

Book Reviews

anatomical and physiological research in Britain, a subject not well explored by historians. *Inter alia* a reader learns about a host of other topics including the collection of research materials, the making of specimens for teaching purposes, and medical publishing. One subject on which the letters are somewhat unforthcoming is the correspondents' personalities. Two good friends who feel free to exchange confidential information is as much a sense as we get.

I recommend this collection of letters to all interested in nineteenth-century medical teaching and science. Jacyna deserves our gratitude for making this correspondence available and for his care in editing.

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SHIRLEY ROBERTS, *Sir James Paget: the rise of clinical surgery*, Eponymists in Medicine, London, Royal Society of Medicine Services, 1990, 8vo, pp. xi, 223, illus., £12.95, £7.95 (paperback).

Sir James Paget (1814–1899) was arguably the most famous medical man of Victorian England. Born in obscurity in Yarmouth, Paget rose to international eminence as a surgeon and medical scientist. He was highly visible in the mid-Victorian years as one of Queen Victoria's surgeons, President of the Royal College of Surgeons, and Vice-Chancellor of London University. He is known today for his classic descriptions of Paget's disease of the bone (*osteitis deformans*) and Paget's disease of the nipple.

Readers hoping to find in this book a study of Sir James Page's surgical and scientific career may be disappointed, for it devotes almost no space to the "clinical surgery" promised in the title. Rather, this book examines Paget's life in much broader terms: his family background, education, early career and professional success. The work covers essentially the same ground as that treated in Stephen Paget's edition of *The memoir and letters of Sir James Paget*, published in 1902 and long out of print. Roberts's book is thus welcome for making Paget's life story readily available to readers.

Roberts relies on the 1902 volume and in addition draws on two collections of Paget letters and documents to round out the portrait of Paget's life and career. Strangely neglected are the secondary works published since 1902 on Paget, medical science, and medical politics. For example, Roberts cites R. D. French's important work on the Victorian anti-vivisection movement and gives a brief account of the controversy as it touched Paget's life. But the scientific and political issues of vivisection are never confronted. In another matter, Roberts seems not to have consulted the modern work on the discovery of *Trichina spiralis* and the conflict between Sir Richard Owen and the young James Paget. Paget recognized the tensions between himself and Owen in the matter, but Roberts says merely that Paget "was content to share his success with Owen, who had the honour of naming the organism. Fortunately, there was no enmity between Paget and Owen as a result of the *Trichina* episode" (p. 51). Here, as elsewhere, the conflicts of personal and professional life are glossed over for the sake of an admiring and optimistic view of this Victorian medical man's work and experience.

The author puts forward the thesis that Sir James Paget was the first modern professional, a man who embodied "the spirit of true professionalism among medical practitioners" (p. ix). But without offering evidence of an alternative professionalism (or of a lack of professionalism) among Paget's colleagues, this thesis can carry little weight.

This book offers little that is new to historians of medicine, historians of science, or social historians. Nor does it address the historiographic issues that might interest professional scholars. The book also lacks the scholarly apparatus of full footnoting—perhaps an effort to avoid an excessively academic appearance. In the process, many assertions about Paget's attitudes, ideas, and achievements go unsupported. The book does, however, offer a pleasant and readable account of an important Victorian surgeon's life for the interested lay person. And the accompanying pictures, many of which have not been published before, are wonderful.

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