

Book Reviews

G. S. ROUSSEAU (editor), *The letters and papers of Sir John Hill, 1714–1775*, New York, AMS Press, 1982, pp. xlv, 208, illus., \$37.50. (Available in UK from Eurospace Ltd., 3 Henrietta Street, London WC2E 8LU).

G. S. ROUSSEAU, *Tobias Smollett. Essays of two decades*, Edinburgh, T. & E. Clark, 1982, pp. xii, 207, £7.95.

As these two volumes amply testify, George Rousseau has become, at a remarkably early age, the doyen of scholars illuminating the elective affinities between literature and medicine (and long may he so continue!). His range of interests, expertise, and panache ripple off the pages of his volume of reprinted Smollett essays, where learned discussions about the impact on embryology of the introduction of pineapples into England jostle alongside some very sensible remarks on Smollett's politics (accommodating), and invigorating common sense about the picturesque. His scholarly skills, tact in editorial techniques, and energy in chasing a hare, make his pioneering collection of Hill letters both a valuable new quarry and an entertaining read, whetting the appetite for the full-scale biography to follow.

Rousseau's foible is for the second-rate. It is *Smollett's* novels he writes about, not Fielding's or Sterne's; and he makes no bones about admitting that most are far from masterpieces. Rousseau doesn't puff Smollett out of proportion: a moderately successful doctor and medical writer, who gave up; a talented author – *Roderick Random* was a great success – whose career as a novelist somehow lost its way; an enigma as a human being, soured, irritable, and taciturn, meriting Sterne's epithet, "Dr. Smelfungus". Sir John Hill is, similarly, the Renaissance man *manqué*: apothecary, actor, promoter of patent herbal remedies, playwright, horticulturalist, naturalist, and above all else, a prolific penman, with over eighty book-titles to his credit (or perhaps debit). At the outset, a most brilliant and promising virtuoso, friend of Sir William Watson, Mendes da Costa, and others of the Royal Society circles, noticed by Haller and Gesner, patronized by the Duke of Richmond. But then after a series of reverses, spurned as the innamorato of Peg Woffington, rejected in his bid for membership of the Royal Society, out on a limb for his association with Lord Bute, increasingly a butt of satire and caricature. Rousseau's notes chart Sir John's downhill slide into financial ruin and a figure of ridicule – no longer taken seriously by scientists ("This shrewd man hastens excessively", declared Haller), deemed a "puppy" by Richmond, a "vain coxcomb" by Woffington, an "ungrateful monster" by William Arderon, immortalized by Garrick:

For Physick and Farces, his Equal there scarce is,
His Farces are Physick, his Physick a Farce is.

The key to the ups and downs of Smollett and Hill is that both had had to struggle to survive in the choppy literary waters which stretched from the gutters of Grub Street to the sun-drenched horizons of Patronage Cove (indeed, each author tried to drown the other). It was sink or swim, and swim they both did, even if the margins were fine and their strokes were sometimes unorthodox ("I do not think any mortal has ever written with more impudence or more ignorance", thought Peter Ascanius of Hill, "his only excuse is that he must write in order to exist"). Smollett and Hill are intriguing specimens of the Georgian doctor/writer as proteus of print and manufacturer of knowledge. Thanks to George Rousseau's microscope, we can now see them so much better, wriggling in their pond.

Roy Porter
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RONALD FETTES CHAPMAN, *Leonard Wood and leprosy in the Philippines. The Cullion Leper Colony, 1921–1927*, Lanham, Md., University Press of America, 1982, 8vo, pp. xviii, 219, \$20.20 (\$10.25 paperback).

The author, an Englishman who emigrated to the USA after the Second World War and

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eventually joined the American Peace Corps, was sent to the Philippines and worked for some time in the Culion Leper Colony. It was there that he became intrigued by a large statue of General Leonard Wood, one of the few reminders of the former American presence in the Philippine Republic of today. The book covers three closely related subjects: the story of the famous Culion Leper Colony from 1906 to 1927; the working of the USA administration of the Philippines from 1898 to 1927; and the life and work of the near-legendary military doctor who rose from humble beginnings to become Governor-General of the former American colony. Of these three subjects the latter is the most riveting.

Leonard Wood graduated from the Harvard Medical School in 1884 and a year later joined the army; an impetuous and swashbuckling character, he took an active part in the campaign against the Apaches in Arizona and, as an officer of the Fourth Cavalry, showed in the field an extraordinary courage and endurance. His leadership was also evident during the Cuban war, and in 1899 he became the military governor of Cuba. It was there, when faced with the baffling problems of yellow fever in Havana and Santiago, that Wood initiated under his authority the study on the transmission of this disease. In 1900, when Major Walter Reed discovered the role of *Aedes aegypti* in this infection, it was Wood who empowered W. C. Gorgas to start the sanitation programme that eliminated yellow fever from Havana.

Wood's further progress was spectacular. In 1903, he became the governor of the Moro province in the Philippines and suppressed the turbulent tribes on the island of Mindanao. In 1906, he assumed the full military command of the Philippines, and three years later President Taft appointed him US Army Chief of Staff. During the next four years, Wood restructured the whole military establishment of the American Army and later was able to convince President Woodrow Wilson that America must enter the war against Germany; he was greatly disappointed at not having been chosen to command the American expeditionary force in Europe. After the war and following Wilson's death, Wood had hoped to receive the republican nomination for presidency but this did not happen. In 1921, when the demands for independence of the Philippines created a tense political situation, Wood was sent once again to the islands as Governor-General. It was during this stormy period that Wood became deeply (and not too happily) involved in the work of the Culion Leper Colony, where Dr Wade and his wife were working with immense dedication on research and treatment of this disease.

Wood had had a serious accident during the Cuban campaign, but his health deteriorated visibly only in the 1920s. In spite of two brain operations and a magnificent and pathetic fight against the increasingly severe symptoms, he became so incapacitated that he had to leave Manila for the USA, where he was operated on once again, this time by Harvey Cushing. A large brain tumour was removed, but on 7 August 1927 Wood died.

A picture that emerges from this well-researched and well-told story is that of a strong and contradictory character, nurtured on an American puritan ethic and driven by a militant and missionary fervour. But his rigid, intolerant, tactless, occasionally brutal dealings with his opponents had no place in the new post-war climate of political and cultural independence of the Philippines.

In the history of tropical medicine Wood's name is indelibly linked with those of Walter Reed and W. C. Gorgas, whom he inspired, assisted, and protected. I enjoyed reading this book and learned a lot from it.

L. J. Bruce-Chwatt
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TEIZO OGAWA (editor), *Public Health*, (Proceedings of the 5th International Symposium on the Comparative History of Medicine – East and West), Tokyo, Taniguchi Foundation, 1981, 8vo, pp. vi, 189, \$38.50.

The ten papers that comprise this volume were presented at a six-day symposium on the comparative history of public health held in Japan in 1980. Only one of the contributions, Kazuo Nomiyama's study of environmental pollution, is expressly comparative. Each of the other papers is a self-contained monograph, and taken as a whole their value for comparative history