

Book Reviews

William Munk (1816–98) wrote the first three volumes during his long tenure as Harveian Librarian to the College, and that policy has been reverted to here, except that Sir Gordon Wolstenholme has edited rather than authored these latest offerings. In fact, after Munk, authorship has always been multiple, though some attempt has been made to standardize the style and format of the individual entries. For the first time, authors have been identified at the end of each life. Also new is the reproduction of a photograph of most of the Fellows included. In some cases autobiographical reflections (which Fellows are encouraged to deposit at the College) have aided their obituarists, who, in any case, write from personal knowledge. Inevitably, this has given the entries a more casual, eulogistic air and the lives tend to be heavier on anecdote than analysis. Rather too many are described as “One of the most outstanding physicians of his time”, and a few of the many rhapsodically happy marriages mentioned might actually have been more ordinary. Nevertheless, there are occasional touches of sharpness: one Fellow “expected complete loyalty and hated criticism”. Another made “no major contribution to knowledge”. A third was “notorious for her alarmingly dangerous driving”.

The usefulness of *Munk's Roll* is indisputable, and these volumes will make handy reference books and easy, if somewhat melancholy, bedside reading. Some of the entries are exceptionally good (e.g., W.S. Peart on Sir George Pickering) and the works as a whole convey a picture of hospital medicine in Britain during the past few decades, through the lives and careers of the 751 Fellows detailed here. So much easily available biographical information makes prosopography irresistible. Do eminent doctors live longer now than they did a century ago? Are they elected Fellows at an earlier or later age? What are their educational backgrounds? These and a host of other questions might be researched from a complete set of *Munk's Roll*. My own random sample (probably statistically insignificant) of twenty Fellows elected about a century ago gave an average life expectancy of Victorian Fellows (elected 1868–70) of 77.8 years, and an average age at election of 44 years. Their colleagues dying 100 years later lived an average 74.5 years, and were 55.6 years old when elected to Fellowship. Although fewer, Victorian Fellows enjoyed their Fellowship for much longer than do Fellows today.

Although about the dead, these volumes are full of life and affection. There are, however, a few curiosities, such as the life of Ida Macalpine, whose son (Richard Hunter) is also, sadly, included. We are told that Ida Macalpine possessed a “collection of incurabula” relating to King George III—presumably these were prophetic documents.

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MIRIAM SLATER, *Family life in the seventeenth century. The Verneys of Claydon House*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984, 8vo, pp. x, 209, £10.50.

STEVEN OZMENT, *When fathers ruled. Family life in Reformation Europe*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1983, 8vo, pp. x, 238, illus., £14.85.

Since Edward Shorter and Lawrence Stone brought the subject into focus nearly a decade ago, the history of the family has become a prominent arena of controversy, and the battle lines are now deeply divided. Both Shorter and Stone argued that, in the early modern period, amongst the lower orders marriages had more to do with forming working economic units than with romance, and that amongst the propertied classes unions were essentially alliances of line, estates, and politics. Upper-class marriages were generally arranged, and considerations of affection between bride and groom were at most secondary, and even viewed with suspicion. Indeed, before the age of the Enlightenment, there was little love, or even tenderness, lost in the repressive, patriarchal regime of the traditional family, where wives were under the thumbs of husbands, and children subordinate to the dominion of their parents. Critics of Shorter and Stone have rejoined, on the contrary, that this bleak picture of unhappy, if instrumental, families, is belied by evidence, both personal and literary, and by common experience of human nature. Linda Pollock, for example, in her *Forgotten children* (Cambridge, 1983) draws attention to warm and caring relations between offspring and

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parents in Tudor and Stuart times, and Antonia Fraser, in her *The weaker vessel* (Weidenfeld, 1983) tells numerous stories of passionate marriages.

The Stonian interpretation has now been reinforced by Miriam Slater's anatomy of a seventeenth-century gentry family, the Verneys. Slater's is a bleak view indeed. She does not see the Verney family in the Stuart age as a "human socializing and nurturing agency devoted to the emotional and psychological welfare of its members" (p.144) but rather as an instrument of "social control". She stresses the tyrannical power exercised by the family head, Sir Ralph; and shows how practically all Verney marriages were not merely arranged for financial advantage but were emotional failures. Slater regards the Verneys as typical of their age (this was "family life in the seventeenth century"), but the inference may be dubious. Much of her evidence comes from the Civil War period, during which the Verney family was thrown into deep chaos by the death in battle of the family head Sir Edmund, the premature elevation of his son, Ralph, and constant major threats to the Verney estates. Emergency retrenchment measures at a time of Civil War must not be confused with the practices of routine, peacetime family strategies.

Altogether a sunnier picture of the early modern family emerges from Steven Ozment's investigation of sermons and advice manuals instructing family members on their duties and on the upbringing of children. These works—and Ozment's sample is mainly German, and mainly Lutheran—advocate love, care, responsibilities, and moderation. The wishes of wives are to be respected, and children are to be disciplined by example not by the rod. Ozment optimistically concludes that these tracts mirrored or shaped reality. A cynic might suggest that they instead indicate that the real world of the Reformation family was indeed as harsh as Stone has painted it.

Ozment's book is of direct interest to the medical historian, because his chapter on childbirth contains admirable summaries of midwifery and infant-rearing treatises of the sixteenth century, in particular Eucharius Rösslin's *Rosengarten* (1513) and Johann Coler's *Haus-Buch* (1591). It is noteworthy—though it may not be significant—that the earlier, Catholic Rösslin is markedly more "scientific", more "enlightened", more "forward-looking" than the later, Protestant Coler. Rösslin showed immense concern for the well-being of the pregnant mother, and required gentleness of the midwife. He urged mothers to nurse their own babies. Coler, by contrast, retailed gross superstitions (an eclipse at the hour of birth spelt death to both mother and child) and dabbled in therapeutic magic (removing a dead foetus from the womb would be helped by draping a snakeskin over the mother).

Medical historians will also be glad of Ozment's survey of the autobiographical writings of Hermann von Weinsberg, born in 1518. His youth was attended by all the horrors of infant mortality (all his sisters died). He himself suffered numerous near-fatal diseases, such as measles; he also suffered equally terrifying cures (for a nosebleed he was "hung somewhat by the neck"). His childhood was dogged with perennial ill health, notably by worms and ineradicable infestations of lice.

Battle will doubtless continue to rage over the health and happiness of families. These useful case studies tend to suggest that while the material conditions of life were appalling, personal relations may not have been so harsh and mercenary as they have been painted.

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W. E. VAN HEYNINGEN and JOHN R. SEAL, *Cholera. The American scientific experience 1947–80*, Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 1983, 8vo, pp. xvi, 343, illus., £24.00 (UK suppliers: Bowker Publishing Co., Epping, Essex).

During the two decades that followed the Second World War, the United States underwent a social transformation that affected virtually all aspects of domestic and international life. Fuelled by a buoyant optimism, relatively unscathed by the war, the American economy grew to unprecedented size, carrying with it a sense that all of the problems of the world were susceptible to solution if sufficient energy and support could be funnelled into their investigation. The growth of the National Institutes of Health, the extension of international