved to be published, and should not be forgotten.

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CATRIONA BLAKE, *The charge of the parasols: women's entry to the medical profession*, London, The Women's Press, 1990, 8vo, pp. xvii, 254, £6.95 (paperback).

In their critique of medicine as a patriarchal institution, late twentieth-century feminists have often adduced the bitter struggles over women's entry to the medical profession in the nineteenth century. It is, therefore, surprising how little that struggle in Britain has been studied in recent years. The broad outline of the story is fairly well-known, but analytic histories have been sadly lacking. Catriona Blake's book helps fill this gap. Using contemporary periodicals as her main source, she gives a narrative history of the period from the late 1840s, when American precedents first aroused interest in a medical career among individual women in Britain, to the mid-1870s, when a route to medical education and the Medical Register for women was finally established after a major public campaign. She combines this detailed narrative with an analysis of the broader women's movement and the professionalization of health care which formed the context for the campaign, no easy task in a short book.

Catriona Blake's stance throughout her book is staunchly feminist. Like any feminist claiming that medicine is a bulwark of patriarchy, she has to account for the fact that, in Britain, women succeeded in entering medicine almost fifty years before entering other "male" professions such as law. To her credit, Blake does not evade this point but uses it to buttress her central argument: that the case for women doctors and the extensive public support for them in the 1870s was fought and won on the demand of women for medical care from women, rather than on claims for equal employment opportunities. In this she is surely right, although I would argue that equal-opportunities arguments were far from insignificant, particularly in generating support among liberal men.

The book makes explicit parallels between medical men's allegedly paranoid opposition to women within their ranks then and now. At times, Blake's rather sweeping generalizations about their psychological proclivities threaten to obscure her analysis of the structural basis of the nineteenth-century opposition and the divisions among medical men, or the possible damage wrought by Sophia Jex-Blake on her own cause. But she has provided a much-needed base from which such issues might be pursued.

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