

Book Reviews

and hard work took him all the way from the bottom of the medical career ladder to the summit of civic virtue and stylish Tory rural conservatism. It is good to have such a well-documented study of a medical beneficiary of Leamington's waters, and of the nineteenth-century gentry's determination to be permanently ill without being (medically) bled.

Michael Neve

Unit for the History of Medicine, University College London

KARL Y. GUGGENHEIM, *Nutrition and nutritional diseases. The evolution of concepts*, Lexington, Mass., and Toronto, Collamore Press, 1981, 8vo, pp. xii, 378, illus., [no price stated].

Although quite a few of the topics in this book have been discussed during the last decades, e.g. in the works of McCollum, Partington, Florkin, or Mendelsohn, it is a welcome addition to our literature and has a character and a value of its own. It shows how food was seen as building-material and a source of energy from Hippocrates to Maimonides. It relates the new concepts of the seventeenth century, e.g. of van Helmont on ferments, Santorio on insensible perspiration, Boyle and Mayow on respiration and combustion. Of the nineteenth century, the author reports, among other achievements, the work of Liebig, Voit, Rubner, and Atwater on energy production, Prout's classification of foodstuffs, and the metabolism studies of Bidder, Schmidt, Pettenkofer, Voit, Claude Bernard, and Schoenheimer. The twentieth-century discovery of vitamins which brought basic changes to the "adequate diet" concept is discussed.

The second half of the book is devoted to well-written histories of seven primary nutritional diseases (scurvy, rickets, pellagra, etc). The difficulty of advancing from the concept of parasitic disease to that of deficiency disease is duly emphasized. There seems no point in carping here about what to me are minor omissions (the work of R. R. Williams, the rise of hereditary rickets, etc.). Among the attractions of the book are the short biographical sketches accompanying the discussion of the concepts. The publisher should hire a better proof-reader.

Erwin H. Ackerknecht

Zürich

MICHAEL MITTERAUER and REINHARD SIEDER, *The European family. Patriarchy and partnership from the Middle Ages to the present*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1982, pp. xv, 235, £16.00 (£7.50 paperback).

This survey of family formation and family structure in Europe from the Middle Ages is thoroughly welcome. It synthesizes a mass of secondary literature (without, however, probing historiographical conflict) and at the same time embodies the authors' major researches into family history within the Austrian Empire. Its style is admirably free from the technical jargon of demographic historians and of sociologists, and the translators, Karla Oosterveen and Manfred Hörzinger, have produced a rendering which mercifully is not glued word-for-word to the original German (though its reading is perhaps a trifle loose in places: "farmer" is used too often where "peasant agriculturalist" is meant). Mitterauer and Sieder are free of the naïveté and Whiggism of Shorter and the occasional eccentricities of Laslett (they also lack his brilliance); and their focus on Central Europe is a valuable complement to the francocentricity of, say, Flandrin and the anglocentric approach of Macfarlane. The book's major drawback lies in attempting to trace its subject from the Middle Ages to the present in fewer than 200 pages. This, coupled with a generalizing sociological ambition and a paucity of individual examples, causes an occasional slide into banality – in the modern world, they write, "wives . . . frequently channel their sexual energies into over-mothering grown-up children and grandchildren, or divert them into religious or social and charitable activities".

The title of the English version does the authors an injustice. They are at pains to stress there was no single, uniform, European family. Family forms differed vastly according to region, religion, and economy. Moreover, they insist, *pace* Shorter, there has been no simple unidirectional "evolution" of the family. We are indeed familiar with these points from Laslett and Flandrin, but they bear reiteration. What is relatively new in Mitterauer and Sieder is their patient and