

### Book Reviews

URSULA R. Q. HENRIQUES, *Before the Welfare State. Social administration in early industrial Britain*, London and New York, Longman, 1979, 8vo, pp. 294, £4.50 (paperback).

Continuing the excellent series on "Themes in British social history", this book is a comprehensive analysis of the origins, administration, and impact of early social legislation, 1780–1870. It is set against the widespread upheavals occasioned by the industrial revolution, the French wars, and the population explosion. The author avoids the biographical approach used in the past and now fortunately superseded. She discusses the following: the Poor Law, early factory legislation, public health, prisons, the police, elementary education, and the care of pauper lunatics. She concludes with an analysis and revaluation of the evolution of public administration as a whole.

This book is, therefore, an important one for the historian of medicine, especially when concerned with social aspects of the subject in the nineteenth century.

JOHN ROACH, *Social reform in England 1780–1880*, London, Batsford, 1978, 8vo, pp. 256, £12.50.

Professor Roach interprets social history as primarily "the working out of ideas under the pressure of events". Debates on individual freedom and collective claims are given detailed consideration, as well as religious themes and the ideals of self-help and philanthropy. The motives and causes are focused on, as well as the facts and events which they produced. Social reformers had been active in the late eighteenth century and until the 1880s it was possible to equilibrate their individualistic achievements with state power. The various aspects of the social history of medicine are dealt with here, together with the innovators involved: those concerned with poverty and poor law, public health, factory legislation, prison, and punishment.

Clearly this is an important work, which will become essential reading for those studying nineteenth-century medicine. The only possible criticisms are the small index and the large price.

PENELOPE SHUTTLE and PETER REDGROVE, *The wise wound. Menstruation and everywoman*, London, Victor Gollancz, 1978, 8vo, pp. 335, £7.95.

Although little has been written on the history of menstruation, it is hardly correct to say that it is still not a subject "for proper scientific or medical research" (dust-jacket). However, the authors are concerned here with whether menstruation is "the source of hitherto unutilised abilities in women". The authors have dug up a large amount of information from science, psychology, mythology, anthropology, and history, and hope to answer this and other questions as well as suggesting new ways of looking at the phenomenon. Their data are well documented and there is a useful bibliography, but few will find their curious amalgam digestible. It is, nevertheless, provocative.

ANNE DIGBY, *Pauper palaces*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978, 8vo, pp. x, 266, illus., £6.95.

The author has studied the history of the poor law in Norfolk with special attention

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to the significance there of the workhouses. She discusses the economic, social, and political factors which shaped the system of poor law, and, in opposition to received opinion, she demonstrates that in spite of a theoretically centralized administration of the Poor Law of 1834, in practice areas like Norfolk retained considerable autonomy. This, together with other new interpretations, make Dr. Digby's book an important contribution to social history. Although she deals specifically with Norfolk, many of her findings can be applied to other rural areas of England and Wales.

J. S. COCKBURN (editor), *Crime in England 1550-1800*, London, Methuen, 1977, 8vo, pp. xiv, 364, £7.50 (paperback).

The editor has collected together eleven essays on crime and criminal law administration in the early modern period. He has done so to exploit different historiographical techniques on related historical sources, and to provide a rational base for students. Each is a scholarly study, and they include topics such as 'The nature and incidence of crime in England 1559-1625' (the Editor), 'Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart Essex' (A. D. J. Macfarlane), 'Infanticide in the eighteenth century' (R. W. Malcolmson), and 'Finding solace in eighteenth-century Newgate' (W. J. Sheehan). There is also an excellent and extensive critical bibliography of publications on crime and criminal justice. Those interested in the overlap of medicine with law will find this book most valuable.

GRAHAM HEATH, *The illusory freedom. The intellectual origins and social consequences of the sexual 'revolution'*, London, Heinemann Medical Books, 1978, 8vo, pp. ix, 131, £2.95 (paperback).

The book's purpose is to enquire whether the evidence for the intellectual case for the sexual revolution that has taken place in the last generation is entirely reliable; also to discover whether the benefits produced are cancelled out by the resultant damage to society. The author has brought together many factors in this process of liberation that are often overlooked: medical, psychological, educational, and social. The result is a thoughtful, informative, and scholarly monograph of value to all concerned with sex, family, social conditions, ethics, and the like, either in the past, today, or in the future.

BARBARA EHRENREICH and DEIDRE ENGLISH, *For her own good. 150 years of the experts' advice to women*. London, Pluto Press, 1979, 8vo, pp. x, 325, £8.50 (£3.50 paperback).

Over the past 150 years gynaecologists, child psychologists, paediatricians, sociologists, psycho-analysts, home economists, and others have gradually replaced women's skill, thus to become the sole experts. Although well-intentioned, some have not been for the women's good, as this book shows. Thus women today, wishing to avoid this, are struggling to define their own identities. The authors reveal the past and discuss new perspectives, including the meaning of female liberation.