

Book Reviews

Barrett, looks highly competent, but he appears to have had little business, and may have gone for a time to Jamaica (p. 74). In 1764, however, he was back in London, working once again on the interminable *Gravid uterus* project. In 1778, he and his (bastard?) son Andries published a book of engravings after curiosities of natural history in the British Museum, the *Museum Britannicum*, in the text to which he cast cantankerous abuse at William Hunter for exploiting his skill without giving advancement or even acknowledgment in return. He disappears from notice around 1788, having been predeceased in 1786 by Andries, who had become an itinerant portrait-limner of moderate ability.

Despite his outstanding skill in scientific illustration, which was appreciated by such a connoisseur as Pieter Camper, Rymsdyk's life appears to have been a string of failures. An underemployed *émigré* of no fixed abode and dressed in William Barrett's cast-off clothes, he never established his career behind the portrait-painter's easel. Instead, he was reduced to slaving in a freezing Soho garret for the perfectionist William Hunter, drawing the putrid abortions and cadavers of destitute women. Paradoxically, the unrelenting professionalism which he devoted to this unpleasant but useful task has brought to Rymsdyk more appreciation from posterity than many smart portraitists have received. Anyone curious to know the full story, such as it is, should consult Mr. Thornton's bio-biblio-iconographical narrative.

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ERIC G. BAXTER, *Dr. Jephson of Leamington Spa*, (edited by Joan Lane and Robert Bearman), Leamington Spa, Warwickshire Local History Society, 1980, 8vo, pp. xii, 104, illus., £4.25 (paperback). (Obtainable from the Society, 47 Newbold Terrace, Leamington Spa, Warwick. CV32 4EZ.)

This welcome book is an edited version of a study of Henry Jephson, M.D. (1798–1878), which the late Eric Baxter spent many years working on before his death in February 1979. Joan Lane and Robert Bearman, who took on the task of making the manuscript fit to print, are to be congratulated on the result, and the generous attitude that it conveys regarding the publication of detailed works of local history on medical topics.

By taking an interest in Henry Jephson, Eric Baxter was also bringing to light much of the nineteenth-century history of Leamington Spa, where Jephson was a famous medical practitioner, benefiting to some extent from the lure of the local spa waters and their attraction for a wealthy, itinerant, class of patients. It is a remarkable career, even by nineteenth-century standards, since Jephson made his way from being an apothecary's apprentice; he became a Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries in 1823, and then a surgeon to Leamington Infirmary and Dispensary in 1826, before graduating M.D. from Glasgow in April 1826. After a brief sojourn in Cheltenham, which Leamington residents disapproved of, Jephson returned to Leamington in September of the same year. Then, between 1828 and 1848, described in Chapter 2 as "the peak of fame", he practised very successfully with the aid of the local waters and "a beautiful and expressive smile". One of his many famous patients – another was Ruskin – was Lord Shaftesbury, who said of him "the very appearance of the man inspires confidence". The smiling manner was parodied by such as Forbes Benignus Winslow, but Jephson cannot have been too concerned: he went on to make a very considerable fortune, helped to establish the Warwick and Leamington Banking Company, as well as numerous civic educational amenities. These must have mattered to him a good deal after 1848, when he lost his sight. But he had reached the heart of the aristocratic and political connexion: the undergraduate W. E. Gladstone recorded a number of dinners with Dr. Jephson, apparently unoffended (this was the early 1830s) by Jephson's hostility to reform and stout adherence to the old Anglican order.

The career has been meticulously researched by Dr. Baxter, and cannot be said to make light reading. This is particularly true of the account of the philanthropic activities in the period 1848–1878, although for avid students of local Midland history, much of what is examined here is fascinating. And Jephson's career as a whole once again testifies to the staying power of conservative philanthropy, once the 1830s and 1840s had been negotiated. In a different century, he might have been incarnated as Beau Nash; but in nineteenth-century England, a genteel manner

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and hard work took him all the way from the bottom of the medical career ladder to the summit of civic virtue and stylish Tory rural conservatism. It is good to have such a well-documented study of a medical beneficiary of Leamington's waters, and of the nineteenth-century gentry's determination to be permanently ill without being (medically) bled.

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KARL Y. GUGGENHEIM, *Nutrition and nutritional diseases. The evolution of concepts*, Lexington, Mass., and Toronto, Collamore Press, 1981, 8vo, pp. xii, 378, illus., [no price stated].

Although quite a few of the topics in this book have been discussed during the last decades, e.g. in the works of McCollum, Partington, Florkin, or Mendelsohn, it is a welcome addition to our literature and has a character and a value of its own. It shows how food was seen as building-material and a source of energy from Hippocrates to Maimonides. It relates the new concepts of the seventeenth century, e.g. of van Helmont on ferments, Santorio on insensible perspiration, Boyle and Mayow on respiration and combustion. Of the nineteenth century, the author reports, among other achievements, the work of Liebig, Voit, Rubner, and Atwater on energy production, Prout's classification of foodstuffs, and the metabolism studies of Bidder, Schmidt, Pettenkofer, Voit, Claude Bernard, and Schoenheimer. The twentieth-century discovery of vitamins which brought basic changes to the "adequate diet" concept is discussed.

The second half of the book is devoted to well-written histories of seven primary nutritional diseases (scurvy, rickets, pellagra, etc). The difficulty of advancing from the concept of parasitic disease to that of deficiency disease is duly emphasized. There seems no point in carping here about what to me are minor omissions (the work of R. R. Williams, the rise of hereditary rickets, etc.). Among the attractions of the book are the short biographical sketches accompanying the discussion of the concepts. The publisher should hire a better proof-reader.

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MICHAEL MITTERAUER and REINHARD SIEDER, *The European family. Patriarchy and partnership from the Middle Ages to the present*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1982, pp. xv, 235, £16.00 (£7.50 paperback).

This survey of family formation and family structure in Europe from the Middle Ages is thoroughly welcome. It synthesizes a mass of secondary literature (without, however, probing historiographical conflict) and at the same time embodies the authors' major researches into family history within the Austrian Empire. Its style is admirably free from the technical jargon of demographic historians and of sociologists, and the translators, Karla Oosterveen and Manfred Hörzinger, have produced a rendering which mercifully is not glued word-for-word to the original German (though its reading is perhaps a trifle loose in places: "farmer" is used too often where "peasant agriculturalist" is meant). Mitterauer and Sieder are free of the naïvety and Whiggism of Shorter and the occasional eccentricities of Laslett (they also lack his brilliance); and their focus on Central Europe is a valuable complement to the francocentricity of, say, Flandrin and the anglocentric approach of Macfarlane. The book's major drawback lies in attempting to trace its subject from the Middle Ages to the present in fewer than 200 pages. This, coupled with a generalizing sociological ambition and a paucity of individual examples, causes an occasional slide into banality – in the modern world, they write, "wives . . . frequently channel their sexual energies into over-mothering grown-up children and grandchildren, or divert them into religious or social and charitable activities".

The title of the English version does the authors an injustice. They are at pains to stress there was no single, uniform, European family. Family forms differed vastly according to region, religion, and economy. Moreover, they insist, *pace* Shorter, there has been no simple unidirectional "evolution" of the family. We are indeed familiar with these points from Laslett and Flandrin, but they bear reiteration. What is relatively new in Mitterauer and Sieder is their patient and