

Book Reviews

J. A. L. SINGH and ROBERT M. ZINGG, *Wolf-children and feral man*, Hamden, Conn., Archon Books, 1966, 8vo, pp. xli, 379, illus., \$16.00.

Despite the age of this book, a reprint of the first edition of 1942, its existence should be noted in view of the recent works on this interesting topic (*Med. Hist.*, 1975, 19: 407–408). There are two parts: the Reverend Singh on 'The wolf-children of Midnapore', in the form of a diary which relates the development in an orphanage of two Indian children discovered living with wolves; Dr. Zingg, an American anthropologist, on 'Feral [i.e. wild human beings nurtured by animals] man and cases of extreme isolation of individuals', which describes other cases of this condition both in India and in Europe. The diary is a simple record, but nevertheless informative, as well as being a moving record of care and devotion; a commentary by Dr. Zingg accompanies it.

In our attempts to differentiate between man and animals this book, and others like it, on wild children add a new dimension to the discussions. They also underline the adaptation that human beings can achieve, and they bring new evidence to the problem of the influence of heredity and environment on behaviour and personality. Quite apart from these fundamental, biological aspects, these books are fascinating and revealing. They raise many more questions concerning psychology, neurology, and ethology.

JOHN GORDON FREYMAN, *The American health care system: its genesis and trajectory*, Baltimore, Md., Williams & Wilkins, 1974, 8vo, pp. xix, 407, £15.00 (\$25.00).

Planned as an overview of the total American health care system, this book shows how vast, complex and expensive the enterprise is, and how compartmentalized it has become. However, as a prelude to planning for the future the author correctly looks at the past and assesses the present situation. The first part of his book deals with 'Genesis: from the Middle Ages to 1965', but considers mainly the eighteenth to twentieth centuries divided into three periods: 1700 to 1850; 1850 to 1920; 1920 to 1965. Health care, medical science, medical education and the financing of health care and medical research (1930 to 1965) are discussed. Reference to the European situation seems restricted to Britain, which overlooks the important influence of the Germans and the French on American medicine. The usual secondary sources are employed and ample reference is made to them in the text. Part II is concerned with 'Trajectory: from 1965 into the 21st century' and the discussion follows the same guide lines used in Part I: economics of health, medical education and the organization of health care. Financial policy is obviously vital and educational policies are gradually changing, especially in medicine. The provisions of health care institutions will be the slowest of all and the most difficult to change. However, a method is proposed of integrating the components of the system to provide innovations in its economic and educational aspects.

Although intended for present-day medical men, administrators, politicians, and others, this book will be of value to historians of medicine, who, in part of their teaching and research, should equate the past with the present and the future, as long as they recognize the hazards and limitations of the technique.