

Book Reviews

WALTER I. TRATTNER, *From Poor Law to welfare state; a history of social welfare in America*, London, Collier Macmillan, 1974, 8vo, pp. xii, 276, £4.50.

It is claimed that this is the first interpretative history of American social welfare, which is defined as “. . . those social security, social service, and health programs, activities, and organizations, public and private, the primary purpose of which [is] to promote the well-being of those individuals that society [feels need and deserve] help.” As well as supporting and improving the well-being of needy individuals and groups, the modern welfare system also improves community conditions and helps to solve social problems affecting all members of it. This book is not, however, a definitive account, but a brief review of the main American policies and practices from the colonial period to the present, representing the essence of social welfare history and its significance in the American experience.

Chapters deal with the background history of colonial and revolutionary America, indoor relief, scientific charity, child welfare, the public health settlement, house and mental movements, the renaissance of public welfare and the quest for professionalization in the early twentieth century, social work in the 1920s, the Depression and a New Deal, and finally the post-war decades.

Throughout, the book is well written, with substantial bibliographies after each chapter, and it is modestly priced. It can be warmly recommended.

JOHN D. THOMPSON and GRACE GOLDIN, *The hospital; a social and architectural history*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1975, 4to, pp. xxviii, 349, illus., £13.75.

The authors have produced a unique and important book. Dr. Thompson is Professor of Public Health and Nursing Administration in Yale University and Mrs. Goldin is an historian of hospitals. Together they deal with present-day thinking on hospital design and introduce it with a remarkable survey of its history. There are four sections: a history of hospital ward design in Europe and the United States, beginning with Graeco-Roman Antiquity; twentieth-century ward planning in the United States and Great Britain; the Yale Studies in Hospital Function and Design, organized by Professor Thompson and based on building axioms as embodied in the Memorial Unit of the Yale-New Haven Hospital, with the objective of establishing a methodology of evaluation applicable to the needs of any hospital; the structure and possible future applications of the concept of progressive patient care. Throughout, there is an abundance of excellent photographs and plans (263 in all), and the text is annotated, with a useful terminal bibliography.

Basically the book deals with the hospital ward and not with the hospital as an institution. It is of great interest to observe how at different periods different needs were felt which determined the planning of a ward, and to be reminded that until a century ago most patients were cared for at home, the hospital being primarily intended for the pauper sick. Social as well as medical factors and cultural values have obviously influenced hospital design and these are all dealt with fully and effectively.

The authors have four functional criteria, which represent their four elements of ward design: a healthy environment, the need for privacy, an efficient layout and provisions for adequate staff supervision. It is around these that the book is built,