

Book Reviews

to the significance there of the workhouses. She discusses the economic, social, and political factors which shaped the system of poor law, and, in opposition to received opinion, she demonstrates that in spite of a theoretically centralized administration of the Poor Law of 1834, in practice areas like Norfolk retained considerable autonomy. This, together with other new interpretations, make Dr. Digby's book an important contribution to social history. Although she deals specifically with Norfolk, many of her findings can be applied to other rural areas of England and Wales.

J. S. COCKBURN (editor), *Crime in England 1550-1800*, London, Methuen, 1977, 8vo, pp. xiv, 364, £7.50 (paperback).

The editor has collected together eleven essays on crime and criminal law administration in the early modern period. He has done so to exploit different historiographical techniques on related historical sources, and to provide a rational base for students. Each is a scholarly study, and they include topics such as 'The nature and incidence of crime in England 1559-1625' (the Editor), 'Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart Essex' (A. D. J. Macfarlane), 'Infanticide in the eighteenth century' (R. W. Malcolmson), and 'Finding solace in eighteenth-century Newgate' (W. J. Sheehan). There is also an excellent and extensive critical bibliography of publications on crime and criminal justice. Those interested in the overlap of medicine with law will find this book most valuable.

GRAHAM HEATH, *The illusory freedom. The intellectual origins and social consequences of the sexual 'revolution'*, London, Heinemann Medical Books, 1978, 8vo, pp. ix, 131, £2.95 (paperback).

The book's purpose is to enquire whether the evidence for the intellectual case for the sexual revolution that has taken place in the last generation is entirely reliable; also to discover whether the benefits produced are cancelled out by the resultant damage to society. The author has brought together many factors in this process of liberation that are often overlooked: medical, psychological, educational, and social. The result is a thoughtful, informative, and scholarly monograph of value to all concerned with sex, family, social conditions, ethics, and the like, either in the past, today, or in the future.

BARBARA EHRENREICH and DEIDRE ENGLISH, *For her own good. 150 years of the experts' advice to women*. London, Pluto Press, 1979, 8vo, pp. x, 325, £8.50 (£3.50 paperback).

Over the past 150 years gynaecologists, child psychologists, paediatricians, sociologists, psycho-analysts, home economists, and others have gradually replaced women's skill, thus to become the sole experts. Although well-intentioned, some have not been for the women's good, as this book shows. Thus women today, wishing to avoid this, are struggling to define their own identities. The authors reveal the past and discuss new perspectives, including the meaning of female liberation.