

## Patients Progress: Sickness, Health and Medical Care in England, 1650-1850 (Medicine and Society Ser. : Vol.4)



Pre-modern society was overshadowed by illness and the threat of death. This outstanding new book examines what people did when they fell sick in Britain between 1650 - 1850. The authors investigate the well-established and flourishing tradition of self-medication, as practised by individuals, within the family and in the wider community. They look at what kinds of medical services could be obtained, both from the regular profession and among quacks and other healers. Above all they explore the personal and sociological bonds developed between patients and their doctors, examining in particular the economic and ethical dimensions of this privileged but precarious relationship. What precisely did doctors have to offer the sick in an age before scientific medicine could promise near-certain cures? This fundamental question is analysed against the background of the cultural and religious attitudes of Enlightenment England and in the context of the development of the medical profession. Drawing on the letters, journals and autobiographies of individual sufferers and from the papers of doctors, this remarkable investigation opens up new issues and offers interpretations which will certainly stimulate controversy among historians, anthropologists and sociologists and lead the way to further research in this area.

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