

Book Reviews

industry. William had always shown the greatest interest in the technical side of the business and was the originator of the first fire-proof construction in England. He now had the opportunity of planning hospital accommodation for eighty patients besides those with infectious diseases. In the Infirmary he introduced day-rooms for convalescents, a number of wards with only two or three beds, and a fever block which had no internal connection with the main hospital. Strutt also devised water-closet doors which removed foul air on closing and at the same time washed the basin. A stove in the basement heated air, which was conveyed to the wards by flues, and there were yet other flues which extracted foetid air, but unfortunately were not accessible for cleaning. The whole formed an inter-linked honeycomb which was to lead ultimately to the hospital buildings' downfall.

Derby was proud of its handsome new hospital, particularly when Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Professor of Architecture in Berlin, was full of praise for its ingenious design.

The ever-present cry of excessive drug expenditure was made in the 1830s, but the committee concluded that there was no gross extravagance although costs were certainly much higher than those of Exeter and Gloucester Infirmaries. It was in the next decade that it was realized that Derby's population was growing rapidly and that the hospital would have to be enlarged, especially to cope with the increased number of fever and venereal cases. A new wing, later called the West Wing, was built in early 1850 for them, yet within only a few years a further expansion became essential, which resulted in the opening of the Nightingale Wing in 1869. Sadly, nearly all this new work was soon to be swept away.

The book unfortunately is not fully referenced and there is only a limited bibliography. The few biographies are almost entirely of architects and builders,

and more would have been liked concerning the medical personnel. The maps and architects' drawings could have been much improved by introducing compass points which would have helped with the complex orientation of the hospital buildings. (Only two were found and they were both late, being on drawings of 1891 and 1896.)

One cannot but admire the speed with which our Victorian forebears dealt with the disaster that William Strutt had unwittingly left them. Surely there is a lesson here for us to learn today?

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Laurinda Abreu, *Memórias da alma e do corpo. A Misericórdia de Setúbal na modernidade*, Raiz do Tempo series, Viseu, Palimage Editores, 1999, pp. 493 (972-97848-3-3).

Laurinda Abreu's book is a scholarly analysis of the preparations made by the citizens of the Portuguese town of Setubal for the hereafter, and the impact these had on the living. It traces over four centuries the implementation of the belief that the soul's term in Purgatory is dependent on a continual round of masses, anniversaries and pious bequests, which in their turn depend on the memory and goodwill of those the dead left behind them. The book is very much the history of the religious observances of Setubal between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries. The Santa Casa da Misericórdia, the charitable hospital founded in 1501, whose extensive financial records provide much of the evidence, was one result of the belief in Purgatory. A close relationship between religious practices and the provision of public health care is observed. The hospital itself, however, is not the focus of this book and readers should not seek herein an in-depth analysis of hospital care in early modern Portugal.

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Setubal was a fishing and garrison town to the south of Lisbon which from the early sixteenth century was heavily dependent on the production of salt in the Sado estuary. Prosperous families of the town often made pious bequests in the form of salt works so the churches and confraternities also became dependent on the fortunes of the salt trade. This interdependence of salt and piety allows Abreu to coin the evocative image of a people whose "Purgatory had the taste of salt" (p. 87). Most of her book, however, deals with the decline of interest in Purgatory from the late seventeenth century as Setubal experienced a series of natural and political disasters that ruined the salt trade, and attitudes changed towards charity and poor relief. The dead, whose memory the living were supposed to cherish, were forgotten as the clergy relieved themselves of the burden of masses, and families struggled to extract their property from the clutches of the church. Those in the Misericórdia who had benefited—the sick poor, orphans and prisoners—saw charity towards them decline. A system of health care and public assistance which had been set up in the early sixteenth century became hopelessly inadequate for the social realities of the nineteenth century.

Abreu's book is based on her two volume doctoral thesis and this probably explains its earnest and ponderous style and a certain lack of focus. There is very little information on the Misericórdia itself and one is left wanting to know more about medical care in Setubal. Only the last part of the book—seventy pages out of over four hundred—deals with sanitation, mortality, disease, diet, and surgical and medical practice in the Misericórdia. If the book is actually meant to be an analysis of religious rather than medical practices in the town, then this last medical section sits awkwardly with the rest. For a reader who might not be familiar with Portuguese history and geography, this book presents further difficulties. Although there are many graphs, there are absolutely no maps. When

the author refers to confraternities in the region of Setubal or the foundation of convents across the town, the reader is none the wiser. Moreover, a great deal of knowledge about the history of modern Portugal is assumed. It is perhaps unusual for a social study of this sort to cover such a long period of time. This reflects the static nature of the system which funded the Misericórdia, but it produces a book bowed under by the vast amount of archival material available. Abreu's scholarship, however, is undeniable and this is an interesting regional contribution to the history of religion and charity.

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Roger French, Jon Arrizabalaga, Andrew Cunningham and Luis García-Ballester (eds), *Medicine from the Black Death to the French Disease*, History of Medicine in Context, Aldershot, Ashgate, 1998, pp. vii, 330, £49.50 (1-85928-382-9).

This book is the companion volume to an earlier collection of essays edited by the same team, entitled *Practical medicine from Salerno to the Black Death* (Cambridge University Press, 1994). Both volumes are the products of conferences organized by medical historians in Cambridge and Barcelona, and held in Barcelona. As their titles indicate, the first volume covered the period from the late eleventh to the mid-fourteenth century; the present volume picks up the story in 1348 and takes it down to about 1500.

The significance of the volume is not simply that it provides uniformly excellent scholarship in an often neglected period of Western medicine (although it certainly does this: see Vivian Nutton's ground-breaking account of medical teaching in the German universities). It also offers a valuable methodological corrective to some of the