

Book Reviews

PAMELA HORN, *The Victorian country child*, Kington, Roundwood Press, 1974, 8vo, pp. xv, 244, illus., £6.00.

Much has been written on children of the nineteenth-century British industrial labouring class, dwelling in city slums, exploited by unscrupulous masters, and immortalized by Charles Dickens. Far less is known of their contemporaries in the country, despite the fact that agricultural labourers comprised in 1837 the largest group of workers in England, and that by 1851 they made up one-fifth of the nation's adult work-force. Mrs. Horn's purpose is to trace the day-to-day experiences of the children of farm workers and village craftsmen, and she deals mainly with the 1880s and 1890s, restricting herself topographically mainly to the South Midlands.

Remembering childhood holidays in the country, one imagines that the country child was in all ways better off than his town counterpart. However, his advantages were marginal because he was living under equally primitive and insanitary conditions, and was assailed by both compulsory schooling and parental exploitation in the fields or in local cottage industries. But parents and employers were usually willing to sacrifice education so that the child could be rendered economically viable at the earliest possible age. One of the most interesting features of this process is that exactly the same had happened to town children several decades earlier. It had been resolved by means of reforms, yet identical evils still existed, now transferred to the country. Up till now this striking fact has been little appreciated.

The author draws her material from a number of primary sources, especially school logs, and from secondary literature. The appendices contain details of housing, diet, household economics, accounts of personal experiences, and reports on rural activities. Some amount of oral history has been employed, and this, together with the manuscript material used, tends to concentrate the study on Oxfordshire and neighbouring counties, although the same conditions were presumably countrywide.

Chapter ten deals with 'Sickness and its cure'. In it the medical, hygienic, therapeutic and prophylactic aspects of the country child are discussed adequately and accurately. The common disorders are mentioned, but not rickets. It would be interesting to know if greater exposure to sunlight made it less common than in the town child, who had an equally rachitic diet.

Mrs. Horn's book is an important addition to the history of the child, for she has surveyed a previously neglected, large group, and has produced an excellent scholarly and well-illustrated account replete with information, much of it original. There is at the moment an increasing interest in the history of paediatrics, and this book as a contribution to it can be recommended enthusiastically.

WERNER FORSSMANN, *Experiments on myself. Memoirs of a surgeon in Germany*, translated by Hilary Davies, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1974, 8vo, pp. xiv, 352, \$10.95.

In 1929 Forssmann (b. 1904) carried out cardiac catheterization for the first time on a human being, himself. Thirty-seven years later he shared a Nobel Prize in Medicine or Physiology for his brief but pioneer work in cardiological investigations. The rest of his career was spent in surgery, in particular urology, and he provides for us here

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an absorbing, candid and well-written account of his life in Germany under the Wilhelmian Empire, the Weimar Republic, National Socialism, and now the Federal Republic of Germany. As a social document dealing with middle-class life and politics in twentieth-century Germany this book is especially important. It likewise provides a revealing account of German medicine in peace-time and during war, especially on the Russian front in World War II. Above all it displays the moral and physical courage, the character, the vision and the humanity of a forceful yet benevolent and unselfish doctor.

When criticisms are made of the so-called "vivisection" of animals by scientists in their experiments, men like Forssmann, and there are many of them, should be recalled; how they inflicted pain, discomfort and potential hazards upon themselves, thinking only of the possibility of advancing human biology.

BERYL ROWLAND, *Animals with human faces. A guide to animal symbolism*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1974, pp. xix, 192, illus., £4.65.

Much has been written on animal symbolism, usually aimed at a popular audience. However, Dr. Rowland, who is Professor of English at York University, Toronto, has produced a scholarly work on the subject.

Man has seen fit to endow animals with human characteristics, and so we have the wise owl, the cunning fox, the faithful dog, the industrious ant, and so forth. Similarly, the lady who wraps her poodle in a woollen jacket is projecting her feelings on to it, for she believes it needs protection from the cold, although, of course, it does not. This process began at a very early prehistoric time and the symbolism became embedded in religious rituals, literature, and in art. The human-headed lions and bulls of Nineveh and the fables of various early cultures are but two examples. The Greeks and Romans made important contributions, which passed unchanged into the medieval world with the addition of Biblical symbolism. As science developed, symbolism naturally declined, but of late we have entered a new phase of it promoted by our mass communication media, the "tiger in your tank" campaign being especially memorable.

Professor Rowland has used as her sources Greek and Roman natural histories, the Bidpai and Aesopic fables, bestiaries, the Septuagint and the Vulgate versions of the Bible, medieval encyclopaedias, numerous Renaissance sources, etc. She has selected forty-seven animals, both real and mythical, and considers each in turn alphabetically, from the amphisbaena to the wolf. Origin, significance, etymology, and references in literature are discussed in detail and there are citations to primary and secondary sources. There are also medical aspects of the animals, usually regarding their therapeutic value and considerable associated sexual symbolism; the author's occasional reference to psycho-analytical interpretations, however, could well have been excluded.

This is a fascinating work which will serve as a reference source for those who seek only a survey of an animal, or the scholar who needs both this and the references. For each type of reader it can be highly recommended. It is well written and illustrated, pleasingly produced, and relatively modestly priced.