

and complex medical and feminist issues she raises lift her analysis above the superficial, giving a glimpse of what this history of the Hospital could have been. The book is also well supplied with photographs which, in themselves, chronicle the shift from a focus on individuals with a commitment to the aims and daily work of the Hospital to more impersonal generic images of what goes on in hospitals. A comprehensive history of the Queen Vic and its significance is still to be written, probably by an independent writer since the judgements about why it ceased to maintain an independent identity are likely to be harsh.

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*A History of Psychiatry: From the Era of the Asylum to the Age of Prozac.* By Edward Shorter. John Wiley & Sons 1997. Pp. xii + 427. \$35.00 paper.

This history of psychiatry covers the period from the French Revolution until the end of the twentieth century. It is an excellent history, well laid out, very readable with a well-balanced overview of the history of the psychiatry in the western hemisphere. The rise of psychiatry in the United States and in Western Europe are the main areas of interest. This book does not discuss the evolution of psychiatry in Asia or India or Latin America.

The book relates in considerable detail the phases of psychiatric development. The subject is examined from all viewpoints: sociological, epidemiological and medical. The chapters are: The Birth of Psychiatry; The Asylum Era; The First Biological Psychiatry; Nerves; The Psychoanalytic Hiatus; Alternatives; The Second Biological Psychiatry; and From Freud to Prozac. There is an excellent bibliography with detailed referencing to each chapter. The index is comprehensive, logical and very useful.

Each chapter is very comprehensive, but also readable in isolation. Some of the great personalities of psychiatry are very well dealt with and would form core information on the subject. The author does not assume prior medical knowledge and medical concepts are well ex-

plained. One of the high points of Australian psychiatry, the discovery of Lithium in the treatment of Bipolar disease, is nicely dealt with.

This book would be of great use to historians of medicine, practitioners of psychiatry or psychology, social workers and the general public. I agree with the review of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 'A splendid book ... engaging and exceedingly well written, it both presents and compellingly documents a revision of history.' I recommend this book on a very important subject in modern medicine as very good value.

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*Dear Dr. Menninger: Women's Voices from the Thirties.* Edited by Howard J. Falconer and Virginia D. Pruitt. University of Missouri Press 1997. Pp. xi + 258. \$45.00 paper.

*Dear Dr. Menninger* is a collection of letters from American psychoanalyst Dr Karl Menninger. Menninger wrote a column in the *Ladies' Home Journal* on 'Mental Hygiene in the Home' for eighteen months from October 1930. He offered advice, not only to those whose letters he quoted in print, but also to readers who wrote to him with their problems. Nearly 2,000 of these letters and Menninger's replies survive, while an unknown number have been destroyed. Of the surviving letters, eighty-odd queries and replies are reproduced in their entirety in thirteen thematic chapters in this volume. The themes selected by the authors range from problems with mood and personality, through sexual problems, to relationships with husbands — philandering, abusive and disappointing — and with parents, children, in-laws and others.

*Dear Dr. Menninger* gives clear voice to the women's stories it selects; Menninger himself congratulated one woman on her 'flowing, vivid, readable style' (p. 24). The writers often set out detailed histories of their problems. For example, one woman who wrote to ask for some 'straight from the shoulder advice' about why her husband humiliated her repeatedly in public, began by describing herself: