

Book Reviews

The book ranges over the whole of the Department's activities. The story of the Respiratory Unit is particularly well-told, and places the initial development of the unit (the forerunner of present day Intensive Care Units) in its very human setting. After its *ad hoc* start the Respiratory Unit could develop only by a grant from Lord Nuffield's Provincial Hospitals' Trust. The Unit was a huge success, and was the model for many such units throughout Britain subsequently. But its very success meant that when more sophisticated intensive care units were established for the treatment of serious illnesses (whether or not they required respiratory care), there was no local support for the anaesthetists' wish to expand their own, and by then rudimentary, pioneering unit. Oxford's proper Intensive Care Unit did not open until 1972; Lord Nuffield (who died in 1963) would not have tolerated such a delay.

Beinart was fortunate to have been able to consult each of the three Nuffield Professors of Anaesthetics (Sir Robert Macintosh, Alex Crampton Smith, and Keith Sykes) whilst researching this work. She was also able to talk with numerous others who are, or who have been, associated with the Department's first 50 years. The pitfalls of writing about recent events and personalities are many, but the result of her work is a most readable history, enlivened throughout by personal recollections which provide immediacy to what so easily could have been a dry catalogue of medical achievements.

Nonetheless, it would have been good to have learnt more about the difficulties (in terms of personalities and the like) with which the pioneers must have had to contend. Similarly, the opportunity has been missed to give anything but the briefest account of Lord Nuffield himself. What is recorded here is the standard story. He was such a fascinating man that a fuller account of his career, and his thinking at a time when the Nuffield Department began, is the most sorely missed feature of this book. Strangely, little mention is made of the other three Nuffield Professorial Departments that were set up in Oxford at the time, and the interaction of the four units is nowhere discussed. Despite these shortcomings the book is a very readable account of a renowned department of anaesthetics, and is an important addition to the literature of the history of anaesthesia.

Richard H. Ellis, St Bartholomew's Hospital

ROBERT DINGWALL, ANNE MARIE RAFFERTY and CHARLES WEBSTER, *An introduction to the social history of nursing*, London, Routledge, 1988, pp. vii, 256, £10.95 (paperback).

This readable, well-referenced book, written by a social scientist, a graduate nurse, and a social historian, sits between Abel-Smith's political history and Baly's Nursing Diploma textbook. Not only is it a textbook for the new-style Nursing Diploma, but it also supports Abel-Smith's "Third Portal" theme, with its emphasis on the ability of a dis-united profession to absorb the "handywomen".

Being the first comprehensive social history of British nineteenth- and twentieth-century nursing, it mirrors the approach of much recent historiography on which it draws. (But has recent work not shown that the retreat of the Anglican Church in the eighteenth century has been exaggerated?). The authors conduct us through the usual developments: domestic antecedents, the incipient revolution of the 1840s, the catalytic effect of the Crimea, the late nineteenth-century reforms (once attributed to the Nightingale Fund), the registration struggle, Nurse Acts and reports from *Lancet* to Briggs. But they always do so critically and with fresh insight. The nursing occupations are aptly compared to the constant redevelopment of a city; and the "registrationists" to redevelopers who had to take cognizance of the nature of the site, and of previous attempts to develop it.

In the conclusion, which covers the last two decades, the eternal problem of nursing is highlighted. Sandwiched between the economic constraints of managing deviance (i.e., illness) and a powerful, autonomous, free-spending medical profession, this politically naïve occupation had only ill-fated strategies for comparable autonomy. Discussing the

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“demographic time-bomb”, and Project 2000, the authors provocatively conclude that even in the next century the handywomen/supportworker will still provide care,—“No elitist programme of nursing has yet been allowed to succeed. Would an alternative based on open entry and continuing opportunity have more prospects of serving both the occupation and its public?”

Currently this must be the best single introduction to the history of nursing.

Malcolm Newby, Newark-on-Trent

GEORGE E. AYRES, *Social conditions and welfare legislation 1800–1930*, Documents and Debates, Houndsmill, Hants, and London, Macmillan Education, 1988, 8vo, pp. ix, 126, £4.25 (paperback).

This is a wide-ranging and useful collection of sources aimed, realistically, at sixth-form students. Each of the eight chapters is prefaced by a succinct and thought-provoking introduction, which effectively sets the documentary extracts in context. Areas covered include the philosophical debates which surround reform, with an examination of *laissez-faire*, Malthusian, and utilitarian approaches, for example, and the carefully chosen sources succeed in conveying the full horror of the social misery that accompanied nineteenth-century industrialization and urbanization.

The process of reform which eventually emerged is seen to be motivated largely by pragmatism (fear, for example, that an unhealthy and ill-educated work force would undermine Britain’s economic leadership, in the face of growing competition from continental competitors in the mid-nineteenth century) rather than philanthropy. The sources also reveal the extent of the entrenched opposition to reform from those in authority; the medical profession emerges with little credit here, it being quoted, for example, that in 1818 “a Manchester Infirmary physician, Dr Edward Holme, could not be drawn to admit that 23 hours labour for children would necessarily be harmful, while Thomas Wilson, a Bingley surgeon, ‘did not see that it was necessary’ for children to have recreation”.

There is a detailed chapter on educational reform, which reveals, among much else, that teachers’ salaries have been a perennial issue: “there is no class of men [school masters] whose reward are so disproportionate to their usefulness to the community” (Lord John Russell writing to Lord Lansdowne in 1839).

The short series of questions which follow many of the documents are perhaps narrower in range than those found on many ‘A’ level papers (which tend to emphasize the role of documentary evidence in historical analysis as well as their specific contents) but they will undoubtedly help to focus classroom discussion.

An index and a general bibliography would have been helpful.

Jeffrey Davis, Roedean School

SUSAN SPURLING, *Animal liberators: research and morality*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, University of California Press, 1988, 8vo, pp. xiv, 247, illus., \$19.95.

This book deals with a subject of increasing importance to the medical scientist—the ethics of animal experimentation. It does this in a unique way by endeavouring to identify a parallelism between the growth of womens’ rights groups and the anti-vivisectionist movement. These two threads of protest are seen as rising out of periods of major social and economic change—the Victorian backdrop of the first truly industrial society, and the affluent, and possibly post-industrial, society of Californian North America. The author clearly indicates that these two eras have similar anti-scientific attitudes resulting from the alterations in the environment that were produced by urbanization in the first case, and the resulting level of environmental pollutants in the second.