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the disease; discovered the parasitic protozoan, *Trypanosoma cruzi*, that produced the disease; and only later described a distinct clinical entity. Chagas was part of the Institute created by Oswaldo Cruz, the bacteriologist trained in Paris who organized a remarkable research and training centre in Rio de Janeiro. Chagas's prominence made him the successor of Cruz at the Rio Institute and led him to the position of director of the National Department of Public Health in Brazil in 1920. He was also a close associate of the Rockefeller Foundation and an active promoter of a US style of sanitation. For a few decades part of his scientific work on the disease was criticized by some Brazilian, Argentinian and German investigators who challenged his erroneous assumption that endemic goitre was a manifestation of South American trypanosomiasis.

The work by Perleth provides a complete picture of the natural history of the disease and follows carefully the origin, evolution, controversy, correction and final acceptance of Chagas' ideas. There is a fine description of the infectious agent and its mode of transmission, the clinical manifestations, the therapy, the preventive measures such as improvement of housing, and the socioeconomic significance of the disease. In addition, the ecological, epidemiological and social factors, such as migration, contributing to the spread of the disease are taken into account. One of the main novelties of this book is the extraordinary information and insights into the crucial relationship between the Brazilian and German investigators of the early twentieth century. This information is based on the papers of Max Hartmann held in the Archive of the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft of Berlin. The author soundly argues that Germans such as Hartmann, Stanilaus von Prowazek (who spent some time in Rio), and the work in protozoology made by Schaudinn played an important role in the interpretation by Chagas of the life cycle of the protozoan.

However, the title of this work suggests that it is uneven. Some aspects are treated brilliantly, others on a very basic level. The tension comes only in part from the difficulty

in combining the natural and the social histories of the disease. The social dimension is based on outdated literature, such as George Basalla, and good but not so recent secondary work. In the author's favour, it must be said that he spent some time in Rio de Janeiro and collected valuable information at the Casa Oswaldo Cruz. Something to criticize is the scant reference to recent socio-historical works in English and Portuguese that present a more elaborate and comprehensive view of the evolution of medical science in twentieth-century Brazil. For example, two important titles that do not appear in the bibliography are: Simon Scharzman, *A space for science, the development of the scientific community in Brazil* (University Park, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991) and Jaime Larry Benchimol and Luis Antonio Teixeira, *Cobras, lagartos & outros bichos. Uma história comparada dos institutos Oswaldo Cruz e Butantan* (Rio de Janeiro, Editora UFRJ, 1993). The author deals with the Rockefeller Foundation using the few and scattered papers kept at Rio de Janeiro. I am certain that his book would have gained in detail, accuracy, elaboration and interpretation if he had worked at the Rockefeller Archive Center of North Tarrytown, a major source for Latin American medical science in the early twentieth century.

In spite of some repetition and its rigid format, I enjoyed and learned much reading this book. There is a lot of specialized information on Chagas' disease that will be of great use to any historian of medicine interested in this disease and to those interested in tropical diseases.

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Allan Ingram (ed.), *Voices of madness: four pamphlets, 1683–1796*, Thrupp, Glos., Sutton Publishing, 1997, pp. xxii, 154, £18.99 (0-7509-1210-3).

The four monographs reprinted here provide some fascinating insights into the experience of

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being a mental patient in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England, although in many ways they are also frustrating. In the Foreword, Roy Porter returns to a favourite theme from his book, *A social history of madness* (1987), the importance of listening to the voices of the mad, and Professor Ingram's Introduction provides a cogent analysis of the way in which these authors chose to make use of the written word to highlight their plight, but also to make sense of their experience. History has treated the writings of the mentally ill with a great deal of condescension, but it would be a mistake to go to the other extreme and portray their accounts as the authentic voice of the marginalized. Unpicking what these pamphlets can really tell us is problematical.

It would have considerably added to the impact of this volume if Ingram had been able to provide some corroborative archive material to clarify the immediate events alluded to—what the official records had to say—although he does provide useful historical background to the period. Despite the consumer perspective, much of what is written about madhouse confinement rings true. Bruckshaw's comment about his attendants' repulsive air of familiarity, finds echoes in similar monographs, and Cruden's diary of daily chainings supports the view that although some madhouses were pursuing reduced levels of personal restraint by the late eighteenth century, patients were routinely subjected to long hours of physical confinement.

The three male authors were seeking recompense for unjust confinement, but Hannah Allen's account is particularly interesting, as she was the only one cared for in a home setting, and the only one who accepted she had been ill. Allen detailed several serious suicide attempts and her eventual triumph over the Devil through Christian fortitude. The extent of self-loathing expressed, and her retrospective sorrow for rude and scornful behaviour, all provide an authentic picture of severe depression, and depict a form of home care which placed her illness in a religious rather than a medical framework. Cruden, Bruckshaw and Belcher,

all writing in the eighteenth century, did not accept that they had been ill. The two former both sought personal restitution, but Belcher's blend of sarcasm and irony lays out a wider case for reforming the system. His monograph addressed to Frederick Bull, a Wilkeite, made appeal to traditional liberties, as did the patient John Perceval in the nineteenth century.

Aside from publishing, none of these authors attempted, like Perceval, to galvanize a wider basis of support for the mentally ill (N Hervey, 'Advocacy or folly', *Med. Hist.*, 1986, 30), and after reading these accounts one is left with an uneasy feeling that although they provide a fascinating window on past discourses long lost to us, they are deeply personal documents lost in a borderland between official indifference and the impulsion to assert a self which may have been deeply flawed.

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William H Brock, *Justus von Liebig: the chemical gatekeeper*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. xiv, 374, illus., £50.00, \$79.95 (0-521-56224-4).

Hot on the heels of the recent biographies of Hermann Kolbe and Edward Frankland, by Alan Rocke (1993) and Colin Russell (1996), comes the long-awaited account by William Brock of an even more important nineteenth-century organic chemist, Justus von Liebig (1803–73). He is best known for the way in which, in the 1830s and 1840s, he used his position as professor of chemistry at the tiny University of Giessen to develop practical teaching of his subject in the laboratory where he launched one of the most famous research schools that European science has ever seen. Brock covers these themes well, bringing out the importance of pharmacy in Liebig's teaching and giving as an appendix Carl Wilhelm Bergemann's detailed report of 1840 to the Prussian Ministry of Education about Liebig's laboratory. Brock also shows that there was much more to Liebig than the renowned chemist breeder. For Liebig chemistry was the