

Book Reviews

conditions, but that changes in housing, work, and welfare in this period cannot be dismissed as relatively unimportant influences on patterns of family stress.

Behlmer's study does not directly address this problem, since it adopted an institutional approach to social history. Consequently, the history of social policy is traced through the papers of the NSPCC, which, in itself, is a valuable exercise. But it entails costs as well as benefits. One of the costs is to place the history of social thought and the history of social and economic phenomena on separate peaks, each in majestic isolation from the other. Another cost is to narrow the range of sources to those which touch on the central organization and its work. Images of childhood in popular literature, music hall ballads, and street theatre could tell us much about the climate of opinion within which the NSPCC and allied groups had to work. Similarly, the phenomenon of cruelty within schools was widely discussed at least since the appearance of *Tom Brown's schooldays*, and a discussion of this theme would have reinforced the view that child abuse was no respecter of class or position. While contributing much to our understanding of Victorian and Edwardian social reform, it is to be hoped that Professor Behlmer will cast his net further afield in later research to illuminate more fully this facet of Victorian mentality.

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CORRECTION

Medical History, October 1983, p. 443: James C. Whorton's *Crusaders for fitness. The history of American health reformers* was first published in 1982. The statement "reprint of 1942 ed." is incorrect.