

Book Reviews

JEFFREY LIONEL BERLANT, *Profession and monopoly, A study of medicine in the United States and Great Britain*, Berkeley and London, University of California Press, 1975, 8vo, pp. xi, 337, £9.60.

A comparative study is always a valuable form of investigation, and here the author, who is trained in medicine and sociology, examines the two medical professions in terms of economic and political strategies in the period since the creation of the London College of Physicians in 1518. He is concerned to know how doctors have built up their profession, and the opposition to them of various social constraints, that is, the institutionalization of the medical profession.

He begins by criticizing Talcott Parsons' functionalist theory of the latter (1951), and prefers to adopt Max Weber's theory of monopolization (1968) and group institutionalization, illustrating it by the history of medicine in Britain and the U.S.A. Thus he surveys medical ethics, their internal domination of the profession and their role of dealing with its external political exigencies. Licensure in the two countries is next discussed to show the domination of doctors over the medical market and the dependence of the structure of the profession on political and legal conditions. Finally, Dr. Berlant analyses a recent proposal for the reform of American medical practice.

In both countries the medical profession has been more or less successfully institutionalized, although this came relatively late in America, and early in Britain. The study of other countries would have been instructive, but the two selected are especially revealing because their medical professions stemmed from a common cultural tradition and diverged because of historical and political consequences. Thus in the two nations a common idea adopted different methods of institutionalization, and herein lies the value of the comparative study. In general the author's sociopolitical perspectives are valuable and he ranges over history, sociology, and economics, applying his findings to the problem of future development of the medical profession.

H. WAYNE MORGAN (editor), *Yesterday's addicts. American society and drug abuse 1865-1920*, Norman, Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 1974, 8vo, pp. viii, 220, \$7.95.

By means of carefully selected contemporary articles and reports the editor aims to illuminate public attitudes to drug abuse, ranging in time from the end of the Civil War to the end of World War I. He divides his anthology into four parts: 'The extent of addiction'; 'Causes'; 'The addicts'; 'The demand for regulation'. One of his aims is the useful one of showing how a problem that receives a great deal of attention today is not a lot different from the situation say a century ago. Historical perspective is of the greatest value in the evaluation and handling of a phenomenon such as drug addiction. It also helps to show that all addicts are not slaves to their compulsions, nor does their efficiency necessarily suffer.

The first-hand accounts of exposure to various habit-forming drugs is a particularly valuable aspect of this book, which can be warmly recommended to all those who are concerned with present-day drug addiction. To the historian it is especially useful to have conveniently collected together this series of essays which abound in rewarding information. The next project should be a similar selection taken from authors in other parts of the world.