

Book Reviews

he traces back to the interwar years. And he looks at the controversies swirling around the proposed use of sterilization as a “solution” to the problem of mental deficiency, essaying some comparative references to the development of social policy in this area in France, Germany, and the United States.

Inevitably, Thomson’s approach, which involves repeated traverses of the same territory from a range of starting points, creates a certain degree of repetition and redundancy in the discussion. My own copy of the text was also marred by the shoddy technical quality of the book: ink bleeding through from one page to another made portions hard to read, and copy-editing lapses gave further evidence of a carelessness I find reprehensible in a publisher as distinguished as the Clarendon Press. These are genuine annoyances and deficiencies, but they are offset by a number of virtues.

In the first place, Thomson’s attempt to place policy towards mental deficiency within a broader context of the development of the Welfare State is largely successful. In an area ripe for sensationalism, his discussions of such issues as the social roots of support for sterilization or the relations between gender, sexual activity, and certification as feeble minded are reassuringly balanced, detailed, and sensible. The monolithic models others have sought to deploy in polemics on these subjects fare poorly when confronted with detailed data—which is not to imply that Thomson shies away, for example, from discussing the reasons for the over-representation of females in the ranks of the mentally defective or is sparing of those who could refer unblushingly to his subjects as “human vermin” who “crawl about, doing absolutely nothing, except polluting and corrupting everything they touch” (quoted p. 43).

Valuable, too, is Thomson’s demonstration of the tendency of professionalization to lead to neglect of the most gravely disabled, and a migration to the margins, where more treatable cases might be found—a point that echoes one of Gerald Grob’s claims about the proclivities of twentieth-century American psychiatry. Professionals operating in this arena had a

particularly difficult time of it, for as Thomson points out, psychiatrists had problems legitimizing their role in the care of the mentally defective—who were by definition incurable—and those who elected (or where sentenced) to practise in this area found themselves in “a residual and stagnating area of the welfare system” that threatened to leave them “trapped in the carceral mode of the past” (pp. 97, 98). Their dilemmas and difficulties are usefully illuminated, as are the tensions that arose between volunteers in this sector and the emerging generation of professionally trained social workers. Noteworthy, too, is a trenchant chapter on the fate of the mentally defective under the Welfare State, with the growing tendencies to differentiate “between high-priority and well-resourced services for the curable, and a continuing decay and neglect of services for the incurable and chronic” (p. 293) having obviously deleterious consequences for this vulnerable population.

In sum, this generally well written monograph is a welcome addition to a somewhat sparse literature.

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Thomas Schnalke, *Medizin im Brief. Der städtische Arzt des 18. Jahrhunderts im Spiegel seiner Korrespondenz*, Sudhoffs Archiv, Beihefte 37, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner, 1997, pp. 271, illus., DM/SFr 88.00 (3-515-06725-6).

After Mary Lindemann’s work on health care in the duchy of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel and Thomas Broman’s on the professionalization of German doctors, this book adds a further perspective to the recent historiography of medicine in eighteenth-century Germany: the world of an urban physician with scientific ambitions. Based on his Erlangen *Habilitationsschrift*, Schnalke provides an analysis of the correspondence of the renowned Nuremberg physician Christoph Jacob Trew (1695–1769).

Trew made himself known as an able medical practitioner, teacher of anatomy and botany, collector in natural history, editor of one of the first medical periodicals—the *Commercium litterarium*—and of magnificently illustrated botanical works (see also my notice of T Schnalke [ed.], *Natur im Bild in Med. Hist.* 1996, 40: 529). His surviving correspondence, a total of 4,831 letters to him and 873 from him, was linked to a large extent to these activities. Schnalke has selected for his study five representative correspondences, in which Trew entertained dialogues with a medical professor (Albrecht von Haller), a court surgeon (Carl Friedrich Gladbach), a court physician (Johann Lorenz Ludwig Loelius), a *Physicus*, i.e. medical officer (Christian Albrecht Gotthold Gruner), and an academic surgeon (Johann Cristoph May).

A number of issues that are characteristic of Enlightenment medicine feature in these letters, e.g. the introduction of smallpox inoculation, difficulties in the procurement of corpses for anatomical study, and the trade in anatomical preparations. More important, however, is the insight into the personal and professional relations between the different types of medical men exemplified by Trew's correspondents. Haller became for Trew the critical authority in anatomical and botanical matters. As a young physician in Berne, Haller had initially sought contact with the established Nuremberg doctor and naturalist. However, soon after Haller's appointment to a professorship in Göttingen in 1736, Trew could not keep pace with him in scientific research, and the balance of power between the two shifted. Interestingly, Trew had previously rejected the offer of a chair at the new university of Göttingen, made to him by the Hanoverian court through its surgeon Gladbach. Despite his elevated occupation and the fact that he had studied and travelled with Trew, Gladbach was hardly accepted by the Nuremberg doctor as a scholarly correspondent: the status difference between academic physician and surgeon was not overcome. By contrast, Trew communicated

extensively and at the same level with the physician Loelius at the Ansbach court. As a non-resident personal physician to the same court, Trew was frequently consulted by his colleague. In the patronage relationship between (noble) patient and doctor, Trew's geographical distance from the court rather enhanced his medical authority. Patients' estimation of his medical advice "from a distance" is likewise reflected in his consultations with the younger *Physicus* Gruner in Gräfenberg near Nuremberg. Perhaps the most remarkable of the five correspondences studied by Schnalke is that with May, an apprenticeship-trained surgeon, who had been taught anatomy by Trew in Nuremberg and then went to Strasbourg, where he made an academic career as a surgical teacher, prosector, and demonstrator of anatomy. In various ways May was aided in his career by Trew as well as by the Strasbourg professors of anatomy and surgery Johann Jacob Salzmann and Heinrich Albert Nicolai. May, who became a member of the Paris Académie des Sciences, can be seen as a prime example of the "academic rise of surgery". Yet his case also shows that this depended not only on the personal ability and ambition of surgeons, but also on the support of academic physicians.

On the whole, Schnalke's analysis of Trew's medical correspondence provides a differentiated picture both of physician-surgeon and of physician-physician relations in the eighteenth century. Communication was widespread and sometimes intense, yet without erasing differences in status. It is to be hoped that this careful work will serve as a model for further studies into the various relations between eighteenth-century healers.

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Detlef Haberland, *Engelbert Kaempfer 1651–1716: a biography*, trans. Peter Hogg, London, The British Library, 1996, pp. vii, 158, illus., £35.00, \$70.00 (0-7123-4503-5).