

Book Reviews

Treves took some medical interest in Merrick, exhibiting him before the Pathological Society of London, before Merrick was whisked off on the English and Continental freak-show circuits. Robbed in Brussels, Merrick got back to England with no identification but Treves's visiting card. Treves befriended him, arranging permanent lodgings in the London Hospital where he became the ideal object of Victorian philanthropy (blameless and harmless), visited by society ladies, taken to the theatre and for holidays to country estates, before dying prematurely aged in 1890.

This well-researched and level-headed book – easily the best offering in this year of the elephant man – has brought to light much revealing new material about Merrick's life, particularly his family background and his days in the Leicester workhouse. In contrast to Bernard Pomerance's glib play *The elephant man*, Howell and Ford show there are no grounds for believing that Treves used his patronage of Merrick, and Merrick's advance to celebrity status, as leverage for the furthering of his own career. Neither is there evidence that Treves's interest was fundamentally prurient, or coldly clinical. Though Treves undoubtedly saw Merrick through certain stereotypes (a man deformed in flesh but pure in soul), he took great pains to bring what little comfort he could to the pathetic life of a man inevitably cut off from being normal; not least, Treves spent much time acting as interpreter of Merrick's distorted speech.

Merrick's life passed through four stages, once his incapacity had left him unfit to earn his living by ordinary labour: as an inmate in the Leicester workhouse; as an exhibit in freak shows; as an exhibit before the doctors of London; and as a patronized object of philanthropy in the London Hospital. What repays some pondering is that easily the most hateful to him was life in the workhouse. Though condemned to be gawped at, he showed no bitterness to those who exhibited him or those who stared. He had words of kindness for the fairground operators (who at least treated him warmly and secured him a good living) and was continually grateful to his society benefactresses and towards Treves.

Roy Porter
Wellcome Institute

LUIS S. GRANJEL, *La medicina española renacentista*, (Historia general de la medicina española, vol. II), Salamanca, Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1980, 8vo., pp. 289, illus., 750 ptas. (paperback).

Professor Granjel has again provided us with a very clear and workmanlike textbook on Spanish Renaissance medicine, based on literary as well as medical authors. The result is very much internalist history, not only in its unsophisticated discussion of the social and economic background, but also in its exclusion of non-Spanish doctors at the imperial court, like Baersdorp and Caballus. It is lavishly illustrated, but it is unfortunate that there is no index of plates, for several lack identification, and the quality of their reproduction is not always good. A comparison between text and plates shows several small errors in the dating and transcription of titles, but these minor criticisms should not obscure our debt to the author for the copious and detailed information he has provided. For no other area of Renaissance

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Europe are we so well supplied with modern surveys as for Spain, and a similar basic introduction to the Renaissance medical history of any other country would be most welcome.

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BOOKS ALSO RECEIVED

(The inclusion of a title in this list does not preclude the possibility of subsequent review. Items received, other than those assigned for review, are ultimately incorporated into the collection of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine.)

FOCION FEBRES-CORDERO, 'Los variados apelativos de los profesionales de la odontología', *Acta Odontologica Venezolana*, 1977, 15: 7–38.

S. S. KALTER (editor), *The use of nonhuman primates in cardiovascular research*, Austin and London, University of Texas Press, 1980, 8vo, pp. xxi, 473, £21.00.

AUBREY MILUNSKY, *Know your genes. Crucial information about hereditary disorders and your personal risks and options*, London, Penguin Books, 1980, 8vo, pp. 320, illus., £2.50 (paperback).

'Medicine and history', *Transactions and Studies of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia*, Series V, vol. II, no. 2, June 1980, pp. 75–158, \$7.50 (paperback).

R. L. PALMER, *Anorexia nervosa. A guide for sufferers and their families*, London, Penguin Books, 1980, 8vo, pp. ix, 156, £1.50 (paperback).