

### Book Reviews

many of the books on medicine published at this time, dealing particularly with their advice on the handling of psychiatric disease. The practitioners, many of them para-medical or empirics and quacks, are considered, with some of the therapeutic procedures detailed. Exorcism is of particular interest in view of the recent attention being paid to this type of therapy. In the seventeenth century new formulations of some mental conditions were being made, but again the background of possession, religious enthusiasms and witchcraft was still very much in evidence. As a concluding case to this period the author selects the terminal illness of Charles II.

This book's topic is one of incredible complexity and Dr. Clarke has done very well in his presentation of it. His text is fully annotated throughout, and most of the illustrations he provides are unique. He has carried out extensive research, although on occasions he has accepted opinions from secondary sources rather too uncritically. Nevertheless, on the whole, he has made a substantial contribution to the early history of mental disease in Britain. It is certainly more than the prolegomena that he modestly claims it to be, and it stands out as a work of scholarship when contrasted with some of the less successful efforts of others. It is to be hoped that he will continue his researches in this much underpopulated field.

NORMAN COHN, *Europe's inner demons. An enquiry inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt*, Chatto-Heinemann for Sussex University Press, 1975, 8vo, pp. xvi, 302, illus., £4.50.

At the University of Sussex, the Columbus Centre (previously the Centre for Research in Collective Psychopathology) is devoted to studying the dynamics of persecution and extermination. Both present-day and historical examples have been investigated, and Professor Cohn's book is his contribution to the Centre's publication series, of which he is the Editor.

In a scholarly, provocative, and stimulating work, his objective is to reveal the origins of the stereotype of the European witch from the second century A.D. to the fifteenth century, when it became fully formed. He is not concerned with the resultant epidemics of witch-hunting in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The stereotype was made up of several components, but to identify them and to dissect them out is a challenge to the most competent researcher. In addition to historical data dealing with ideas, material deriving from psychology, social anthropology, and from the sociology and social psychology of persecution must be handled. A prominent ingredient was a fantasy originating in Antiquity and preserved in a literary tradition, which maintained that there existed in any society a group of wicked dissidents who practised inhuman rites. The idea was handed down mainly by theological transits and involved Christians, medieval heretical sects, and groups such as the Knights Templars of the fourteenth century, although the author can demonstrate here that accusations were baseless. He also traces the origin of the witches' "sabbat" and shows that, despite nineteenth-century and modern scholars, witchcraft was not an organized activity, that "covens" did not exist, nor was it a vestigial remnant of an ancient pagan religion. Additional factors such as upper-class ritual or ceremonial magic, peasant dream experiences, and village hatreds and jealousies were also potent components of the witch stereotype and responsible for the witch-hunts.

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Professor Cohn draws the important comparison between the witch-hunts and similar modern events, the common denominator being an attempt to eradicate from society a group of evil and corrupt individuals. It is clear from his book that many aspects of witchcraft will have to be reassessed, and in addition the several fertile ideas he puts forward demand further study. His postscript is devoted to "Psychohistorical speculations" and deals with psycho-analytic interpretations. It tends to mar the precise scholarship of the rest of the work and could well have been omitted.

This book must be examined thoroughly by all who are studying the history of medicine in Antiquity to the eighteenth century. Moreover, it shows how historical errors and misinterpretations can be widely influential, and it therefore presents a salutary lesson to investigators of any period of history. It deserves a wide audience.

FRANCO ROMANO CLARA, *Giuseppe Giannini (1774–1818). Le traité, 'Della natura delle febbri e dei metodi di curarle'*, [Zürich], Juris Druck, n.d. [1975], 8vo, pp.147, illus., SFr30.00.

Dr. Clara's dissertation is Nr. 102 in the *Zürcher Medizingeschichtliche Abhandlungen* series and concerns a Milanese physician, who was a disciple of Brown and Cullen, and created his own medical system. It was a variation of theirs because in it all diseases were considered to be nervous in origin, with sthenic and asthenic components. He was also well versed in the works of the British physicians, such as Pringle, Lind, Haygarth, Ferriar, Percival and Howard, and was an important contributor to the rapid spread of vaccination in Italy.

In the book mentioned in the title, Giannini discussed his system and his method of preventing and treating infectious diseases with oral dilute acid. It was published in Milan 1805–1809, and had a certain amount of success. He is also remembered for his proposal in 1805 to create hospital isolation wards, and Dr. Clara claims that when giving acid in fevers he was the first to use a type of systemic chemotherapeutic agent, although this judgement is surely in retrospect and therefore of no historical value.

Giannini was obviously a subsidiary figure, and this scholarly study, which is well written and documented, and beautifully presented, allows us to obtain a more European view of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and to note the British influence in Italy during this period.

MAURICE CROSLAND (editor), *The emergence of science in Western Europe*, London, Macmillan, 1975, 8vo, pp. [3 11.], 201, £11.00.

In 1974 a conference on *The emergence of science in Western Europe in different national contexts* was held at the University of Leeds under the auspices of the British Society for the History of Science. The ten papers presented are here reprinted with an editorial introduction.

The purpose of the meeting was to show that the Scientific Revolution can be traced from the late sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century and that it was widespread in Europe. Its manifestations in six countries are presented here: northern Italian sixteenth-century mathematicians, mechanics and experimental machines (A.G. Keller); science in the Italian universities in the sixteenth and early seventeenth