

Book Reviews

RODERICK E. MCGREW. *Russia and the Cholera, 1823-1832*. Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1965. viii, 229 pp. \$6.00.

Reviewed by ERWIN H. ACKERKNECHT, *Director, Medizinhistorisches Institut, Universität Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland.*

LARGE-SCALE epidemics like the plagues of the Middle Ages or the cholera outbreaks of the 19th century are not only biological events, but form a screen on which the material and ideological structure of a given society is projected in sharp outline. It is from this point of view that L. Chevalier has analysed the cholera epidemic of 1832 in France (La Roche sur Von, 1958), and Charles Rosenberg the cholera epidemics in New York City between 1832 and 1869 (Chicago, 1962). Both have been quite successful in their attempts. Prof. McGrew gives now a no less valuable study of the first cholera epidemics in Czarist Russia which, in view of the scarcity of material on the social history of Russia, is of particular interest.

The author follows this frightening killer on its way through Russia from Astrakhan to Orenburg and Saratow, along the Volga to Moscow, St. Petersburg, the Baltic, Poland, and also Archangel. He gives particular attention to events in the two capitals. The overcentralised Czarist bureaucracy was not only helpless, but provoked through its clumsy, brutal measures numerous riots which cost thousands of lives. One of the most interesting findings of this study is that the pattern of the riots was the traditional Russian pattern of peasant revolts. Cholera revealed in Moscow the existence of a stratum of small merchants who were worse off than the serfs.

The medical profession was, as everywhere, divided on the question of contagion. It was very young, and in every respect very weak. I feel that the author is rather exaggerating when he describes an indigenous Russian medicine arising at this moment. It is no accident that the reports he relies on most heavily stem from "Russians" like Lichtenstaedt, Markus, Loer, Jaehnichon, Herrmann, etc. Less constant use of fashionable stereotypes and better proofreading would probably not reduce the readability of this valuable book.

F. N. L. POYNTER, Ed. *The Evolution of Pharmacy in Britain*. Springfield, Illinois, Charles C Thomas, Publisher, 1965. 240 pp. \$7.75.

Reviewed by G. R. PATERSON, *Professor of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Toronto and Director, Canadian Academy of the History of Pharmacy.*

THIS publication is the printed record of the fourth British Congress held by the Faculty of the History of Medicine and Pharmacy at the School of Pharmacy of the University of Nottingham, England, 20-23 September 1963. Nine papers are presented and, in addition, a presidential address serving as an introduction (by G. E. Trease) and a most interesting appendix of "Notes on an Exhibition illustrating the Pharmaceutical History of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire prior to the Foundation of the Pharmaceutical Society in 1841." As in all symposia, the calibre of the