

### Book Reviews

PHILIP ROBERTS (editor), *The diary of Sir David Hamilton, 1709–1714*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975, 8vo, pp. xlviii, 138, £10.00.

Hamilton was physician to Queen Anne and during the last five years of her life he kept a diary detailing his intimate contacts with her and her medical state. Her ideas and opinions, her relationships with friends, ministers and foes, together with the mood of the times, were faithfully recorded so that an excellent portrait of the queen and a valuable account of events towards the end of her reign are provided.

The 'Introduction' gives a biographical sketch of Hamilton (1663–1721), and his medical theories and practice are also discussed, briefly and, on the whole, inadequately. He was a follower of Sydenham and was especially interested in the psychoneuroses, although he made no important contribution to medicine. In politics he was a Whig, a Royal confidant and a political broker. In fact a good deal of the diary deals with political matters. It occupies only sixty-five pages, the rest of the book being taken up by the 'Introduction', notes on the transcribed diary, four appendices, a bibliography and an index.

As well as providing revealing insights into Queen Anne's personality and activities it also gives an excellent account of medical practice amongst the upper classes at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Sir David is especially exercised over Anne's gout and discusses the contemporary ideas of etiology and therapy. However, although it is claimed that ". . . his treatment of the Queen forms a substantial section of his diary. . . ." the index carries only one reference to this, to Tipping's water for urinary lithiasis, and it concerns the Duchess of Marlborough and not his royal patient. In fact, it is the only medical term indexed so that the medical data is lost for those who do not wish to read the whole book.

C. D. ROGERS, *The Lancashire population crisis of 1623*, Manchester, Manchester University Extra Mural Department, 1975, 8vo, pp. 34, 60p.

A group of workers encountered in parish registers a hitherto unexplained increase in burial entries of catastrophic proportions during 1623. No causes of death had been recorded and no indisputable evidence of an epidemic could be found. It is suggested that this population crisis was due to the effects of famine resulting from the economic depression and high grain prices known to have existed in the North of England during the early 1620s. By this explanation the drop in conceptions and the increase in infant mortality and the death rate generally could be accounted for. Famine amenorrhoea is, of course, well known, and Ladurie in his classical paper (*Annales*, 1969, 69: 1589–1601) pointed out its historical demographical effects; reference to this work should have been made here. It would have also been interesting to compare the results of this group's research with the analysis of war-time famine in Holland, recently reported by Stein and others in, *Famine and human development. The Dutch hunger winter of 1944–1945* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1975).

Mr. Rogers' brief monograph demonstrates again the fascinating information concerning provincial English medical history that the careful examination of parish registers and of other local demographic and historical material can provide. There must be many more problems awaiting elucidation.