

### Book Reviews

*A History of Parasitology*, by W. D. FOSTER, Edinburgh and London, E. & S. Livingstone, 1965, pp. vii, 202, 15 plates, 35s.

Medical historians and parasitologists will welcome the appearance at last of a work devoted to the history of parasitology. Hitherto no modern study of this subject has been available with the exception of R. Hoeppli's *Parasites and Parasitic Infections in early Medicine and Science* (1959), a work designed on quite different lines.

One important limitation must however be mentioned. Professor Foster's book deals only with certain groups of human parasites (helminths and protozoa) and deliberately excludes parasitic fungi and arthropods, so depriving us of a history of the mycoses and above all of scabies, a disease of great interest in the evolution of medical ideas.

Having made this reservation, one has nothing but praise for Foster's work. In fourteen clearly expressed and well documented chapters he gives us a general survey of the evolution of medical parasitology from antiquity up to 1850, then goes back to trace the development of our knowledge of cestodes, trematodes (flukes and schistosomes), nematodes (trichina, hookworm, filariae), and of various groups of pathogenic protozoa (trypanosomes, *Entamoeba histolytica*, *Babesia*, plasmodia) before summing up in a brief conclusion.

It should be noted that, apart from some mention in the first, general, chapter nothing is said of ascarids, oxyurids, *Leishmania*, *Toxoplasma*, *Balantidium*, and several other parasites.

The book has an index of authors cited but no subject index. It is illustrated with fifteen plates showing early drawings of parasites and portraits of parasitologists.

J. THÉODORIDÈS

*John Morgan, Continental Doctor*, by WHITFIELD J. BELL, Jr., University of Pennsylvania Press; London, Oxford University Press, 1965, pp. 301, 52s.

Benjamin Rush, in his eulogy to his dead teacher said that the name of John Morgan should be linked for ever with that period in America when medicine was first studied and taught as a science. This book is a study of the man and the period.

Morgan's father emigrated from Wales to Pennsylvania about 1717. He prospered as a shopkeeper and John Morgan was born in 1735 in Philadelphia, the city in which he was to found America's first medical school in 1764. In 1750, Morgan was apprenticed to Dr. John Redman, 'sound in theory and cautious in practice', and in 1755 he became apothecary to the recently opened Philadelphia Hospital.

After a brief military interlude, which served as the background to his later controversial Director-Generalcy, Morgan furthered his medical and cultural education in Europe, where he came under the influence of William Cullen, William Hunter, John Fothergill, and others, and met many famous men, from the Pope to Voltaire. The project to found a medical school in America was undoubtedly born during these days in England, fostered and encouraged by John Fothergill, and discussed among the lively group of American students in Edinburgh, who included William Shippen, Morgan's senior by two years.

Morgan returned from his tour in 1764, a Fellow of the Royal Society, M.D. and F.R.C.P. Edinburgh, and L.R.C.P. London. In Philadelphia, Shippen had already

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been teaching anatomy for some two years, but Morgan immediately took it upon himself to arrange the opening of a medical school attached to the College of Philadelphia, without any consultation with his erstwhile fellow student.

Morgan's remarkable inaugural lecture in May 1765, *A Discourse upon the Institution of Medical Schools in America* was the climax of his career, and his plans and recommendations affected American medicine for over a generation. It also sparked off the hostility which vexed him ever after. His quarrel with Shippen flared and flourished over the following years, and though commanding great respect and a considerable reputation as a physician, Morgan produced no more scientific work, nor did his teaching ever rise above the didactic and superficial, and he died in 1785 an embittered man, as his latest portrait clearly shows.

Mr. Whitfield Bell is a librarian of the American Philosophical Society, of which John Morgan was a leading founder member. Mr. Bell gives us a sympathetic and understanding appraisal of Morgan's life, in a well written and much needed biography. The stories of Morgan's European tour, of the foundation of the Philadelphia school, and especially of the background of military service on the frontier and during the War of Independence, are particularly well told.

Mr. Bell has no illusions about the defects in the character of his subject, but might perhaps have attempted to discuss in more detail why it was that Morgan became involved in so inveterate a quarrel with William Shippen, failing completely to realize that the full realization of his ambitions over the medical school depended greatly upon Shippen's co-operation. Perhaps Mr. Bell should attempt to answer these questions with a study of Shippen himself.

The book is supplied with good notes and index, and is to be recommended to medical men and historians on both sides of the Atlantic, as a satisfactory study of an interesting physician, and of a fascinating period in American history.

K. BRYN THOMAS

*Spencer Wells, the Life and Work of a Victorian Surgeon*, by JOHN A. SHEPHERD, Edinburgh and London, E. & S. Livingstone, 1965, pp. 132, illus., 30s.

The name of Spencer Wells is better known than that of almost any other surgeon. The reason for this is given in the very last sentence of this interesting biography—'In most operating theatres in Great Britain surgeons do not ask the sister for artery forceps but simply say "Spencer Wells"'. Yet the main achievement of this famous surgeon was not the invention of an artery forceps (for in fact he did but modify the form of the forceps) but because, as Treves put it, 'by his determination he succeeded in founding abdominal surgery as we know it.'

Mr. Shepherd has done the profession a notable service in making the details of Spencer Wells' career available. He has examined every available source and has written a very readable book. Incidentally, his account of the history of ovariectomy is very comprehensive and the best that has yet been written.

Spencer Wells was born in 1818. His family was humble and he had to fight his own way through life. He became a pupil of a doctor at Barnsley and later studied at Leeds, Dublin, and at St. Thomas's Hospital, London. Qualifying M.R.C.S. in 1841 he joined the Navy in which he remained for 15 years. He was posted to the Malta