

The Library

SOME RECENT ADDITIONS

ACHESON D: *Independent Inquiry into Inequalities in Health Report* The Stationary Office, 1998; 164pp

This well-publicised report was drawn up to address the issue 'that although the last 20 years have brought a marked increase in prosperity and substantial reductions in mortality to the people of this country as a whole, the gap in health between those at the top and bottom of the social scale has widened.' The *Report* asserts that the disparity between income groups, as well as the genders and ethnic groups, can be corrected. A comprehensive and well-documented read.

DASTON L, PARK K: *Wonders and the Order of Nature* Zone Books, 1998; 511pp

Mingling fact and fantasy, this text explains how the European Naturalists from the late Middle Ages to the Enlightenment viewed themselves and their world. The Naturalist school's passion for objective investigation was ever entwined with a sense of wonder as they delved into the secrets of science - mixing monsters and miracles, anatomy and alchemy. Both scholarly and fanciful, this developmental history describes art and science intertwined with the extraordinary world the Naturalists saw themselves surrounded by. A comprehensive and entrancing read describing those who sought to push the limits of their understanding and imagination.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH: *On the State of Public Health 1997* The Stationary Office, 1998; 283pp

The latest report in a series that began 140 years ago, this document is not merely a compilation of public health statistics, but endeavours to explain the information over the duration that it had been interpreting data while drawing upon the latest evidence-based methodology. It includes an interesting historical introduction. Succinct yet broad in scope this report will be of interest to all those concerned with public health.

KUMAR P, CLARK M (eds): *Clinical Medicine (fourth edition)* W.B. Saunders, 1998; 1326pp

This excellent popular reference work for students and health care professionals has been revised and refreshed. It is now even more valuable for reference in a broad variety of medical settings. The layout of the text and plates is well considered with colour-coded chapters making for swift navigation to the desired information. Beneficial lists for further reading into the evidence are added along with new diagrams, charts, and other inserts to support the updated text. An exceptional choice for revision or reference.

THE SCOTTISH OFFICE: *1997 Health in Scotland* The Stationary Office, 1998; 198pp

The latest statistics, issues, and trends in health care specific to Scotland.

The Library is pleased to announce the addition of CD-ROMs to its existing collection. The titles below may all be borrowed (as books) or used in the Library. Library staff will be pleased to assist any new users in getting started with any of the titles.

WILLIAMS P ET AL. (eds): *Gray's Anatomy* Churchill Livingstone, 1998; Book and CD-ROM

The latest edition of the classic now includes a CD-ROM that allows an interactive examination of the body's anatomy. Both are available for borrowing from the Library.

KAY J: *Kay's Portraits* West Port Books, 1999

System Requirements: Pentium PC or Mac; 8 MB RAM; Win 3.x, 95, 98; CD-ROM Drive (8 X Speed or better preferred).

During the second half of the eighteenth century Edinburgh was at the centre of the Scottish Enlightenment, and no work introduces the people of the period better than *Kay's Portraits*. The Edinburgh barber-turned-artist John Kay devoted his time to producing caricatures of the people who walked the capital's streets. From the 1770s to his death in 1826 Kay drew over 900 caricatures of the great and the humble, the happy and the sad, and the bad and the mad. 361 of the portraits were published in 1838 along with short anecdotal biographies of their subjects, and together they form a unique, gossipy and fascinating record of an extraordinary society.

WEST PORT BOOKS: *Historic Edinburgh in Maps - an Interactive Guide* West Port Books, 1999

System Requirements: IBM compatible PC; 8 MB RAM; Win 3.x, 95, 98; CD-ROM Drive (4 X Speed or better preferred).

Explore the streets and lanes of Edinburgh through the centuries with this easy-to-use CD-ROM. The city is divided into 15 sections and the user can travel between sections and centuries with the simple click of a mouse. Clickable points on the map bring up additional images - such as a sketch of a street or building in the era you are examining. Whether you are looking to make serious scholarly inquiries or simply want to stroll through a favourite neighbourhood across a span of time, this CD-ROM is excellent.

WEST PORT BOOKS: *Edinburgh Maps and Plans: 1544-1851* West Port Books, 1999.

System Requirements: IBM compatible PC; 8 MB RAM; Win 3.x, 95, 98; CD-ROM Drive (4 X Speed or better preferred). Requires a graphics program (any).

This CD-ROM traces a fascinating path through three centuries of Edinburgh maps and plans with 42 individual reproductions of the original. Beginning with a map drawn by Hertford's occupying army in 1544, this product includes

a depiction of a besieged Edinburgh in 1573, Gordon's 1647 representation, Kirkwood's map of the early nineteenth century, and concludes with several maps containing overlays which convey added levels of information. Recommended

for all those who have an interest in the evolution of Edinburgh or the development of maps. It does require graphics software, but the Library staff will be pleased to help new users get started.

BOOK FROM THE COLLECTION

Van Helmont, John Baptiste (1579-1644). *Oriatrike, or Physick Refined: the Common Errors Therein Refuted and the Whole are Reformed and Rectified* (translated by J Chandler). London: Lodowick-Loyd, 1662.

It is perhaps surprising to discover, on a website of controlled trials, a work by a seventeenth-century Flemish physician, biochemist and mystic. The website is 'Controlled Trials from History' <http://www.rcpe.ac.uk/cochrane/index.html> developed by the College Library and the UK Cochrane Centre. The physician and mystic - Johannes Baptiste Van Helmont. Van Helmont features in 'Controlled Trials from History' because he tackled the problem of how best to

posts, which he declined because he refused 'to live on the misery of my fellow men'. Instead he embarked on private research. Helmont studied and expressed vital phenomena in chemical terms, introduced the concept of gas, was one of the first to use the balance in scientific quantitative experiments and devised an early thermometer. In 1625, the General Inquisition of Spain condemned Helmont's treatise on the magnetic cure of wounds, *De Magnetica Vulnerum*, for heresy, impudent arrogance and association with Lutheran and Calvinist doctrine. Helmont spent some time in prison and under house arrest for writing this treatise, which suggests that applying ointment to the weapon not the wound could effect a cure. This treatise and more of Van Helmont's writings can be found in the College's copy of the first English translation of Helmont's collected works, *Ortus Medicae*, posthumously published by his son in Amsterdam in 1648.

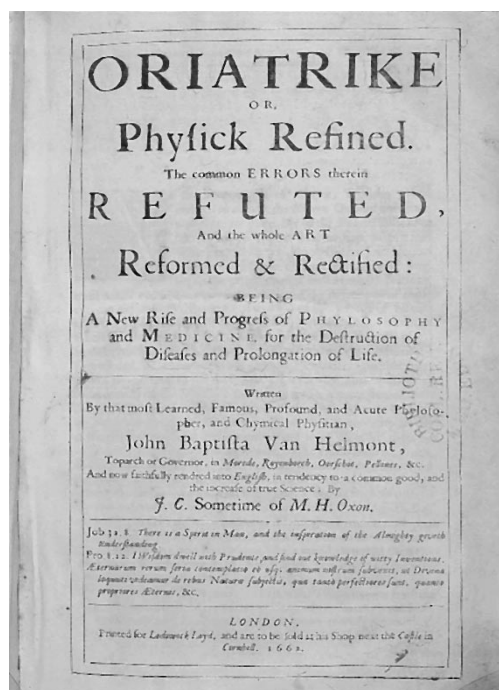


FIGURE 1
Titlepage of *Oriatrike, or Physick Refined*.

avoid selection biases in assembling comparison groups. Van Helmont wanted to make an unbiased comparison of the efficacy of blood-letting in the treatment of fever, and he proposed that lots should be cast to decide which patients would be bled and which treated without blood-letting.

After receiving an MD in 1599, Helmont made his reputation as a physician during an epidemic of plague at Antwerp. This led to offers of ecclesiastical and royal medical

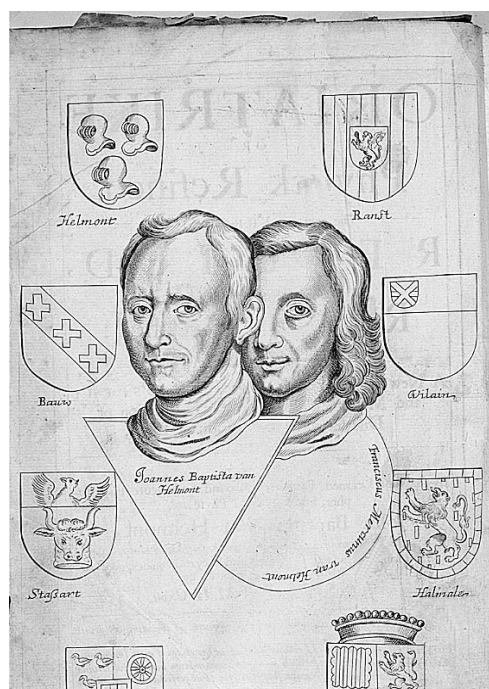


FIGURE 2
Frontispiece showing Van Helmont and his son.