

Book Reviews

particular the American Indians, from which arose the more conventional notion of the noble savage, but also a new theory of the development of society by means of the idea of the ignoble savage.

Professor Meek's scholarly book will be of interest to historians of the eighteenth century, general or medical, especially those concerned with social concepts, and to anthropologists, sociologists and economists.

STEPHEN KNIGHT, *Jack the Ripper. The final solution*, London, Harrap, 1976, 8vo, pp. 284, illus., £4.50.

The author promises a "final" solution to the identity of the Ripper. Briefly, it is suggested that the gruesome deeds were carried out by a group of men in order to silence their victims, five East End prostitutes who were likely to blackmail those concerned with an illicit association of the Duke of Clarence. Despite the author's ingenuity the case does not stand up to careful and critical analysis and is no more "final" than its many predecessors. A lengthy account of the proposed solution need not, therefore, be given.

Donald Rumbelow's *The complete Jack the Ripper* (reviewed in *Med. Hist.*, 1976, 20: 357) remains the best Ripper book to date, and although it offers nothing new and sensational it is a careful review of known facts. To evaluate fully a complicated medico-legal case, the author should have experience of history, forensic medicine, psychology, and criminology, amongst other skills. Rumbelow is a serving policeman and well versed in general history. The present author is a journalist.

FRIEDRICH SOLMSEN, *Aristotle's system of the physical world. A comparison with his predecessors*, [Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1960] New York, Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1970, 8vo, pp. xiv, 468, [no price stated].

In view of the importance of this book its availability should be made known. It was received enthusiastically when it first appeared in 1960 (see *Isis*, 1963, 54: 151–152; and *Philosophical Review*, 1962, 71: 520–523) and has since become a classic, both as regards the handling and interpretation of the topic and the presentation of the material. Professor Solmsen deals primarily with Aristotle's *Physics*, the *De Coelo*, the *De generatione et corruptione* and the *Meteorologica*, but begins by discussing the work of the earlier Greek natural philosophers from Anaximander to Plato. He thus covers the pre-Socratic and Platonic areas as well as the Aristotelian. Apart from certain interpretations which have been challenged, this remarkably scholarly work has survived intact, and will remain for many more decades the authoritative account of the physical sciences in the early Greek era, which will continue to be consulted by all those concerned with Greek science. Would that a scholar of Solmsen's erudition and literary ability could provide us with similar work on biology in the same period.

RICHARD ASHLEY, *Heroin. The myths and the facts*, London, St. James Press, 1972, 8vo, pp. xi, 276, £3.50.

Idem, *Cocaine. Its history, uses and effects*, London, St. James Press, 1975, 8vo, pp. xii, 232, £3.95.

The author is a free-lance writer and other than this seems to have few technical