

### Book Reviews

particular the American Indians, from which arose the more conventional notion of the noble savage, but also a new theory of the development of society by means of the idea of the ignoble savage.

Professor Meek's scholarly book will be of interest to historians of the eighteenth century, general or medical, especially those concerned with social concepts, and to anthropologists, sociologists and economists.

STEPHEN KNIGHT, *Jack the Ripper. The final solution*, London, Harrap, 1976, 8vo, pp. 284, illus., £4.50.

The author promises a "final" solution to the identity of the Ripper. Briefly, it is suggested that the gruesome deeds were carried out by a group of men in order to silence their victims, five East End prostitutes who were likely to blackmail those concerned with an illicit association of the Duke of Clarence. Despite the author's ingenuity the case does not stand up to careful and critical analysis and is no more "final" than its many predecessors. A lengthy account of the proposed solution need not, therefore, be given.

Donald Rumbelow's *The complete Jack the Ripper* (reviewed in *Med. Hist.*, 1976, 20: 357) remains the best Ripper book to date, and although it offers nothing new and sensational it is a careful review of known facts. To evaluate fully a complicated medico-legal case, the author should have experience of history, forensic medicine, psychology, and criminology, amongst other skills. Rumbelow is a serving policeman and well versed in general history. The present author is a journalist.

FRIEDRICH SOLMSEN, *Aristotle's system of the physical world. A comparison with his predecessors*, [Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1960] New York, Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1970, 8vo, pp. xiv, 468, [no price stated].

In view of the importance of this book its availability should be made known. It was received enthusiastically when it first appeared in 1960 (see *Isis*, 1963, 54: 151–152; and *Philosophical Review*, 1962, 71: 520–523) and has since become a classic, both as regards the handling and interpretation of the topic and the presentation of the material. Professor Solmsen deals primarily with Aristotle's *Physics*, the *De Coelo*, the *De generatione et corruptione* and the *Meteorologica*, but begins by discussing the work of the earlier Greek natural philosophers from Anaximander to Plato. He thus covers the pre-Socratic and Platonic areas as well as the Aristotelian. Apart from certain interpretations which have been challenged, this remarkably scholarly work has survived intact, and will remain for many more decades the authoritative account of the physical sciences in the early Greek era, which will continue to be consulted by all those concerned with Greek science. Would that a scholar of Solmsen's erudition and literary ability could provide us with similar work on biology in the same period.

RICHARD ASHLEY, *Heroin. The myths and the facts*, London, St. James Press, 1972, 8vo, pp. xi, 276, £3.50.

Idem, *Cocaine. Its history, uses and effects*, London, St. James Press, 1975, 8vo, pp. xii, 232, £3.95.

The author is a free-lance writer and other than this seems to have few technical

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qualifications to write these books. But he has an attractive if rather journalistic style, the data he presents are fully documented, and he includes useful appendices with additional technical information.

In the first title the author has accumulated his evidence by detailed and extensive research, including encounters with addicts, pushers, and police. He examines all aspects of the drug and its use as an addictive agent, and provides fascinating transcriptions of interviews and a chapter on "The British experience". In particular he points out the many myths and extensive mis-information concerning heroin and by so doing renders a useful service.

Cocaine is more expensive and more fashionable. Several books on it have appeared recently and together with Ashley's they provide information which previously was very scanty. He presents a history of the drug and an account of its use by South American peoples, its popularity in the nineteenth century, the campaign against it, and of its recent reappearance as an addictive agent. Physical addiction to cocaine, according to Ashley, does not occur, so that again myths have grown up about it.

In the last few years there has been a spate of books on drug addiction, occasioned by its extent in the world and by the anxiety of society wishing to understand more of the phenomenon in an attempt to suppress it. These books add to the corpus of knowledge, but not to successful treatment.

MICHAEL HUNTER, *John Aubrey and the realm of learning*, London, Duckworth, 1975, 8vo, pp. 256, illus., £12.50.

We remember Aubrey as the author of the ever-popular and informative *Brief lives*, but forget that his interests touched on many subjects in addition to biography. He was an outstanding exponent of archaeology and prepared in manuscript the first book in English on it, *Monumenta Britannica*. He also studied natural history, astrology, education, topography, magic, folklore, mathematics, art and antiquities, and it is from his similarly unpublished notes on them that Dr. Hunter has been able to accumulate many of his data. He analyses carefully all of Aubrey's writings, showing the development of his ideas in science, technology, magic, and antiquities. In addition, his book is an important contribution to seventeenth-century studies, for he can show that archaeology originated under the influence of the scientific advancement. Evidence for the survival of occult concepts in otherwise rigidly scientific circles is also to be found.

The author has relied heavily on Aubrey's manuscripts, the ordering and deciphering of which must have been a daunting task. Throughout there is a high level of scholarship and it is good to see real foot- rather than back-notes. Dr. Hunter's book should be examined carefully by all workers in seventeenth-century science and medicine, for it will contribute importantly to their studies.

DIANA CRANE, *Invisible colleges. Diffusion of knowledge in scientific communities*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1972, 8vo, pp. x, 213, £7.15 (£2.00 paperback).

The success of this book is indicated by the appearance of a new impression in 1975. It received wide praise on its publication in 1972 (*Amer. J. Soc.*, 1973, 79: 180, and *Choice*, 1972, 9: 831, as well as *Contemporary Society* and *Technology and Culture*).