

search — from 1906 to the present. The result is not a tale of rational and orderly scientific discoveries leading to a satisfying mechanistic explanation for allergy. Rather, this story, like most scientific progress, is fraught with controversy, ambiguity, and emotion.

Jackson's history begins in 1906, with the introduction of the term "allergy" into the scientific lexicon by the Austrian pediatrician Clemens von Pirquet. The term was meant to encompass a variety of immunologic hyperreactions, including serum sickness, food intolerance, adverse reactions to bee stings, and the death of laboratory animals injected with foreign proteins, and it was met with considerable opposition, ranging from skepticism to outright hostility. Perhaps its most vehement detractor was the French physiologist Charles Richet, who regarded this new term as redundant in light of his own term, "anaphylaxis."

The theories about the cause of allergy were as controversial as those regarding its meaning. Hay fever, as we learn in this book, was considered by many to be a disease of the elite, primarily attacking people of Anglo-Saxon descent and sparing the poor and uneducated. Others thought the root of allergy was nervous or hormonal. Throughout his descriptions of these controversies, Jackson weaves the shifting concepts of immunity, disease, and the nature of antibody-antigen reactions. Indeed, von Pirquet was among the first to suggest that the immune response itself could cause disease, an idea that formed the basis of his theory of allergy.

Jackson later delves into the economics of allergy, exploring the extent to which pharmaceutical, cleaning, and food companies have benefited from — and perhaps exploited and fueled — a growing fear of allergies to generate and sustain multibillion-dollar industries. He also examines the extent to which allergies reflect industrialization and urbanization, which have resulted in an ever-increasing release of pollutants and toxins into the environment.

Jackson's writing is precise and scholarly, and although I occasionally felt bogged down by the dizzying cast of characters, it is clear that the author is a consummate historian. Although *Allergy* is perhaps best for those readers with at least a rudimentary knowledge of medicine and immunology, it provides a rich medical and social narrative, suitable for anyone with a penchant for medical history and curiosity about the roots of this still enigmatic modern-day scourge.

Heather L. Van Epps, Ph.D.

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New York, NY 10021

hvanep@rockefeller.edu

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## CORRECTIONS

Immune Cells in Colorectal Cancer (April 6, 2006;354:1531-2). In the letter by Wolf et al., the third reference on page 1531 should have been "Wolf D, Wolf AM, Rumpold H, et al. The expression of the regulatory T cell-specific forkhead box transcription factor FOXP3 is associated with poor prognosis in ovarian cancer. *Clin Cancer Res* 2005;11:8326-31." We regret the error.

Laparotomy versus Peritoneal Drainage for Necrotizing Enterocolitis and Perforation (May 25, 2006;354:2225-34). On page 2233, on line 10 of the Appendix, the name J.S. Upperman should have appeared along with those of other investigators from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

Alemtuzumab for Refractory Celiac Disease in a Patient at Risk for Enteropathy-Associated T-Cell Lymphoma (June 8, 2006; 354:2514-5). On page 2514 of the letter, the sentence that begins three lines from the bottom of the right-hand column should have read, "Alemtuzumab was administered according to the conventional therapeutic schedule used in cases of chronic lymphocytic leukemia that is resistant to alkylating agents (30 mg three times per week for 12 consecutive weeks)," not "(30 mg two times per week for 12 consecutive weeks)," as printed.

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