

### Book Reviews

manipulative therapy. He discusses at length the vexed question, and defends vociferously the use of manipulation only by doctors and physiotherapists in well-selected cases. When employed correctly it can usually bring about symptomatic relief. The iniquities of lay manipulators, the adverse attitudes of some medical practitioners and the lack of adequate facilities and how they may be corrected are dealt with.

The historian should be aware of these contentious present-day issues, for their etiology lies in the past. This excellent book can, therefore, be strongly recommended as a unique study.

**VIOLA SKULTANS**, *Madness and morals. Ideas on insanity in the nineteenth century*,

London and Boston, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975, 8vo, pp. xv, 260, illus., £5.50.

The easiest way to produce a book is to choose a respectable number of extracts from the works of outstanding contributors to a given topic and to introduce them with a small number of pages of text. If the selection can be from books written in English so much the better, because tedious translations can thereby be avoided. Such is the format of this book: twenty-eight pages of introduction, including a few references to relevant literature, and the rest is the anthology, without annotation or comment. The author has training in philosophy and social anthropology, which one must assume she considers adequate qualification for her deliberations.

In fact there is nothing new here, and there are several deficiencies. Dr. Skultans elects to discuss and illustrate only British psychiatry, with no reference whatever to events in other countries; her bibliography is thus composed entirely of works in English, and even so many important secondary sources are omitted. She claims that this is necessary in order “. . . to limit the field of interest . . .” (p. 1), and because ideas on mental disease are comprehensible only by knowing something of the society producing them. But Britain has never been an intellectual island, and French and German influences on nineteenth-century British medicine are undeniable and cannot be ignored. Another defect is a complete silence on the influence of phrenology on nineteenth-century psychiatry. This is now being shown to be of great importance, and Professor E. H. Ackerknecht, to whom no reference is made in this book, has claimed that its effect was comparable to that of psychoanalysis in the present century.

**PETER WINGATE**, *The heretics*, London Macmillan, 1975, 8vo, pp. 219, £3.95.

Historians differ in their attitudes towards the historical novel. On the whole, they may agree on the entertainment it can provide, but they find difficulty in accepting the fictional extrapolations. The scene of this one, written by a medical practitioner, is Basle in the early sixteenth century and the events are seen through the eyes of Oporinus, whose career is the central theme; he is probably best known by his publication of Vesalius' *De fabrica* in 1543. Other outstanding figures are encountered, such as Paracelsus, Erasmus, Calvin and Froben. A good deal of research has gone into the writing of this book and the author transmits vividly the intellectual turmoil of the Renaissance and Reformation. The conflict of personalities and the unorthodox against the orthodox are strikingly portrayed, but the ever-present violence is tempered by the humanity of the times and by the tolerance of Basle.

However, despite the skills of the author in depicting this scene and despite an

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historical note to help sort out fact from fiction, the historian will still declare that he can never be sure what is real and what is fabricated. To decide, he must investigate the doubtful, but this, of course, destroys the objective of the book which is to provide entertainment.

LESLIE V. GRINSELL, *Barrow, pyramid and tomb. Ancient burial customs in Egypt, the Mediterranean and the British Isles*, London, Thames & Hudson, 1975, 8vo, pp. 240, illus., £5.75.

The disposal of the dead, although a grisly topic, is one of the most interesting of man's activities, reflecting as it does many basic beliefs of the inhumators and cremators. Mr. Grinsell, who was Curator of archaeology and history at the City Museum and Art Galley, Bristol, has produced an excellent, scholarly work on burial customs which brings together a remarkable amount of information.

In the first part he discusses general topics, such as treatment of the body, dress and personal adornment, grave goods, funerary rituals, and the later history of the tombs including grave robbery. In the second he deals with specific regions, including Egypt, Mycenaean tombs, Etruscan cemeteries, and the British Isles, based on personal visits between 1958 and 1973. An appendix gives useful information for those wishing to visit these sites.

The main criticism of the book is that more could have been said about the underlying ideas and cultures that determined a community's funeral customs, for to the historian of medicine this is an important aspect. Nevertheless, the book provides an authoritative, well-documented and richly illustrated account, and it can be strongly recommended.

NORMAN HOWARD-JONES, *The scientific background of the International Sanitary Conferences 1851-1938*, Geneva, World Health Organization, 1975, 4to, pp. 110, illus., S.Fr.12.00 (paperback).

During 1974 a series of six articles on this topic were published in the *WHO Chronicle* by the author, and they are now collected together and provided with a 'Preface' and 'Index'. The subject has never been dealt with before and Dr. Howard-Jones' book is, therefore, worthy of widespread notice. Moreover, a study of the conferences reveals a number of lessons of vital importance for present-day methods of combating disease. Clearly the author has based his work on very extensive research and includes a number of original contributions to the history of medicine. Thus he gives credit to Filippo Pacini (1812-1883), the discoverer of the corpuscle that carries his name, for his discovery in 1854 of the cholera vibrio thirty years before Koch, and he points out that this seems to be the first incrimination of the pathogen of a disease. The material throughout is well documented and well written, and there are excellent illustrations. This book may, therefore, be strongly recommended as a valuable addition to our knowledge of the history of public health and microbiology.