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“safety first” as an underlying family motive, rather than the more complex versions sometimes nuanced. Perhaps the most difficult part of asylum or institutional history is style in writing. Should one be safe and routine, avoiding flights of convoluted prose? Should words like “routinization” be included? MacKenzie’s rhythm is staid and generally clear and coherent, but trying to balance out data and analysis lends itself to safety first prose as well. It was never easy to write about the obvious and the expected, yet part of this particular history should be about language, the descriptive language generated by the demands (for recording in the notes) of the 1845 Asylums’ Act, the Act that gave birth to these very casebooks.

The most potentially interesting chapters are those on “a family business” (ch. 2), and “the protection of private care” (ch. 7), in which she explores some of the reasons why an otherwise undistinguished country GP started looking after mentally ill patients. Taking at first patients “such as are of a quiet and tractable disposition”, Newington’s skills seem to have evolved via practical management details. We have a potential here to explore the real meaning of moral therapy, as to whether it was a kind of behavioural approach or more a description of a certain style of physicianly behaviour that seemed to be effective. Good husbandry abounds, in that the Newingtons were quite adept at organizing their labour force. Demand, going to the top end of the market, the influence of other private asylum owners, the local gentry, all added to the flowering of the asylum.

Perhaps most disappointing about this history is the lack of focus generated by the limited scope of MacKenzie’s enquiry. Thus in the chapter on “the asylum and moral reform,” she quite rightly points to the use of the diagnosis “moral insanity” for a third of the inpatients in the period 1838–1855. She outlines the increased length of stay, the reduced number of admissions, the increasing rise in population and the dropping off of the acceptance of pauper inmates. However, she does not once mention the work of Prichard, the man who actually coined the term “moral insanity”. She suggests that a notion of reward and punishment, and the cultivation of a desire for esteem, were essential to the Newingtons’ management process, and asks questions as to why families chose to send their members to an asylum. Clearly this is a complex point, with many cultural, social and financial considerations to be thought through. However, the most obvious reason, that the families themselves were being driven mad by the behaviour of their deranged relatives, never seems to surface. We are told that the most famous inmate, John Perceval, who was there only briefly, called the place Pecksniff Hall, but there is no attempt to clarify the meaning of this term to those of us not versed in the caricatures of Dickens.

Certain questions about the asylums in nineteenth-century Britain remain. The most obvious one, why were they built in such enormous numbers, remains most urgently in need of an answer. Versions of “social control” derive from the key work of Andrew Scull, but as an increasing number of individual asylum histories are reviewed the picture becomes more complex. Edward Hare has suggested the possibility of a new viral disease, and thus the emergence of schizophrenia-like illness in a chronic form not unlike general paralysis of the insane. The evangelical zeal of Lord Shaftesbury cannot be left out of the equation. The increasing recognition of mental disease behind abnormal behaviour, in the context of a more sophisticated and urban society, has also to be more fully explored. What Ticehurst surely shows, however, is that people placed in the asylum were generally mad, and that good care required lots of people. MacKenzie’s focus on the doctor as entrepreneur, and on the role of the family, is an interesting one, but the details of this book tend to show that these were not the heart of the matter.

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SAUL JARCHO, *Quinine’s predecessor: Francesco Torti and the early history of cinchona*, The Henry E. Sigerist Series in the History of Medicine, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993, pp. xviii, 354, illus., £45.00 (0-8018-4466-5).

The story of cinchona—commonly known as Jesuits’ bark, or Peruvian bark—is an excellent example of the successful introduction and marketing of a new remedy in the mid-seventeenth century. When given powdered, it commonly stopped the chills of intermittent fevers, without so much as purging: it was, in short, a specific, whose actions could not be explained according to

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humoral theory. Saul Jarcho, an industrious bibliophile, endeavours to show us the views of the physicians who favoured or opposed the bark by, in effect, setting up their books for us on a series of tables, arranged chronologically and geographically. He then guides us through his collection a book at a time, giving a thumbnail sketch of each author, sometimes making a few very general remarks about the period and place in which the book appeared, and then elucidating the passages on the bark contained in it. The library of information that he has gathered for us leads up to his *pièce de résistance*, the works of Francesco Torti. On pages 120–4, he prints his own English translation of Torti's very rare Latin *Synopsis* of 1709 (the Latin text is printed in an appendix); he follows this by devoting a chapter to a detailed account of Torti's *Therapeutice specialis* of 1712 (another appendix discusses the various editions of this work), and then shows us some of Torti's contemporaries, and his reputation. In the first appendix, Jarcho discusses opinions on intermittent fevers held by well-known early modern physicians.

Jarcho does not synthesize the information he has collected. The result is a kind of scientific report, mainly consisting of short paragraphs following one another without much in the way of transitions. He also demands a lot of his readers, pointing them to preceding or following chapters for bits of information, or asking them to draw their own conclusions about matters he brings up. For instance, after a description of the French antimony wars Jarcho invites the reader to compare and contrast "the factors that influenced the history of the Jesuits' bark" (pp. 77–8) and antimony, rather than doing so himself. He neither looks closely into the economic history of the bark, public opinion, or the history of the Jesuits, nor gives the reader much detail about the stories of the bark's use, such as the fascinating successes at the French court of Robert Talbor and Adriaan Helvetius. Nevertheless, Jarcho does make a few explicit and several implicit arguments: he manages to lay to rest the story about the bark being adopted because of the good effects it had on the Countess of Chinchon; he points time and again to the Jesuit connections of the early advocates of the bark; he suggests some of the possible ways in which the bark was marketed, mentioning that the Jesuits ran a number of pharmacies; and almost incidentally, he shows that there was clear evidence that patients were pushing their doctors to use the bark by the early 1650s. The story of the bark is an important one, and all historians concerned with the subject will be able to start with Jarcho's clear report.

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EVAN M. MELHADO and TORE FRÄNGSMYR (eds), *Enlightenment science in the Romantic era: the chemistry of Berzelius and its cultural setting*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. xiv, 246, £30.00, \$49.95 (0-521-41775-9).

In so far as chemistry may be said to have been the most important science underlying medicine in the nineteenth century no historian of medicine can neglect the work of J. J. Berzelius (1779–1848), arguably the most influential chemist of the century. He has been celebrated by many biographical essays, particularly in his native Sweden, and now this collection brings together in English the work of a number of scholars from several countries. Recurrent themes include the newly announced atomic theory and the rise of organic chemistry, but Berzelius is also seen in his wider social setting, as a prolific writer and (in probably the most engaging chapter) as a European traveller whose uninhibited comments on society are as entertaining as they are enlightening.

Not all the material is new and it is far from comprehensive, but by way of compensation a short bibliography is provided. Occasionally some very curious judgments are recorded. Reference to "the deadly blow to vitalism" (p. 32) dealt by Wöhler's synthesis of urea in 1828 can only be explained by the early date (1963) of the original article. Ammonium amalgam is made from ammonium compounds (pp. 144–5) not from ammonia itself (p. 91). There are several side-swipes at "traditional authors", sometimes with justification but woefully underestimating their path-breaking contributions. Dismissive references (pp. 132 *et seq.*) to "chemists-cum-historian" [*sic*] ignore the possibility that a profound knowledge of chemistry could be at least as valuable in understanding Berzelius as the latest fashion in historiography. Can there be any other instance where ignorance (in this case of recent chemistry) is effectively paraded as a virtue?

Modern chemists also feature in a suggestion (p. 220) that "Berzelius emerges the loser" if they express their indebtedness to him (and not to Laurent, as it is argued they should). But is the history