

## Book Reviews

To a medical or pharmaceutical historian this book is a mine of useful information, well presented and carefully considered.

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SHARON ROMM, *The unwelcome intruder. Freud's struggle with cancer*. New York, Praeger, 1983, 8vo, pp. xxiii, 164, illus., \$19.95.

Freudabilia continues to accumulate, and the slide towards the coffee-table end of the canon is now apparent. This short, well-illustrated book consists of fourteen chapters, varying in length from four to nearly forty pages, detailing the great man's prolonged encounter with oral cancer. The title is from Freud's own description, as quoted by Felix Deutsch – "an uninvited, *unwelcome intruder* whom one should not mind more than is necessary". However, given that the lesion was a squamous cell carcinoma, recurrently nurtured by twenty cigars a day, and that friends carefully supplied tobacco throughout all shortages, a more apt description – and Freudian interpretation? – might be "the honoured guest".

The details of Freud's operation and prosthesis are based on the notes of the surgeon, Hans Pichler. These are clear, original, and interesting. Some of the photographs and drawings would be nice to have for one's own slide catalogue. Much of the rest, though, is derivative, extensively quoting the Jones and Schur biographies, and lapsing constantly into a literal form of open-mouthed hagiography. Wisely, the author, a plastic surgeon, refrained from trying to relate Freud's oral pathology to his concurrent psychological ideas. But what are we to make of a patient who refused to stop smoking, who insisted on constant minor adjustments to his prosthesis, who twice switched to alternative doctors (returning each time to the gentlemanly Pichler), who demanded to be seen *more often*, and would only let his daughter nurse him? Perhaps this was not unusual in Viennese great men of the time, but the heroic tone isolates rather than informs. Short biographies of the medical men involved are plentiful, but there is no sense in which Freud's behaviour is embedded in the medical or patients' attitudes of the day.

Thus, while the book is easy enough to read in terms of style and print, there are too many irrelevant details. For example, a photograph of the London Clinic hardly seems necessary given Freud's brief and late attendance there. Likewise, there is a comment that "Freud might have looked across this street . . ." (on his first visit to Pichler), which tempts one to suggest he was probably too busy putting out or lighting up a cigar. In the end, however, one can only welcome the appearance of this book. Would that more of us attempted to bridge the widening gap between clinical and historical approaches.

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BARBARA MELOSH, *The physician's hand. Work culture and conflict in American nursing*. Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1982, 8vo, pp. ix, 260, [no price stated].

This is a useful, well-researched book and should be widely read for, although it relates to the American experience of the development of nursing as a profession, the similarities with the history of nursing in this country are more striking than the differences. *The physician's hand* recasts nursing history from the viewpoint of the nurse on the job and places it in the context of women's history, labour history, and sociology. Written from a feminist point of view, it traces the struggle of women to carve out a "profession" in a man's world and in a limited labour market.

Acknowledging the Nightingale influence, Professor Melosh rightly points out that the first nursing reform was about getting better women – "a higher type of womanhood". However, scientific advance and other social change supported the development of nursing as skilled labour, and hospitals were not slow to replace the old attendants with "respectable nurse students" who were more acceptable to their new fee-paying clientele. There was a burgeoning of schools of nursing. In this situation, the old schools and the self-conscious elite separated themselves from the rest. Rather than cast their lot with the growing number of nurses, the leaders pursued the restrictive policy of professionalization. The book is about the conflict that