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his illness, and, in general, it synthesizes his ideas on metaphysics and literature, medicine and cosmology, and, having recently faced death, the relationship of man to God. It is also autobiographical, and Donne uses his encounter with illness to ponder on the significance of his life as a whole.

The *Devotions* appears here (pp. 3–127) with textual apparatus and full commentary (pp. 129–187), preceded by an ‘Introduction’, in which the editor discusses the possible nature of Donne’s illness, his religion and metaphysics, and the bibliographical details of the book. Each of the twenty-three sections is divided into ‘Meditation’, ‘Expostulation’ and ‘Prayer’. Professor Raspa, who has a chair of English at Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, has produced a scholarly work which contains many references to early seventeenth-century medicine. It will be of great value therefore to historians of medicine who are concerned with the renaissance, and as an outstanding source it can be thoroughly recommended.

HERBERT MAYO, *Anatomical and physiological commentaries*, with an introduction by Paul F. Cranefield, Metuchen, N. J., Scarecrow Press, 1975, (The History of Medicine Series, published under the auspices of the Library of the New York Academy of Medicine, No. 45), 8vo, pp. xiv, 120, 141, illus., \$12.00.

Mayo (1796–1852) of London published two volumes of commentaries (1822–1823), in which he described his important work on establishing the purely motor function of the facial nerve and the mixed function of the fifth, thereby refuting the conclusions of Charles Bell. The consequent dispute rivals the Bell-Magendie conflict, and each reveals a good deal of Bell’s character. Mayo also detected the central pathways of the pupillary reflex and this discovery is also in the *Commentaries*. In addition, there is an extensive and important account of the morphology, function and comparative anatomy of the cerebellum by J. C. Reil (1759–1813). Unfortunately Mayo had taken considerable liberties with Reil’s German text and the end result is by no means a translation. It was severely criticized by contemporary commentators, and should only be studied with the original at hand.

Mayo’s book is uncommon and little known so that this facsimile reprint of it with illustrations, reduced in size, is especially welcome. It is handsomely produced with a short introduction, but could have been improved by the addition of notes to Mayo and Reil’s texts, in order to elucidate parts difficult for the modern reader to comprehend.

RONALD L. MEEK, *Social science and the ignoble savage*, Cambridge University Press, 1976, 8vo, pp. v, 249, £6.00.

The author is Professor of Economics at the University of Leicester, and he provides here a study of a new theory of socio-economic development which appeared during the second half of the eighteenth century. Its key factor was argued to be the mode of man’s subsistence, and it first arose in France and Scotland in the 1750s; it is termed here the four consecutive stages theory, the stages being hunting, pasturage, agriculture and commerce. It was much influenced by Adam Smith and has been of great importance to social science ever since it was formulated. Amongst the several influences moulding it was the contemporary literature on savage societies, in

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particular the American Indians, from which arose the more conventional notion of the noble savage, but also a new theory of the development of society by means of the idea of the ignoble savage.

Professor Meek's scholarly book will be of interest to historians of the eighteenth century, general or medical, especially those concerned with social concepts, and to anthropologists, sociologists and economists.

STEPHEN KNIGHT, *Jack the Ripper. The final solution*, London, Harrap, 1976, 8vo, pp. 284, illus., £4.50.

The author promises a "final" solution to the identity of the Ripper. Briefly, it is suggested that the gruesome deeds were carried out by a group of men in order to silence their victims, five East End prostitutes who were likely to blackmail those concerned with an illicit association of the Duke of Clarence. Despite the author's ingenuity the case does not stand up to careful and critical analysis and is no more "final" than its many predecessors. A lengthy account of the proposed solution need not, therefore, be given.

Donald Rumbelow's *The complete Jack the Ripper* (reviewed in *Med. Hist.*, 1976, 20: 357) remains the best Ripper book to date, and although it offers nothing new and sensational it is a careful review of known facts. To evaluate fully a complicated medico-legal case, the author should have experience of history, forensic medicine, psychology, and criminology, amongst other skills. Rumbelow is a serving policeman and well versed in general history. The present author is a journalist.

FRIEDRICH SOLMSEN, *Aristotle's system of the physical world. A comparison with his predecessors*, [Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1960] New York, Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1970, 8vo, pp. xiv, 468, [no price stated].

In view of the importance of this book its availability should be made known. It was received enthusiastically when it first appeared in 1960 (see *Isis*, 1963, 54: 151–152; and *Philosophical Review*, 1962, 71: 520–523) and has since become a classic, both as regards the handling and interpretation of the topic and the presentation of the material. Professor Solmsen deals primarily with Aristotle's *Physics*, the *De Coelo*, the *De generatione et corruptione* and the *Meteorologica*, but begins by discussing the work of the earlier Greek natural philosophers from Anaximander to Plato. He thus covers the pre-Socratic and Platonic areas as well as the Aristotelian. Apart from certain interpretations which have been challenged, this remarkably scholarly work has survived intact, and will remain for many more decades the authoritative account of the physical sciences in the early Greek era, which will continue to be consulted by all those concerned with Greek science. Would that a scholar of Solmsen's erudition and literary ability could provide us with similar work on biology in the same period.

RICHARD ASHLEY, *Heroin. The myths and the facts*, London, St. James Press, 1972, 8vo, pp. xi, 276, £3.50.

Idem, *Cocaine. Its history, uses and effects*, London, St. James Press, 1975, 8vo, pp. xii, 232, £3.95.

The author is a free-lance writer and other than this seems to have few technical