

Book Notices

of plague at Pistoia in 1630–1. Here, despite a high mortality in the pesthouses, the overall mortality is surprisingly low, 1.5 per cent, and certainly less than 3.5 per cent of the total population, as compared with 12 per cent at Florence, 25 per cent at Prato, and 61 per cent at Verona in the same epidemic. In the rural areas around Empoli, some parishes had no fatalities, while others lost almost half their inhabitants. This is an epidemic puzzle on which the excellent appendix of Renaissance ideas on plague throws little light. At its paperback price, this book is a bargain not to be missed.

M. A. SCREECH, *Ecstasy and the praise of folly*, London, Duckworth, 1980, 8vo, pp. xxiv, 267, £24.00.

This learned and subtle book, an exposition of the ending of Erasmus's *The praise of folly* (1511), reminds us that madness can take many forms, and that the ecstasy of the religious, the ignorance of the fool, and the inspiration of the poet have all been seen, described, and even explained in terms of medical insanity. This is humane scholarship at its best, but at an inhuman price.

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.)

Bibliography of the history of medicine, No. 15, 1979, Bethesda, Md., National Library of Medicine (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), 1981, 4to, pp. x, 924, lxxii, [no price stated], (paperback).

Conferencias y Estudios de Historia y Organización de la Ciencia, La Habana, Cuba, Museo Histórico de las Ciencias Carlos J. Finlay, 1979–80, Nos. 11, 13, 16.

DAVID DELVIN, *A patient's guide to operations*, Harmondsworth, Middx., Penguin Books, 1981, 8vo, pp. 329, £1.95 (paperback).

JOSE LOPEZ SANCHEZ and ZOE DE LA TORRIENTE BRAU, *Bibliografía científica cubana (1790–1848)*, La Habana, Cuba, Museo Histórico de las Ciencias Carlos J. Finlay, 1979, 4to, pp. 176, [no price stated].