

Book Notices

JULIA BRIGGS, *Night visitors. The rise and fall of the English ghost story*, London, Faber & Faber, 1977, 8vo, pp. 238, £7.25.

The author claims that her book is the first full-length study of ghost stories in the last twenty-five years. She has selected certain salient features or remarkable authors and discusses the topic at the height of its popularity. She tackles the problem of why so many ghost stories appeared between 1850 and 1930 and why Dickens, Stevenson, Kipling, and Henry James enjoyed writing them. These are complex and diffuse topics, but Mrs. Briggs can identify recurrent aetiological themes such as diabolism, anti-science, mesmerism, drugs, duality of the soul, and the mysteriousness of the human mind.

Although her reference system is inadequate, she has contributed usefully to an area of literature that demands further study.

ALBERT BOROWITZ, *Innocence and arsenic. Studies in crime and literature*, London, Harper & Row, 1977, 8vo, pp. xiv, 170, £4.95.

The author is a lawyer and his interest lies in cases in which writers or musicians are brought into direct confrontation with crime. Here he writes about some of them: the Moors murders case, Thackeray, Mozart, Jack the Ripper, Cicero, Henri de LaTouche, Racine, Shaw, Pushkin, and others. He writes in popular style with no documentation, but his essays will interest those concerned with medico-legal, historical matters.

G. HOWARD POTEET and JOSEPH SANTORA, *Death and dying: a bibliography 1950–1974*, supplement, vol. 1: *suicide*, New York, Whitston Publishing Co., 1978, 8vo, pp. xxi, 166, \$12.50.

Death and dying: a bibliography 1950–1974 was reviewed in *Medical History*, 1977, 22: 233. This is the first supplement, and deals with suicide. It extends further the value of the original volume, and is arranged in the same manner.

BOOKS ALSO RECEIVED

(The inclusion of a title in this list does not preclude the possibility of subsequent review.)

Mortality statistics, cause, England and Wales, 1976, London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1978, 4to, pp. viii, 105, £2.75 (paperback).

HAKIM MOHAMMED SAID (editor), *Hamdard Medicus*, vol. 21, January–June, 1978, Karachi, Hamdard National Foundation of Pakistan, 4to, pp. 141, illus., \$15.00 per annum.

EDWARD O. WILSON, *On human nature*, Cambridge, Mass., and London, Harvard University Press, 1978, 8vo, pp. xiii, 260, £7.85.

B. A. WOOD, *Human evolution*, London, Chapman & Hall, 1978, 8vo, pp. 80, illus., £1.75 (paperback).