

### Book Reviews

the social and cultural sense'. So far, however, only a handful of trained historians have explored systematically the lessons of the past which emerge from the study of morbid behaviour and its management. A book of nearly 400 pages on this topic by a professor of American history is therefore something of an event.

Professor Grob has chosen as his theme the development of a single institution, the Worcester State Hospital in Massachusetts, from the time of its foundation in the early 1830s until 1920. Over the greater part of a century he is therefore able to trace the story of how changes in the management of the insane reflected not so much advances in scientific knowledge as a variety of social, economic, religious and personal factors, all contributing to the fluctuating climate of psychiatric opinion. The contemporary psychiatrist must find it chastening to view the past forty years in the light of his predecessors' experience. He will as surely be impressed by the modernity of the outlook of the young Adolf Meyer during the six years he spent at Worcester from 1896 to 1902. Above all, he will be compelled to echo Sir Aubrey Lewis's question about the changing face of psychiatry: 'how much of this change is the work of doctors and how much the product of the *Zeitgeist*, or rather of social and technological movements working powerfully on the course of human affairs?'

MICHAEL SHEPHERD

*English Midwives, their History and Prospects*, by J. H. AVELING, reprint of 1872 ed., with introduction and bibliography by JOHN L. THORNTON, London, H. K. Elliott, 1967, pp. xxxii, 186, port., £7 10s. 0d.

First published in 1872, James Hobson Aveling's *English Midwives* has become extremely scarce. Mr. John Thornton has done a great service in publishing a facsimile of the work. To the modern reader Aveling's name means little. The biographical sketch which John Thornton has written and the sketch of the author brings the man into focus. Aveling was born in Cambridgeshire, studied medicine at Aberdeen and practised first at Ecclesfield near Sheffield, to which place he was encouraged to come through the good offices of the wife of the vicar who wished that there should be a doctor in the village capable of administering chloroform during childbirth. After four years he moved to Sheffield where he was appointed lecturer in midwifery and diseases of women and children. After twelve years, on account of his wife's health, he moved to Rochester, and when his wife recovered he set up in London where he helped to inaugurate the Chelsea Hospital for Women. In 1873 he founded the *Obstetrical Journal of Great Britain and Ireland* and edited this for three years. He was an inventor of many obstetrical instruments and later played an important part in the initiation of an examination for midwives by the Obstetrical Society.

His *English Midwives* has a quaint flavour all its own. Relying largely on original sources he describes the trends of midwifery practice century by century and describes the work of those midwives who either through fame or infamy have left some mark on the annals of history. In his preface he sets out briefly his intentions 'To arouse an interest in the midwives of this country—to show what misery may result from their ignorance—and to gain sympathy, advice and assistance in endeavouring to raise them to a more refined and intellectual position, has induced the author to present this

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little volume to English readers'. The most important part of the book is that which deals with the nineteenth-century attempts to control the practice of midwifery and to improve its standards. Little is now known of the attempt by the Society of Apothecaries in 1815 to incorporate into the Apothecaries Act, which controlled the standards of education of the general practitioners, a section to provide for the examination and control of midwives. Had this act been passed as originally framed midwives would have been placed under the control of twenty-four medical districts and would have been bound to take out an annual licence to practise. Another little known incident is the attempt by Drs. Acland and Stokes to get a resolution through the General Medical Council requiring the Council to lay down the qualifications and certification of midwives.

Dr. Aveling was not against the study of medicine by women: 'If a woman feels strongly that it be her mission to become a medical woman, and it is found that she can pass the same examinations as those which are required of the medical man, let her come boldly with the rest of us and enter into combat with disease and death.'

This book forms a landmark in the history of the English midwife and for those wishing to study the subject it is a *sine qua non*.

R. M. S. MCCONAGHEY

*Beiträge zur Geschichte des Gesundheitswesens der Stadt Halle und der Medizinischen Fakultät der Universität Halle*, ed. by W. PIECHOCKI and H. T. KOCH (*Acta Historica Leopoldina*, No. 2), Leipzig, Barth, 1965, pp. 188, illus., DM. 11.20.

This is a special number of the East German historical journal *Acta Historica Leopoldina* edited by Rudolph Zaunick. It is really a Festschrift devoted to commemorating the 250th jubilee of the University of Halle-Wittenberg and promoted under the auspices of the Deutschen Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina. The authors' editors are Dr. Werner Piechocki, City Archivist of Halle and Dr. Hans Theodor Koch, Physician to the Carl-von-Basedow Hospital, Merseburg.

There are eight contributions, four from each author. The first four deal with various aspects of the medico-social life of Halle Saale beginning in 1526, when city doctors were first appointed. Chapter 3 gives an interesting account of anatomy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and pays due homage to the famous anatomist Johann Friedrich Meckel, whose widow bequeathed a fine anatomical collection to the University in 1835, valued at 35,000 taler.

Chapter 5 describes what is termed nowadays 'study leave' taken by the Halle surgeon Carl Heinrich Dzondi (1770–1835). He visited Paris in 1821 and then Holland, England, Scotland and Ireland in 1822. He commented that anatomy teaching in London at that time was good and that there was no lack of cadavers for study. He was somewhat puzzled, if not shocked, by the question 'Are your bowels open?' which was seemingly put to every patient, irrespective of his illness!

The last chapter deals with the appointment of Karl August Weinhold (1782–1829) as Professor of Surgery and Ophthalmology and the misgivings it aroused.

There are eight portraits and thirty-six illustrations. My copy of the journal was