example, of the illustrations to the writings of the Elizabethan surgeon William Clowes, or to Italian editions of Matthioli's *Herbal*. But both these authors and their printers were aiming at the top end of the market, and it is one of the great merits of this book to have given us examples taken from the other end of the spectrum as well. This is, in short, a fascinating book, whose assembly of artistic material might well be imitated for other regions. It adds a new dimension to the study of renaissance medicine.

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RICHARD PANKHURST, *The history of famine and epidemics in Ethiopia prior to the twentieth century*, London Central Books (for Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, Addis Ababa), 1986, 8vo, pp. 120, illus., £2.50 (paperback).

This volume reprints a number of the author's articles, originally published between 1961 and 1973 and here updated and revised as chapters of the book. The transition to monograph form has been masterfully achieved; and as some of the original studies were published in highly specialized or little-known journals, their reappearance here is particularly welcome.

For the period prior to 1888, the author has found that the character and paucity of the evidence makes a detailed assessment of Ethiopian famines and epidemics impossible. The sources are largely hagiographical; hence, they dwell upon the deeds and miracles of the pious, and discuss natural disasters in terms of divine wrath and punishment. Little historical detail is provided, and it is often impossible even to identify the disease named in the accounts of medieval epidemics. Nevertheless, there are certain episodes of famine and epidemic, beginning in the fifteenth century (pp. 25–56), that emerge more clearly to our view; and these leave no doubt as to the terrible impact of these disasters.

The real importance of Pankhurst's study lies in its final chapter (pp. 57–120) on the great famine of 1888–92. His account of this disaster takes up more than half of the book, and for good reason. For this event he is able to bring to bear evidence from no less than a hundred different sources, including diplomatic reports and official dispatches now in European archival collections (primarily Italian), accounts by missionaries and travellers, traditional Ethiopian chronicles, and even oral descriptions by eyewitnesses interviewed in their old age by Pankhurst during the 1950s and '60s.

The famine of 1888–92 was precipitated by a series of earlier calamities: an epidemic of rinderpest that by late 1888 had killed more than ninety per cent of the country's cattle, drought and hot weather that caused a major crop failure, and a sudden influx of swarms of locusts and caterpillars. In the resulting famine, food prices soared thirty- and forty-fold, and in many areas food of any kind was simply non-existent. Pankhurst describes the consequences of all this in hideous detail. The starving scratched in the ground for roots, ground old cowhides into powder for soup, and ate animal dung and carrion. Cannibalism was not unknown. Entire villages perished, and in many towns (including the capital Addis Ababa) the starving, too weak to resist, were dragged away and eaten alive by wolves and hyenas. Informed contemporary observers estimated that a third of the population perished; and if this figure is only approximately correct, then this famine was fully as devastating in Ethiopia as the Black Death was in Europe in 1348. In any case, Pankhurst demonstrates that its long-term consequences were very serious: displacement of populations through migrations, the collapse of traditional institutions (e.g., marriage and legal customs) and of subsistence agriculture in general, and long-term disruption of the traditional balance in the relations between various sectors of society.

This is an important book, not only as a chronicle of famines and epidemics in Ethiopia, but also as an informative contribution to the social history of the traditional Near East and North Africa. It is also a distressing book, for the horrors it relates still persist today. It was this consideration, in fact, that led to the work's publication. It contains numerous illustrations by

the Ethiopian artist Admassu Mammo based on recent famine conditions in the country; and Pankhurst provides an introduction ('A forward view', pp. 4–6) in which he discusses current efforts to implement long-term solutions to the threat of famine in Ethiopia, and deplores current international aid facilities for their tendency to link development aid to considerations of economy and power politics.

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JUDITH WALZER LEAVITT and RONALD I. NUMBERS (editors), *Sickness and health in America. Readings in the history of medicine and public health*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1986, 4to, pp. x, 550, $32.50 ($14.95 paperback).

We welcome the second edition of this work, first published in 1978 (see review in *Med. Hist.*, 1979, **23:** 360). Eighteen new essays are added, with new sections on 'Race and Medicine', 'Women and Medicine', and 'The Art and Science of Medicine'. Some older articles have been deleted. It is a comprehensive review of sickness and health in America and encompasses efforts to prevent or cure illness—their failure and success. There are thirty-six essays, each by a different contributor, including both editors, who work in the professorial department of the History of Medicine in Wisconsin University, Madison, USA.

The first essay is, to my mind, a strange introduction, dealing as it does with masturbation, especially the contribution of Tissot. Engelhardt, its author, tries to equate its effects with those of alcohol and drug addiction—surely illogical, because these are harmful diseases of society at large. The second essay is also psychogenic. It deals with neurasthenia—another example of the American obsession with neurosis.

The section on medical education is one of the most interesting and discusses the teaching of general (internal) medicine in America, stressing the problems and the place of Osler in helping to overcome them. Virginia Drachman's contribution considers women doctors and their initial difficulties in being accepted.

Are black people medically different from whites? Recent studies suggest that they are. They possess greater resistance to yellow fever and malaria and to heat, but suffer more from genetic disorders such as sickle-cell anaemia. Allan Brandt's essay on the Tuskegee Syphilis Study of 1932 in Alabama is a salutary reminder of the role of racism in research—in this case blacks not Jews, but note the date!

The late George Rosen's discussion on health centres questions the need for them—protagonists here should read it.

There is a table of contents and an index, and each essay ends with copious notes and details of the author. There are ten pages of further reading and a list of abbreviations of journal titles.

This is an excellent review, which can be recommended to the general or to the specialist reader. It is very reasonably priced.

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EDWARD BABAYAN, *The structure of psychiatry in the Soviet Union*, New York, International Universities Press, 1985, 8vo, pp. ix, 336, illus., $40.00.

So far as one can make out, this is primarily the work of a Soviet psychiatrist (no information is given about Yu G. Shashina, Babayan's collaborator), and has been translated by two others, but very poorly, sprinkled with such neologisms as "idioplasm", "parabiosis", and "stressogenics". It has no references and contains no data or systematic information; the preface states that it has "concentrated on the organisation and delivery of psychiatric and narcological care, and on the judicial, legislative and legal standards adopted". Historians will be mostly