

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 The author avoids the biographical approach used in the past and now fortunately superseded.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