

### *Book Reviews*

Mr. Cohn has attempted to be objective and has obviously researched his subject extensively.

There is no doubt that Sister Kenny's successes were in part due to her therapeutic aggressiveness, but her relatively simple methods have, nevertheless, proved effective in the reduction of paralysis and contractures and are certainly preferable to the previous custom of immobilization. As a balanced survey of a remarkable woman crusader and for insights into American medicine in the 1940s, this book can be warmly recommended.

JEAN DONNISON, *Midwives and medical men. A history of inter-professional rivalries and women's rights*, London, Heinemann, 1977, 8vo, pp. vi, 250, illus., £6.50.

At the present time the profession of midwife is becoming obsolete, especially in the United States, a diminution of usefulness which began in the seventeenth century. Prior to that, child-birth had been strictly a woman's business, but gradually male attendants displaced her and in the mid-nineteenth century the female monopoly seemed to be set for extinction. However, in the second half of the century there was a revival of the midwife, and today there are indications that she may again play a more important role. This is due partly to feminist agitation and the benefits of home delivery, but the psychological advantages said to accrue for the baby cannot be taken seriously.

This scholarly book, which derives from a thesis compiled by a teacher of social administration, surveys the changing scene chronologically, ending with the Midwives Act of 1902 and valuable 'Conclusions', which include a discussion of present-day problems. Accounts of situations in continental countries would have added depth and perspective and increased the worth of the book without adding greatly to its size. Nevertheless, the work will be of considerable interest to a wide circle of individuals involved with obstetrics, as well as to the historian of medicine.

ALFRED DOUGLAS, *Extra-sensory powers. A century of psychical research*, London, Gollancz, 1976, 8vo, pp. 392, illus., £6.95.

The evidence put forward so far in support of extra-sensory perception is as extensive as it is varied, and the author, a writer, presents a survey of it in a clear, objective and well-documented manner.

The first part deals with 'The dawn of psychical research', beginning with the Ancient World and including Greatrakes, Swedenborg, Wesley, and Mesmer. The spiritualistic movement emerged in the middle of the nineteenth century, and in the 1870s organized studies led to the foundation in 1882 of the Society for Psychical Research in London. The second part describes the various mediums and the major investigations carried out on them. Finally there is the beginning of the era of psychical research in the laboratory, the most famous being experimentalist J. B. Rhine at Duke University, whose work is being carefully assessed by Dr. S. Mauskopf, not referred to here. The book closes with 'Present trends in para-psychology'.

Mr. Douglas has presented a complex subject lucidly and without bias. His survey