

## Book Reviews

from the opening article in *Die medicinische Reform*: "Die Arzte sind die natürlichen Anwälté der Armen und die sociale Frage fällt zu einem erheblichen Theil in ihre Jurisdiction."

The continued interest of the issues addressed in Virchow's weekly is shown by the present photomechanical reproduction from East Germany. It comes not many years after a West German edition (Georg Olms Verlag, Hildesheim, 1975). The East German republication has been handsomely produced and enlarged with a ten-page epilogue by Peter Schneck.

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OTTO SONNTAG (editor), *The correspondence between Albrecht von Haller and Charles Bonnet*, Berne, Stuttgart, and Vienna, Hans Huber, 1983, 8vo, pp. 1338, SFr. 278.00.

This work is remarkable for a variety of reasons. The 928 letters and archival materials at the Burgerbibliothek in Berne and at the Bibliothèque publique et universitaire in Geneva have been deciphered and transcribed with cleverness and method. As a result, Sonntag's edition is remarkably clear and well annotated. A useful introduction (pp. 13–31) details the nature of the exchanges, the topics of correspondence, and the unsuccessful attempts in Bonnet's circle after Haller's death (1777) at editing for publication part of the correspondence. Except for a few detached pieces, the larger part of the correspondence had remained unpublished when Sonntag took up the task of bringing it to scholarly light (with the appropriate notes and a detailed index for names and subjects, pp. 1307–1338).

Spanning the period 1754–77, the exchanges reflect the manifold intellectual life of two major "Aufklärer", central figures in the history of the life sciences. It is impossible to assess the wealth of information historians will extract from this impressive collection on the "ideological" setting of scientific research. For instance, the political and religious positions of both Bonnet and Haller determined a specific brand of Enlightenment philosophy, quite different from the spirit of the French *Encyclopédie*. Their philosophies involved a significant recasting of the presuppositions behind the apparently uniform empiricist methodology, which has been taken to characterize unequivocally the ideal of science in the eighteenth century. Historians of science and medicine should be especially interested by the way some major topics of Haller's and Bonnet's published scientific works are "subjectively" presented and discussed in the correspondence: Haller's doctrine of irritability and sensibility; his views on major functions: circulation of the blood and respiration; his conceptions of a physiological system; Haller's and Bonnet's preformationist theories of generation, influencing each other and developing in opposition to the epigenetist views and philosophical presuppositions of Maupertuis, Buffon, C.F. Wolff, and J. T. Needham; not to mention Bonnet's original psychological theory, or the more general discussion of scientific methodology.

Close scrutiny of the materials in this correspondence will demand a reassessment of the "image" of life science in the Enlightenment, a crucial period in its development.

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GIUSEPPE ONGARO (editor), *Leopoldo M.A. Caldani, Lazzaro Spallanzani. Carteggio (1768–98)*, Milan, Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino-La Goliardica, 1982, 8vo, pp. 419, illus., L.25.000 (paperback).

The complete correspondence between Caldani and Spallanzani (74 extant letters from Spallanzani and 64 from Caldani) enhances the perception of Caldani (1725–1813) as a scientist in close relationship with major representatives of the new observational and experimental trends in anatomy, physiology, and pathology. It complements the image emerging from his correspondence with Haller, edited by Hintzsche in 1966, and with Fontana, edited by Mazzolini and Ongaro in 1980. Following in the footsteps of Haller,