Paul Artale 20.4.26

Review: Druin Burch, *Taking the Medicine*, Vintage Books, London, UK, 2009 (2010 edn.)

Pages: 308

Iatrocide Past and Present

A dense and scientific-styled history of both major medical discoveries and blunders, the two often going together. It shatters the myth of the impartial, rational doctor-scientist going about his work free from external influence. The opposite seems true, that doctors are drive by a "God complex" and prefer to rest more on opinion rather than randomised statistical testing.

There are deep dives into quinone, antibiotics, sulpha drugs, antibiotics thalidomide, and aspirin. The astute reader will also observe nothing much has changed in the past century regarding safety and informed consent, e.g., with untested COVID-19 shots killing and maiming under world health authorities' approval.

The reader will also take a way a valuable scepticism of the medical arts which may one day save his life.

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Prologue (pp. 1-10)

"Doctors, for most of human history, have killed their patients far more often than they have saved them. Their drugs and their advice have been poisonous. They have been sincere, well-meaning and murderous." [p3]

I) Early Medicine and Opium (pp. 11-22)

The poppy ovary swells and oozes white liquid from its seed-head. Once dried it forms the paste opium. Sumerians called it the joy plant. From it comes morphine and other alkaloids.

Antimony was used for schistosomiasis.

The Egyptians did trepanation on the skull.

II) <u>Sophistry and Laudanum</u> (pp. 23-36)

Roger Bacon (13thC) stressed observation, theory, and experiment.

Francis Bacon (16thC) created the scientific method.

In the 17thC, William Harvey discovered blood circulation.

Paraclesus (b. 1493, Switzerland) popularised the Doctrine of Signatures. He also created "laudanum" (opium in alcohol which helped active compounds dissolve easier).

"Masterly inactivity was frequently the best option … Medicine is founded on the desire of patients to be helped and of doctors to help. These desires outweigh sense. The difficulty of doing nothing, or of admitting that there is nothing to be done, is overwhelming." [pp31,33]

Dr Oliver Wendell Holmes of Boston, 19thC: "There is nothing people will not do … to recover their health and save their lives." [p33]

III) <u>Self-Confidence and Quinine</u> (pp. 37-50)

Galen was so fond of bleeding he prescribed it for blood loss.

Johns Hopkins founding professor Sir William Osler, 1920: "To bleed art the very onset in robust, healthy individuals in whom the disease sets in with great intensity and high fever is good practice." [p38]

Malaria is caused by protozoan *Plasmodium* which has one cell inside a wall.

The South American cinchona tree bark (quinone) was found poisonous to *Plasmodium*. Powdered bark was *Pulvis Jesuiticus*; when Oliver Cromwell fell ill with malaria he naturally refused the powder!

The Royal Society was established 166 with the motto: "Nullius in Verba".

IV) Learning to Experiment (pp. 51-59)

Firearm wounds were poisoned by the gunpowder; treatment was quaterisation with oil and elderberry.

V) The Taste of Trees (pp. 60-63)

The willow (*Salix*) was investigated as an alternative to cinchona.

VI) Beetroots, Mesmerism and Organic Chemistry (pp. 64-70)

VII) New England and New Ways of Thinking (pp. 71-79)

Puerperal fever was said to be caused by bacterial infection of the womb lining.

Samuel Hahnemann created homeopathy after overdosing on cinchona and finding he had symptoms of malaria.

VIII) Dyes, Stains and Antibiotics (pp. 80-95)

Murexide was from the cone-snail *Murex*, a purple dye of which 10,000 snails were needed to make one Roman toga.

Artificial aniline dyes enabled people to know see reactions in the body.

MB was discovered 1876 by Heinrich Caro; it was used to stain the tubercle bacillus.

Jew Paul Ehrlich discovered mast cells by staining nerve fibers with MB.

MB also stains *plasmodium*, which cured two malaria sufferers in Berlin.

IX) Medical Missionaries (pp. 96-105)

As destroys small facial blood vessels.

Trypanosoma brucei causes African sleeping sickness.

Ehrlich found chemotherapy was only useful to test *in vivo*.

Treponema pallidum causes syphilis, infecting brain and spinal cause and eventually causing death.

Zionist Chaim Weizmann was a chemist.

X) Aspirin and Drug Development (pp. 106-115)

In 1826, Henri Leroux isolated salicin from willow bark.

In 1882, dye company Farbwerke created a pharmaceutical division Hoescht.

Coal tar derivative napththalene causes blood cells to split.

Friedrich Bayer was born 1825 near Cologne. In 1863 he co-founded Bayer & Co.

Paracetamol is N-(4-hydroxyphenyl)ethanamide.

Salicylic acid can dissolve the stomach.

Bayer created Aspirin in 1933.

XI) Cough Medicine Called Heroin (pp. 116-119)

Heroin is *acetylated* morphine. Bayer stopped making it in1913.

XII) Francis Galton almost Reforms Medicine (pp. 120-125)

XIII) Antibiotics and Nazi Nobels (pp.126-139)

Bayer absorbed Casella Dye Works in 1925 to become I. G. Farben.

XIV) Penicillin and Streptomycin (pp. 140-156)

Francis Bacon: '[since] is … one in which the labours … of men … may with the best effect be first distributed and then combined. For then only will men begin to know their strength." [pp140,141]

Moulds were know to kill bacteria in 1876.

In the 1930s, sulphonamides dwarfed penicillin which took a back seat.

The Rockefeller Foundation was created 1913 with $100M.

In 1943, Albert Schatz discovered streptomycin working with soils.

XV) ‘Sickness in Salonica: my first, wort and most successful clinical trial’ (pp. 157-169)

Archibald Cochrane was born 1909 in Scotland.

Tuberculosis was treated by deliberate lung deflation in order to give patients rest.

XVI) Captain of the Men of Death (pp. 170-184)

Sulfonamides and penicillin had no effect on tuberculosis.

The scientific method means doing a *reliable* test.

XVII) Ethics and a Glimpse of the Future (pp. 185-199)

George Orwell died January 1950, partly from side effects of streptomycin.

The whole point of a random trial is remove the agency of doctors.

Cochrane held doctors have a “God complex”.

XVIII) Thalidomide’s Ongoing Catastrophe (pp. 200-213)

The Royal College of Physicians of London created the British regulatory system in 1518.

In 1930, the USDA’s Bureau of Chemistry became the FDA.

Massengil Company began mixing sulphonamides in diethylene glycol to sell the product as a liquid without testing; it killed 107 over two months.

In October 1957, Chemie Grunenthal released Contergen (thalidomide) on the market; the drug of choice for pain relief especially during pregnancy. The British company selling the drug: "[thalidomide] can be given with complete safety to pregnant women and nursing mothers, without adverse effect to mother or child." [p208]

John F. Kennedy: "The physician and consumer should have the assurance that any drug or therapeutic device on the market today is safe *and* effective for its intended use." [p212]

XIX) <u>Syphilis, Leprosy, and Head Injuries</u> (pp. 214-230)

Albert Nessier discovered gonorrhoea bacteria in 1878. He performed 'serum therapy' by injected diseased blood into healthy prostitutes; some of which got syphilis.

The WMA developed the 1964 Helsinki Declaration based off the Nuremberg code.

Thalidomide was repurposed as chemo since it stopped cell division, also, for sever leprosy (ENL; FDA-approved n 1998). FDA approval also enabled doctors to use it off label for AIDS.

XX) <u>Aspirin and the Heart</u> (pp. 231-252)

Phenol used in explosives, is needed to make aspirin.

The majority of Spanish Flu deaths were pneumonia infection.

I. G. Farben was split up in 1951.

Aspirin is thought to inhibit cyclo-oxygenase used to control inflammation hormones.

Dicoumarol was discovered 1921 from cattle eating mouldy hay and dying from blood clotting. In 1948, Link modified it to create warfarin, with application to poison rats.

XXI) <u>Large Trials and Grand Designs</u> (pp. 253-262)

XXII) The Battle for Hearts and Minds (pp. 263-270)

In 1983, flecainide was created to stop extra heart beats, but it killed by heart attack.

XXIII) The Risks of Opinion (pp. 271-279)

AZT (zidovudine) interferes with reverse transcriptase. Initially, it was shown to increase CD4 cells, however, a 1994 European study found major side effects and no benefit.

XXIV) Revolutionary Confidence (pp. 280-290)

Yellow Fever is a hemorrhagic illness.

Thomas Jefferson: “Ignorance is preferable to error.”

XXV) The Beauty of Doubt (pp. 291-305)

“Evidence-based medicine” is a propaganda term.

68% of surgeries offer no benefit.

HRT cases 2,000 cases of breast cancer p.a. in the U.K.