

Book Reviews

the archives – particularly Shaftesbury's correspondence and candid diaries – letting the documents speak for themselves whenever possible. The author eschews too much psychological analysis in favour of a narrative format which is always readable and often gripping. Shaftesbury emerges as neither simply a saint nor a bigot, but as a saintly, bigoted human being, sympathetic if not particularly lovable. (It is a strange man who finds both his father and his son woefully inadequate.)

Readers of this journal will probably find Finlayson's analysis of Shaftesbury's involvement with the Commissioners of Lunacy, the Central Board of Health, the Factory Acts, and the anti-vivisection movement of most interest. To read this book is to understand how Shaftesbury could admire and co-operate with the essentially secular Chadwick, to glimpse, in fact, the heart and soul of Evangelical Victorian paternalism at its best and at its worst.

Finlayson's study is a major achievement which in its judicious thoroughness deserves comparison with Blake's *Disraeli* and Gash's *Peel* as a classic biography of a maker of Victorian England.

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MICHAEL ROSE, *Curator of the dead. Thomas Hodgkin (1798–1866), doctor and campaigner for human rights*, London, Peter Owen, 1981, 8vo, pp. 148, illus., £9.50.

Thomas Hodgkin, notes the author of this slender volume, is one of the most intriguing figures of mid-nineteenth-century English medicine. An influential Quaker, science popularizer, campaigner for the protection of African and North American aborigine populations, friend to Moses Montefiore and other notables, and importer to Britain of Gallic-flavoured pathological anatomy, Hodgkin lived a life of pungent variety. Personally and professionally, he touched on many of the critical issues that historians are just beginning to tease out of the intellectual and social fabric of medical life a century and a half ago.

As Michael Rose further attests at the outset, the definitive account of Hodgkin's life and career remains for a future biographer to write. In this instance the intention was merely to provide a sort of sketch for such an effort, a paean to a neglected subject in Victorian medicine. Despite such truth in advertising, however, I must report this book to be ultimately disappointing. It is a rather untidy collection of facts and anecdotes about Hodgkin, some useful but almost all derivative from others' work. In offering this, Dr. Rose leaves the reader in an odd and uncomfortable dilemma. His scholarly apparatus is so thin that one is frequently left wondering about his sources. On the other hand, when he does quote key sources, such as the important recent article in the pages of this journal on Hodgkin's 1837 *contretemps* at Guy's Hospital by Kass, Carey, and Kass (*Med. Hist.*, 1980, 24: 197–208), he lifts long chunks from others' analyses, tacking them – with attribution – into his own narrative.

The organization of the book is thematic, a step that seems sensible; but Rose jolts the reader by jumping between unrelated sub-topics within chapters. When he runs out of steam on one aspect, without adequate interpretation or a sense of closure he simply jumps to another. Finally, there are numerous errors of both fact and interpretation. Though the author claims no expertise as a historian, surely some reader or colleague could have picked out such inaccuracies as identifying major medical figures as “Rudolph Virchow” (p. 101), “Francis Dalton” (p. 43), and “Sir Aston” Cooper (p. 138). Matters of interpretation, when present, also fall all too frequently beside the mark, viz. the contention (p. 106) that the British Empire in 1837 “was soon to be united into a vast and formidable machine for commerce and war.”

The author of this monograph adopted an approach that was modest and well-meaning. Nevertheless, the resulting pastiche cannot be recommended. One is hard pressed to think of an audience for which it may be serviceable. Curious and fascinating by fits and starts, *Curator of the dead* is nonetheless a work in which the whole is, unfortunately, considerably less than the sum of its parts.

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