

Book Reviews

What he finds is that certain immunities and physical features protected bondsmen (tolerance to humid heat, malaria, yellow fever) while others hurt them (pigmentation filtered out much sunlight and thus vitamin D, inexperience with tuberculosis and pneumonia and other European diseases significantly increased mortality rates). Add to that a diet probably high enough in calories but frequently deficient or marginally adequate in vitamins, minerals, and protein, and the reader understands why morbidity and mortality among blacks was much higher than for white and why Kiple and King argue that blacks had special medical problems.

It was the uniqueness of the slave's health situation that antebellum observers (especially physicians and slave-owners) noted and embellished upon. The result, inevitably, according to the authors, was the incorporation, from the 1820s on, of black medical differences from whites (interpreted as signs of inferiority) into the pro-slavery argument.

Another dimension is not narrative history – it tells no story, relates no events, focuses on no individuals. Nor does the book set a mood in time or place. Kiple and King, instead, concentrate on disease and dietary descriptions and spot inter-relationships between them and modern medical knowledge. They weave this information together with specific political conditions and social needs in antebellum America to derive their conclusions. Such close attention to medical detail nets much new and interesting information but also runs the risk of overstating the case for poor nutrition as the basis of almost all slave ill health and of ignoring the social and psychological dimensions of disease causation, treatment, and recovery. The effects of health problems on individual lives are ignored in large “big picture” studies such as this one. Furthermore, when dealing with such rapidly changing fields as human biology and medicine, where current ideas and “facts” may be quickly discarded or superseded, it is necessary to be cautious. Kiple and King take pains to identify their own speculations and others' tentative hypotheses. Readers must be wary. But the authors are also to be congratulated on their extensive searches of the medical literature and on their readable explanations of complex medical concepts and conditions.

This book truly provides *Another dimension to the black Diaspora*. It builds from, complements, and then further explores ideas and information presented in the growing body of writings on black health in the New World.

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NANCY STEPAN, *The idea of race in science: Great Britain, 1800–1960*, London, Macmillan, 1982, 8vo, pp. xxi, 230, £20.00.

In mountain climbing, one attempts a project “because it is there”. In history, one often attempts a project “because it is not there” – simply because there is a monographic gap to fill, or a synthetic treatment that remains unwritten, rather than because there is a significant problem of historical interpretation that compels the investigator's attention. Thus the present volume's definition of subject is justified because “no comprehensive account of the science of race in Britain from its origin in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, until its demise after the Second World War, yet exists” (p. xix). Climbing a mountain is an all-or-nothing proposition. Filling a gap in historiography is sometimes hard to evaluate, since where synthesis fails, shovels-full of information may still help to fill the breach. And because the size of the gap depends on the prior knowledge/ignorance of the reader, a knowledgeable reader may in fact prove an inauspicious critic – the more so when, not a synthesizer by inclination, he finds himself one of the synthesized.

Many other readers, however, may find much of value in this book. Despite a lack of conceptual clarity on certain critical orienting issues (the relation between “scientific racism” and “the scientific discourse on race”, or between factors “‘outside’ science” and “the internal logic of scientific arguments”), Stepan's book does indeed provide, within the short compass favoured by the current economy of publishing, a generally competent treatment of the major episodes in “the history of the idea of race in the natural sciences in Britain” (p. ix) – although it frankly limits itself to “the study of the main figures in science rather than the minor ones” (p.

Book Reviews

xix). Despite a tendency to interpretative ad hoc-ism, it does bring together the important monographic work (e.g. Bynum, Searle, Stocking, Young) that has been done, and in some instances offers perceptive independent readings of particular figures. One might quarrel with the decision to focus on the natural sciences in isolation from the social (and the failure adequately to appreciate the way in which Lamarckian assumption linked the two – archetypically in the work of Herbert Spencer, who is cited only three times), but, for the most part, the argument seems unexceptionable. While it climbs no interpretative heights, many readers may find this a “useful” book.

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FELIX KLEIN-FRANKE, *Vorlesungen über die Medizin im Islam*, (Sudhoffs Archiv, Beiheft 23), Wiesbaden, Steiner, 1982, 8vo, pp. viii, 161, DM. 52.00 (paperback).

Comprehensive surveys of Islamic medicine have never been common and, until recently, they have been mainly out of print. To examine this latest addition to so distinguished a series has thus been a matter of especial interest.

The initial chapters trace the historical development of medical knowledge and practice from the earliest surviving references, particularly in Arabic poetry. Here the author liberally recounts anecdotes from Ibn Abī Uṣaibi‘a and others, and the reader may be surprised to find the word “Physiker” used in a rather specialized sense. The important chapter on Islam’s freely acknowledged debt to works translated from Greek clearly advances Islamic medicine as very much more than the mere perpetuation of a tradition derived from Greece, as the attention given to this field today might suggest. The author also illustrates the Arabs’ familiarity with the problems of textual criticism, and adds that they knew of Hippocrates largely through Galen’s commentaries. Apart from sections on Dogmatic and Empirical medicine, the remainder of the work discusses medicine’s relationship to religion and to astrology (the human body seen as a microcosm that responded to healing best when the macrocosm was benevolent).

As the title suggests, this work claims to be no more than an introductory guide for students new to the field. Misprints apart, its style is clear and accessible, and absolutely no knowledge of Arabic is assumed. The specialist, however, may well feel that certain aspects deserve fuller treatment, and he should not expect to be led towards unknown horizons.

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WOLF ZUELZER, *The Nicolai case. A biography*, Detroit, Mich., Wayne State University Press, 1982, 8vo, pp. viii, 463, illus., \$30.00.

“Barbarus hic ego sum, quia non intelligor ulli.” This quotation from Ovid’s *Tristia* could be the leitmotiv of Georg Friedrich Nicolai’s whole life, not so much as a physician, but rather as a pacifist and humanitarian. Wolf Zuelzer deserves merit for this carefully researched and well-written biography, which does justice to a fairly difficult personality of encyclopaedic dimension and at the same time contributes extensively to our understanding not only of Wilhelmine Germany at war but even more so to that of the early period of the Weimar Republic.

Nicolai, the sometimes stubborn pacifist troublemaker, went through an ordeal as the victim of outraged hatred in the early 1920s which eventually forced him to leave Germany. His own scepticism about the real achievements of the German Revolution of 1918 proved all too true when he became the focus of fanatical antisemitic and nationalistically inspired student protests, ending, remarkably enough, in his “excommunication” from the academic community of Berlin University. He remained the *barbarus* not because his compatriots were unable to understand his ideas, but because they were unwilling to accept his new religion of humanity. Neither would they agree to his moral code based on the common biological and cultural denominators of mankind fighting an oversimplified and crude Darwinism which served the German public not only during the First World War, when Nicolai published his *The biology of war*. This was secretly distributed in a mere 2,000 copies and reached a greater audience only