

Book Notices

J. B. LYONS (editor), *Dublin's surgeon-anatomists and other essays by William Doolin*, Dublin, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, 1987, 8vo, pp. 232, illus., [no price stated].

William Doolin was a distinguished Dublin surgeon. His working life spanned the years from his qualification in 1910 to his death in 1962. He was cast in the mould of the surgeon-gentleman—fluent in French and German, an all-round sportsman, widely read, an intimate of the Dublin literati, a lifelong advocate of the voluntary system, and, of course, a medical historian. It is probably because of all these attributes, rather than just the last, that Dr. Lyons has produced this volume of Doolin's essays. Certainly, there is more to be learnt about Doolin from reading these pieces than there is about the history of medicine. The modern reader, attentive to only the overt content, will find the scholarship shallow, the psychologism quaint, and the triumphalism overpowering. Yet in general, and especially when they dwell on Irish medicine, there is much to be discovered here. Doolin, after all, practised in Dublin in the 1920s and 30s, a world that now requires a great degree of historical imagination to reconstruct. These essays, written mainly in the 1950s, say much about the historical self-perceptions of one of the leaders of Irish medicine in those troubled years.

HENRY GILBERT ORME and WILLIAM H. BROCK, *Leicestershire's lunatics. The institutional care of Leicestershire's lunatics during the nineteenth century*, Leicestershire Museums, Art Galleries and Records Service (96 New Walk, Leicester LE1 6TD), 1987, 4to, pp. vii, 57, illus., £5.50 (paperback).

Against a backdrop of emergent national provision and policies—private madhouses in the eighteenth century and county asylums in the nineteenth—the special features of lunacy in Leicestershire are traced in this admirable, and well-illustrated, brief volume. A short account of the private madhouse run by Thomas Arnold in the late-eighteenth century is followed by lengthier discussion of the Leicester Infirmary Asylum (1783) and the Leicestershire Lunatic Asylum (1837), a public asylum set up under the permissive Act of 1808, whose fabric survives as part of Leicester University. The admission records of this institution are shown to cast doubt upon the notions (a) that the Victorian asylum was an agency of social control and (b) that the asylum was a centre of medical hegemony.

HEINRICH OTTO SCHRÖDER (translator), *Publius Aelius Aristides, Heilige Berichte*, Heidelberg, Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1986, 8vo, pp. 150, DM 48.00 (paperback).

Over fifty years ago, Constantin Ritter, assisted by the eminent historian of Greco-Roman religion, Otto Weinreich, prepared a German version of the Sacred Tales of Aelius Aristides (fl. AD 170). The manuscript remained forgotten until 1978, and Professor Schröder has revised the earlier translation, updated it, and provided it with a valuable commentary. In particular, he has been able to bring to general attention recent relevant archaeological material from the Asclepieion of Pergamum, where Aristides had many of his visions, and to correct some of the wilder speculations of C. A. Behr, whose English version of the Sacred Tales offers the most accessible entry to their understanding. Historians of religious healing in Antiquity would be unwise to neglect what Schröder and his predecessors in this version have to say.

ELLEN DWYER, *Homes for the mad. Life inside two nineteenth-century asylums*, New Brunswick and London, Rutgers University Press, 1987, 8vo, pp. xiv, 309, \$32.00.

In this carefully researched and sensitive study, Ellen Dwyer examines the comparative history of two major public asylums in New York State in the nineteenth century: Utica, founded in 1843, and Willard, founded in 1869. She shows how the two asylums emerged in the

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course of events with rather different profiles. Utica, originally headed by Amariah Brigham, was more experimental in its therapies and tended to have a rapid patient turnover. Willard, which expanded to house well over two thousand inmates, became far more a purely custodial institution for chronic and senile patients. Effective use is made of patient casebooks in determining the nature of the personal relations between staff and patients (the images of the family and the father remained predominant).

JEANNETTE PARISOT, *Johnny come lately. A short history of the condom*, London, Journeyman Press, 1987, 8vo, pp. xiii, 125, illus., £4.95 (paperback).

Perhaps more aptly titled 'All you could possibly want to know about condoms, but never thought of asking', this book was first published in West Germany in 1985. The English edition is described on the title-page as "translated and enlarged", with a further credit for "new material and revisions", material of relevance to Britain having been incorporated. The rather jokey style may or may not reflect the tone of the original. However, in spite of this, the anecdotal approach, and the fact that it is a popular rather than scholarly work on the subject (though any work on this topic risks being turned into a joke however serious the author's intentions), this book does provide the latest account of the rise of the condom, demolishing a number of popular myths, although it is a pity that the critical attitude to received ideas in this specialized field was not extended to comments of a more general nature on such related matters as the rise of the birth control movement. Not merely a history of this widely-used contraceptive and prophylactic device, the book describes modern production methods and marketing, and includes a comparison of advertising methods in different countries, a glossary of slang terms in various languages, a guide to purchasing condoms in a variety of countries, literary references to its use (some of them rather unpredictable), and the results of a survey conducted by Journeyman Press in 1986 on attitudes to condoms. Whether the original was thus intended, this version seems specifically propagandist on behalf of a commonly employed yet despised method of birth control and disease prevention. The illustrations are copious and well chosen.

Current Views from Circulation, Monograph No. 1, Dallas, Texas, American Heart Association, 1987, 4to, pp. 237, illus., [no price stated] (paperback).

Current Views is a volume that reprints selected items which appeared in *Circulation* during the three years July 1983-July 1986. Although primarily concerned with modern cardiological research, it also contains ten papers by W. Bruce Fye on the recent history of cardiology. Some, such as 'Cardiology in 1885', are little more than celebratory. Others, however, such as the papers on William T. Porter, William Henry Howell, and H. Newell Martin, are replete with original research. Well written and technically authoritative, if rather progressivist in style, they all repay careful attention.

CLAUDINE HERZLICH and JANINE PIERRET, *Illness and self in society*, trans. by Elborg Forster, Baltimore, Md., and London, John Hopkins University Press, 1987, 8vo, pp. xvi, 271, [no price stated].

This is an unrevised translation of the work first published in 1984 as *Malades d'hier, malades d'aujourd'hui* and reviewed in this journal (1984, 28: 344). It amounts to the most ambitious attempt yet at a historical sociology of health and sickness. It is, however, hampered by its random and sometimes cavalier mix of historical and fictional sources and a tendency to vacuous and self-contradictory generalization.