chology that informed it. Of greater consequence for this study is the discussion of French political economy in the thought of J. B. Say and Simonde de Sismondi. Especially in the form cast by Say, political economy celebrated the reign of liberty—economic liberty, particularly—created by the Revolution and argued confidently that progress and human happiness were assured by the continued unrestricted exercise of that liberty. Here was philosophy that suited the new ruling order and was assumed by Villermé and many of his associates.

In the second third of the text the author turns to Villermé's publications. Though Coleman considers works on a diverse range of subjects, he emphasizes those on three research topics: the state of prisons (1820 and 1829), human mortality by social class (1826 to 1834), and the physical and moral condition of French textile workers (1840). These publications represent Villermé's most influential work and also illustrate the evolution of his approaches and opinions. Numerical data for studies such as he undertook were frequently scarce and almost always imperfect. Villermé showed both resourcefulness in finding and using what was available and, like most of the early social and medical statisticians, indifference to refinement in mathematical rigor. Both the investigator and his intended readers were practical men impatient for useful results.

These results were frequently striking. Morbidity and mortality data indicated that human well-being was determined by economic status. For example, Villermé found that the poorer and more miserable the condition of a prisoner prior to his captivity, the more likely he was to die during confinement. Likewise the mortality in the districts of Paris was inversely proportional to a crude measure of resident wealth. Similarly, cholera was more likely to claim a victim during the 1832 epidemic in the poorer than in the wealthier Parisian lodging houses.

Villermé was initially optimistic. His studies demonstrated that the causes of excessive mortality were man-made and remediable. In fact he was at pains to demonstrate that the high mortality in town districts was not due to geography or climate, conditions beyond human control, and that the premature deaths of industrial workers were not due to materials or conditions essential to factory employment. When human intervention occurred, as when reforms were made in prison management, mortality dropped. But as Villermé's attention moved from the special environment of the prison to the industrial city and then to the factory itself the issues became more troubling. The conflict between discovered fact and cherished ideology became acute.

That conflict is the special subject of this book's third and final section. Political economy promised that the defects of the new economic order would vanish with economic growth. But Villermé's inspections of textile districts had shown just how squalid and precarious was the life of industrial workers. Optimism was difficult in the face of his wage and cost-of-living data or his infant mortality rates. As an advocate of public hygiene, Villermé was dedicated to improving the health and lengthening the lives of the people. No mere propagandist, he flatly rejected Andrew Ure's fantastic defense of the early factory as a boon to those employed therein. But his analysis of the causes of misery took him into areas where his political and economic beliefs severely limited his options. Apart from state prohibition of child labor, justified on both humanitarian and economic grounds, Villermé could accept no public intervention to improve the circumstances of the laboring poor. He could recommend only voluntary, paternalistic efforts to employers and sobriety, industry, and patience to the workers. Political events in the 1840's made such solutions obsolete and Villermé increasingly bitter. In the aftermath of the revolution of 1848, in his middle 60's, he wrote a bitter, fearful attack on worker efforts to gain political and industrial power. This tract revealed the belief that contemporary class structure was rooted in inherent human differences and an expectation of deference and dependency from the lower orders.

Coleman's is an important book. The subject is well chosen to reveal the relations between empirical social research and its societal setting. The author handles both sides of this relationship competently. He gives a historical account that is well informed, balanced, and stimulating. With one or two small exceptions, such as the analogy drawn between the Parisian clinicians and their hygienist contemporaries, Coleman's analysis convinces.

Good work normally raises new questions, and such is the case here. One wonders why Villermé began so early to use the language of social class and why in his comparisons of human groups he so often favored economic differences, especially given that he could have foreseen that this sort of analysis might challenge the tenets of political economy. In Britain, where industrial life was also often miserable and laissez-faire the dominant economic creed, Villermé's younger contemporaries found the source of disease and early death in defects of the urban environment. Their analysis both explained their morbidity and mortality data and allowed remedial action (sanitary reform) that did not blatantly threaten those private economic interests that political economy protected. Having singled out economic causes, Villermé was left with unacceptable economic solutions. To put it crudely, was Villermeé more honest or more naïve than the English sanitarians? The differences in approach between the French and the English sociomedical investigators are important. Not the smallest merit of Coleman's book is that it offers the first significant analysis of that enterprise in France.

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Unorthodox Health Programs

Crusaders for Fitness. The History of American Health Reformers. JAMES C. WHARTON. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1982. xii, 360 pp. + plates. $19.50.

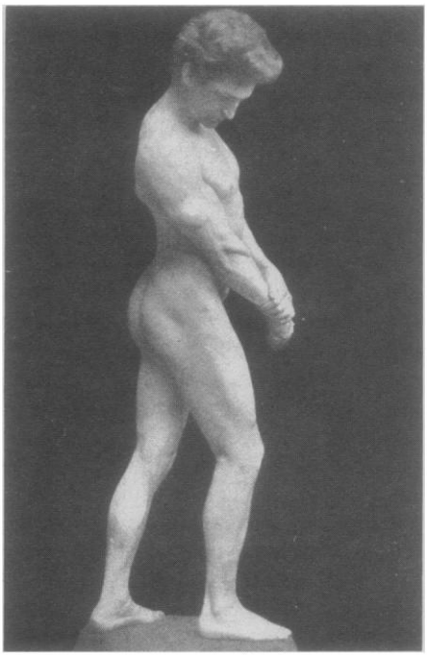
The implicit assumption of *Crusaders for Fitness* is that the leaders of personal hygiene crusades, far from being a collection of foolish and naïve quacks, were often "well-educated and otherwise critical minds" who should not be dismissed, as a previous author has done, as "nuts among the berries." Wharton suggests further that radical schemes of hygiene appeared regularly on the American cultural landscape from 1830 to 1920 but tended to be especially prominent during periods of "general reformist ferment and social optimism when an expanding public spirit enlarged the constituency for perfectionist campaigns."

Wharton is particularly adept at demonstrating that one common thread that runs through the health schemes he deals with—from William Andrus Alcott's "Christian physiology" to Bernarr Macfadden's "Physcultopathy"—is the phenomenon Theodore Roszak (*Harper's Magazine*, Jan. 1981, p. 54) has termed "scientized mysticism," or the relaxed use of scientific ideas to satisfy what is essentially a religious yearning. Thus,

notwithstanding their penchant for a scientific vocabulary, health reformers of all persuasions shared an optimistic view of nature/God that attributed disease to the violation of hygienic law and argued that personal salvation lay within the reach of every individual who pledged to eschew "temptation" and live healthfully. Though methods and means might shift with the vicissitudes of scientific, pseudoscientific, and cultural innovation, underlying assumptions about the essential goodness of nature, including the presumption that evil either did not exist or could be profitably ignored, remained consistent. Though such systems could tantalize a person like William James, the ethical messianism of optimistic hygiene raised the hackles of thinkers whose vision tended toward a darker view of human existence. H. L. Mencken, for example, called hygiene "the corruption of medicine by morality," complaining that it was "impossible to find a hygienist who does not debase his theory of the healthful with a theory of the virtuous."

And yet what remains curious about the heroes of Wharton's narrative is that often they were well-read, forward-looking individuals whose education allowed them to appropriate the language and authority of the hard sciences but who did not recognize any implications that science might be "running contrary to their fundamental faith in human perfectibility." As Oliver Wendell Holmes observed of the phrenologists, each one's system was "so adjusted as to soak up all evidence that helps it, and shed all that harms it."

If Wharton's book has a failing, it is with respect to this tension between science and belief. Though we are left with the impression that the concern for individual and community health in the form of public crusades for perfection was a new and distinct characteristic of the post-1830 period, and thus probably the product of a modernizing and industrializing culture, the author does not probe the connection between modernism and health reform as thoroughly as he might. If we agree that the general cultural thrust of Western thinking in the last three centuries has been to disseminate the Enlightenment's respect for skepticism, empiricism, and the scientifically demonstrable, the appearance of pseudoscientific panaceas that essentially appeal to man's spiritual nature tells us something about the general acceptance of Enlightenment ideas. Roszak suggests one explanation for the persistence of the "irrational": "In the deep allegiance of the people," he writes, "the scientific world view simply has not taken, though it continues to dominate our economic and political life." Could it be that the rise of health reform was directly linked to the increasing failure of traditional religions to grab hold of people's imaginations? Did not the ideology of hygiene demonstrate the inadequacy of Enlightenment ideas to satisfy a persistent yearning for the transcendent that the Age of Reason believed would pass away with continuing progress?



"Bernarr Macfadden displaying the fruits of physical culture." [From Macfadden's *Virile Powers of Superb Manhood* (London, 1900); reproduced in *Crusades for Fitness*]

And what of the relationship between health reform and politics? Body worship, as Charles Krauthammer has observed (*New Republic*, 16 and 23 Aug. 1982, p. 30–31), has traditionally been the province of the political right. Yet we have recently witnessed the publication of *Jane Fonda's Workout Book*, a how-to best-seller that would have delighted the likes of Bernarr Macfadden and that, according to Krauthammer, "peddles Tom Hayden's ideas wrapped in Jane Fonda's body."

One regrets that Wharton has not probed these issues more deeply. Though *Crusaders for Fitness* combines lively readability and good-natured humor without sacrificing lucid analysis and serious historical scholarship, it leaves us wishing for more.

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