

## Book Reviews

medical politics during the first thirty years of the NHS. He served the BMA as a formidable Chairman of Council from 1966 to 1971; he was appointed in 1972 as Chairman of the Standing Advisory Committee of the Central Health Services Council, and in 1974 he became a member of the General Medical Council. He is also one of the foundation Fellows of the Royal College of General Practitioners, but it is interesting to note that the College is allowed only two of the briefest of entries in this book; nothing could illustrate more vividly the division between the LMC/BMA/GMSC world of medical politics and the apolitical RCGP. But this book is not, and the author would be the first to concede that it did not set out to be, a comprehensive history of the general practitioner. It is in fact a memoir of the author's personal involvement in the politics of medicine, of his life as a most distinguished general practitioner in Winchester, and an exposition of his firmly held views on the way that this complex, arduous, and rapidly changing branch of medicine should be practised. He writes with vigour as if he were talking to you, and is seldom worried by doubts or uncertainties. It is a valuable memoir, particularly for the future historian who will, we suspect, find a lot that is hard to understand about general practice during the period following the second world war. He will need to untangle the way that general practitioners displayed in their work a mixture of frustration and enthusiasm, of irritability and deep affection for their patients, of almost paranoid distrust of government and the Ministry of Health, and of continual fear of loss of clinical freedom; and yet, in spite of these latter fears, he will note the rarity with which the leaders could obtain any agreement on political attitudes or action; he will also note the frequent touchiness, insecurity, and hypersensitivity to outside criticism co-existing with a surprising willingness on the part of many to change their patterns of behaviour and even indulge in searching self-examination of motives and attitudes. He may conclude that here was a group of medical practitioners whose attitude to their work could change from love to hate and back again several times a day, and who loved to be loved by their patients but were repeatedly surprised to find that most of the time they really were. The future historian, and indeed, anyone today who is interested in the practice of medicine, will find this memoir helps to unravel these contradictions and is therefore a much more valuable book than it would have been if the author had, in fact, attempted a comprehensive and detached "life and history of the family doctor".

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GEOFFREY B. A. M. FINLAYSON, *The Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury 1801–1885*, London, Eyre Methuen, 1981, 8vo, pp. 639, £19.50.

The place of Anthony Ashley Cooper, Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury (1801–1885), in Victorian philanthropy, social reform, and political debate is secure. During his long and active life, Shaftesbury busied himself with numerous charitable projects: lunacy laws, public health reform, factory legislation (particularly concerning women and children), the conversion of the Jews, the purity of the Anglican Church, missionary endeavours, ragged schools, and working-class housing, to name but some. He was the quintessential Evangelical, convinced that faith alone can save, yet determined to do Good Works until his dying day. Pious to a fault, his uncompromising stances meant that the central bastions of political power were denied him. A Conservative by temperament and tradition, he never toed any party line but God's. He contented himself with being the conscience of Britain, even though the increasingly secular society of his old age found his message too harsh. His paternalism and advocacy of a hierarchical, deferential society led some to dismiss him as a bigot; his sense of God's hand on his shoulder and his willingness always to defend the Evangelical cause led others to view him as a saint. Like many other saints, he vacillated between feelings of extreme worthlessness and those of bitter indignation that too many failed to heed his message and worth.

These and many other facets of Shaftesbury's personality and achievements emerge from Geoffrey Finlayson's massive biography, the first on this scale since Hodder's three-decker *Life of Shaftesbury*, published shortly after its subject's death. Finlayson has thoroughly exploited

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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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