

### *Book Reviews*

improved: expectation of life at twenty rose, age at marriage for women fell, more land was available. But plague had left a middle-aged and elderly population, and by 1400 Halesowen was doomed to demographic stagnation for a generation or more. This general picture had been suggested by much previous work on medieval agrarian society, but it had not been established in such overwhelming and convincing detail. Thanks to Dr. Razi, historians of the Black Death and its effects now have some firm statistical ground to stand upon. It is safe to predict that Halesowen will become as famous in historical demography as Dr. E. A. Wrigley's Colyton, and there could be no higher praise than that.

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V. E. LLOYD HART, *John Wilkes and the Foundling Hospital at Aylesbury*, Aylesbury, Bucks., HM + M Publishers, 1979, 8vo, pp. 79, illus., £5.00.

There is a wealth of manuscript information pertaining to the Foundling Hospital and its country branches, yet published work on this important eighteenth-century social institution is minimal; but it is not for this reason alone that Dr. Lloyd Hart's small book is a welcome addition to the literature. He gives, in a lucid, readable style, a lively account of the foundation of the small branch hospital at Aylesbury, its intimate involvement with the local Member of Parliament, John Wilkes, and the events leading to its closure in 1768. The first quarter of the book gives much original background information about the London Foundling Hospital and a further chapter provides brief details about the large Yorkshire branch at Ackworth. The personalities involved are clearly etched and, through their letters, the author demonstrates the compassion for and the care taken to ensure the well-being of these unwanted infants.

If there is a criticism of this book, it is one of brevity. It merely whets the appetite and leaves the reader wanting to know more; both about the foundlings and the running of the institution. For this reason it is to be hoped that this small local study is only the precursor of larger and more informative volumes about the Foundling Hospital.

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T. S. PENSABENE, *The rise of the medical practitioner in Victoria*, Canberra, Australian National University, 1980, 8vo, pp. xiii, 219, illus., [no price stated], (paperback).

The social implications of developments in Australian medicine have received scant attention from historians. This scrupulously researched case-study is therefore welcomed as a fundamental contribution to Australian medical history and to an understanding of the importance and influence of doctors in Australian society today.

As an economic historian, Mr. Pensabene is concerned with two questions: "How did the medical practitioner improve his professional status? How was this increased status directed?" (p. 5). To answer these questions he takes the period 1870 to the