global incidence of diseases and the geographical and social environmental factors influencing each of them, there is a small amount of historical data in some of the sections. Tropical and infectious diseases, industrial lung disease, drug abuse, cardiovascular disease, mental disorders and mental subnormality, malignant and deficiency diseases are discussed in twenty chapters, but there are no sections on neurological or rheumatic disorders. Thus, although intended for those concerned with present-day medical problems, it will be of value to the historian who wishes to read an authoritative review of the geography of a specific disease. For this it can be strongly recommended.

DAVID GRYLLS, *Guardians and angels. Parents and children in nineteenth-century literature,* London, Faber & Faber, 1978, 8vo, pp. 211, £6.50.

The author explores the relations between parent and child in the nineteenth century and their origins, by examining the literature of the period. He shows that everyday thought about children consisted eventually of a "Romantic" perspective, detectable in adult and children's books. By "Romantic" he means the attitude that romanticized the child as incapable of doing evil. Gradually the child was able to emancipate itself with the decline in parental control, despite the traditional view of the dictatorial Victorian father still held today.

Dr. Grylls deals mainly with Jane Austen, Dickens, Butler, and Gosse, and no doubt critics will contest this selection and the other authors he draws upon, or does not. He cites extensively, but unfortunately does not document his quotations. Nevertheless, his book can be recommended as another useful contribution to Victorian life, against which the history of medicine must be cast.

BRYAN GANDEVIA, *Tears often shed: child health and welfare in Australia from 1788*, Rushcutters Bay, Australia, and Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1978, 8vo, pp. 151, illus., [no price stated].

Dr Bryan Gandevia's contributions to the history of Australian medicine will be known to readers of this journal, since his articles have sometimes appeared in *Medical History*. Many of his publications, however, have come out in various Australian medical journals not routinely read by medical historians, so this present monograph will be particularly welcome. Most of Gandevia's historical work has been concerned with health and disease in their broadest manifestations, and the same generous approach characterizes this history of child health and welfare in Australia from the landing of the First Fleet in Botany Bay, January 1788, until the very recent past. Although Australia was primarily a convict colony until the middle of the nineteenth century, from the very beginning there were both convict children and the offspring of deported adults. During this period Australia acquired a reputation as a healthy place for children. Statistics are not completely reliable, but some figures for settlements in the western part of the colony suggest that, between 1842 and 1848, infant mortality ranged between four and ten per cent, roughly one-third the comparable rate in England. Gandevia analyses this phenomenon and points out that the major factor was the virtual absence of epidemic viral diseases such as measles and influenza. These viruses were generally unable to survive the long voyages from England, or if they did, were unable to remain endemic in the sparsely-populated

colony. From the 1850s onwards, the population became dense enough to sustain epidemic diseases spread by person to person contact.

Gandevia discusses both the epidemiological and the institutional aspects of child welfare in Australia. He examines a variety of specific institutions, such as children's hospitals, orphanages, and schools, relating several local case-studies to national legislation concerning such matters as childhood employment and family allowances. The book demonstrates his excellent grasp of both printed and archival sources, and though there are no footnotes, Gandevia does provide specific chapter references. His account of the recent past is necessarily sketchy, but the final chapters outline the main events in the professionalization of paediatrics in Australia, its development as an academic subject, and a few Australian contributions to the specialty. Of the latter, the most famous is probably Sir Norman McAister Gregg's 1941 demonstration of birth defects among children of mothers contracting rubella in the early months of pregnancy.

ROSEMARY WHITE, *Social change and the development of the nursing profession. A study of the Poor Law nursing services 1848–1948*, London, Henry Kimpton, 1978, 8vo, pp. xi, 243, £6.80.

The author is a highly-qualified nurse who here traces the evolution of her profession in relation to social influences. She is concerned primarily with Poor Law nurses, whose history has not been recorded as fully as others. She uses a wide variety of primary sources in addition to a rich background of works on nursing, medical, and social history. Her textual material is fully referenced, so that the pioneer excavations she has carried out can be of benefit to those who follow.

Although her handling of some of the medical advances of the nineteenth century shows some flaws, the author has produced a stimulating book which will be of wide appeal to those in the health services and historical fields.

PHILIP ABRAMS and E. A. WRIGLEY (editors), *Towns in societies. Essays in economic history and economic sociology,* Cambridge University Press, 1978, 8vo, pp. viii, 344, £7.95.

The prestigious series of Past and Present publications presents another important title. There are twelve scholarly essays by experts, given originally at a conference in 1975 or previously published in *Past and Present*. They tend to refute the thesis that there exists a specifically urban contribution to history. The town must be regarded as a social construct rather than a social entity, and a more dynamic view of urban history and sociology developed. Evidence is presented from the early Roman Empire, China, early medieval Europe, English provincial town decline or development in the late middle ages and the eighteenth century, Genoa in the thirteenth century, Florence in 1427, London in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and German cities just before industrialization.

These papers present a challenging new approach and will, it is to be hoped, stimulate further research into a significant re-interpretation of the history and sociology of towns. It provides the medical historian with an excellent backdrop against which much of medicine evolved.