

Book Reviews

feature which “today has no place in the pathology of coronary disease”, while it did not even mention the coronary vessels, which play “a decisive role” in the disease Leibowitz claims to have diagnosed. In his retrospective diagnosis, therefore, Leibowitz has to ignore evidence which *is* given, and invent evidence which is *not* given. Just how great a discordance is required between our medical categories and those of eighteenth-century physicians before we will learn to abandon this fruitless game? Our categories and their categories are quite simply incommensurable.

All in all, this is an interesting set of articles, the best of which are thematically related to Lindeboom’s own interests. We await the next volume, this time celebrating his eightieth birthday.

Andrew Cunningham
Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine
University of Cambridge

JÓZSEF ANTALL, *Pictorial history of European medicine and pharmaceuticals*, Budapest, Corvina Kiadó, 1981, 4to, pp. 22 + 92 plates, [no price stated].

After a fifteen-page history of medicine with special reference to Hungary, Dr. Antall provides ninety-two colour plates of paintings, drug-jars, surgical instruments, medallions, wax and ivory models, and other relics relevant to the history of medicine and pharmacy. Nearly half of the items reproduced are in the Semmelweis Museum of Medical History, Budapest; the rest are from other European collections. At least a dozen have already been reproduced in Dr. Antall’s *Pictures from the history of medicine* (1973).

Each item is accompanied by a brief text *en face*. The text is intended as “a guide or chatting partner who will show [the reader] around some of the relics of European healing”, but few gallery-guides are as concise as this. The pictorial language of obsolete medicine is, if possible, even more arcane than the written language, but here the reader who looks to the text for elucidation of the image will find little help. What is the emblem on the reverse of the medallion issued in honour of Tommaso Rangoni (no. 41), and what is its relevance? Why is a mustard-pot (no. 17) decorated with a Turk’s head? Why do the three Maries in a painting in the Esztergom Museum have drug-jars made of turned ivory (no. 13), whereas all the actual jars illustrated in the book are ceramic? A painting attributed to Leonardo da Bressanone (no. 12) is reproduced to illustrate the “stiff, bandage-like method of swaddling, which is fortunately no longer in use”: what, then, was its rationale? More consideration of such questions of iconography would increase the usefulness of these illustrations to medical historians.

Nevertheless, for various reasons we are indebted to Dr. Antall for publishing these valuable items. Collectors and curators of ceramics will be pleased to find illustrations of dated and attributed Hungarian wares (67–72), while historians should find in the pictures an approach to fellow-feeling with medical practitioners of the past. To mention one example: no. 55 is a Bolognese portrait of a Dominican nun in the pharmacy of which she presumably had charge, and the details are carefully composed to express and justify her faith in the therapeutics which it was her vocation to administer.

William Schupbach
Wellcome Institute

GRETA JONES, *Social Darwinism and English thought. The interaction between biological and social theory*, Brighton, Sussex, Harvester Press (New York, Humanities Press), 1980, 8vo, pp. xiv, 234, £22.50.

If social Darwinism had not existed someone, according to Greta Jones, would have invented it. A search for biological underpinnings to the social sciences had begun long before Darwin’s time, and all the crucial intellectual ingredients of evolutionary theory were well-established aspects of social thought by the middle of the nineteenth century. In this respect then, the *Origin of Species* did not inaugurate a new epoch in national ideology. So what, asks Jones, did Darwin’s book do? Her answer focuses on a new, post-Darwinian generation of social theorists who explicitly claimed to base their work on biological principles. Expectations already raised,

late Victorian intellectuals seized the language and imagery of Darwin's biology with enthusiasm, and hitched them to various continuing movements such as liberalism, individualism and collectivism, debates about heredity, race, and class, and questions of the rationality or irrationality of the human animal. Social Darwinism therefore became ubiquitous, pervading the entire range of social science from economics to ethics, by way of politics, eugenics, and moral philosophy, appealing to many different schools of thought and being taken up by an extraordinarily wide variety of social theorists.

This much is well known to historians. The intriguing point brought out in *Social Darwinism and English thought* is that social Darwinism was often espoused by both parties to a controversy, each protagonist believing himself the only true Darwinian. The constellation of facts and fancies that signified Darwinism to those concerned was thus an ever-variable, fluctuating mass of concepts, subject to as many interpretations as there were propagandists for causes. More significantly, it also provided the ground on which radically opposed groups could at least meet, if not agree with each other. Greta Jones emphasizes the fragmented, contradictory character of social Darwinism by describing the major arenas of debate so far as Britain was concerned. Her story, though pitched at a somewhat abstract level, is certainly comprehensive and will guide many researchers through this particular labyrinth. Yet the author has more than this to tell us: she hopes to analyse what it is that pushed – and still pushes – the social sciences towards biology, and the agents that might mediate between the two. The key, it would seem, is philosophy. At the deepest level, social Darwinism resolved itself into a theory which began from the “reality” of existing social relationships – or more often an ideological picture of them – and argued back to their apparently “natural” causation. Theorists, she claims, may have reduced human activity to hard-core biology but they failed to escape the limits of the social ideologies of their time: it was no good using Darwin to justify social science, since he was as steeped in current ideology as they were. Such myopia continues today, particularly in sociobiology. The great expectations of the nineteenth century might have faded away, but social Darwinism is not yet bankrupt and, according to Dr. Jones, lives on in one form or another.

Janet Browne
Unit for the History of Medicine
University College London

IAN R. TYRRELL, *Sobering up. From temperance to prohibition in antebellum America, 1800–1860*. Westport, Conn., and London, Greenwood Press, 1979, 8vo, pp. xii, 350 [no price stated].

The word “prohibition” in American history evokes the doubly heady pleasure of forbidden drinking in the 1920s; but it was during the first half of the previous century that traditional attitudes toward alcoholic beverages (that they were a social bond, stimulating to labour, and healthful) and toward taverns (that they were community centres with semi-official functions) were transformed by a segment of the dominant group into the widespread conviction that drinking was a socially divisive sin, destructive of work and body; taverns became saloons, the nerve-centres of anti-social disease. In both phases, one is talking of male culture. Mary Beth Norton has recently described the meaning to colonial women of being excluded from the public life represented by the tavern; it has long been known that women's breaking into public life included their postbellum assault on saloon culture. Now Ian Tyrrell establishes that Protestant women of upper and artisan classes played a powerful role in temperance from the 1820s.

But the chief subjects of his study are men. The first temperance reformers were upper-class, New-England “evangelicals”, inspired by the Second Great Awakening. They were also the leaders and beneficiaries of the revolutions in manufacturing and commercial agriculture which brought about the social dislocation, especially for the lower classes, whereby Tyrrell explains the massive increase in drinking between 1800 and 1830. These founders of the American Temperance Society assumed the class and ethnic biases that made first temperance and then prohibition the marks of success and road to salvation. In the 1840s, temperance was taken up by members of the artisan class who were losing status and employment – and