

Book Reviews

Antiquarian interest apart, the value of the book for students of ancient medicine ultimately depends on the quality of Caius' textual criticism. As far as the modern editor is concerned, this value is not great. Caius' knowledge of Greek was not particularly sensitive (certainly he was not as good as Cornarius). Nutton is realistic about this throughout, yet he shows a considerable amount of charity towards his subject. He sees Caius as an important figure in the history of Galenic textual scholarship because "a modern editor of Galen is perforce a pioneer"; as a witness to the reading of certain manuscripts, "his pedantry here proves to be a virtue".

Nutton himself indicates what might be stressed rather more: that much of Caius' work on Galen was polemically motivated, with an eye on contemporary rivals. Galen had established the precedent, in "reinterpreting" Hippocrates to the point not only where Hippocrates could do no wrong, anticipating much of the natural philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, but also to the point where he was always in agreement with Galen. The case seems to have been similar with Caius. In my view, we are not dealing here with a transparent case of a medical philologist at work.

I came away from this book with a far higher regard for Dr Nutton's historical detective work than for Dr Caius' reaction and pedantry. As an introduction to the development and criticism of the early printed editions of Galen, however, this monograph is one of the best pieces available today.

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SUE M. GOLDIE, (editor), *"I have done my duty": Florence Nightingale in the Crimean War 1854–56*, Manchester University Press, 1988, 8vo, pp. x, 326, illus., £35.00.

Sue Goldie has selected about a third of the Nightingale letters from the Crimean period and provided an excellent connecting narrative and lavish explanatory references. The complexities of Miss Nightingale's character, not least a ruthless streak, are very apparent. Some of the most revealing letters are those written after her illness in the Crimea. The patience, diplomacy, and confidence with which she had initially handled the army medical officers and others in authority had now gone. In August 1855 she bewailed that her work had foundered "on the rocks of ignorance, incompetence and ill-will". At times it seems almost that she suffered a persecution mania.

The letters cover in detail Miss Nightingale's vendetta with John Hall, the senior army doctor. He did not interfere with her activities in the Scutari Hospitals but, understandably, considered she had no authority in the Crimea. The quarrels were often trivial in origin, as for example when she complained that Hall had transferred two nurses from Smyrna to Balaclava without her approval: she had previously taken no interest in the nurses at the Smyrna Hospital.

At times Miss Nightingale treated her staff harshly or unfairly. Mrs Bridgeman and her party were thought to be excellent by the Koulali army doctors and, later by Hall in the Crimea. Miss Nightingale had no use for them; they had come out with Miss Stanley without Miss Nightingale's approval and she did not like Irish Catholics. It was all rather petty at times.

The text is highly recommended to the general reader as a balanced account of Miss Nightingale's trials and triumphs. For the historian more directly interested in the period this is an authoritative analysis with the stamp of able and diligent research. The illustrations are enhanced by the inclusion of four of the curiously primitive but highly evocative water-colours of the Scutari wards painted by Nurse Anne Morton.

John A. Shepherd

DANIEL DE MOULIN, *A history of surgery, with emphasis on the Netherlands*, Dordrecht Boston and Lancaster, Martinus Nijdhoff, 1988, 8vo, pp. xxiii, 408, illus., [no price stated].

Daniel de Moulin's *A history of surgery* is conceived on familiar lines and, within the chosen framework, impeccably executed. The work proceeds from antiquity to the very recent past and covers the whole of Europe and, to some extent, America. It is both social and technical in its

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approach. Thus each chapter starts with a résumé of European history, followed by a brief account of the social position of surgeons, and then a rather longer exposition of surgical skills and practice. The strength of this work is twofold. First, it is thoroughly researched and replete with detail that can be trusted to be accurate. Second, although dealing with the major surgical traditions since antiquity, the chapters are heavily weighted in favour of Dutch material. These sections are undoubtedly the best in the book. Here the author has room to be expansive and interpretative, whereas the matter presented elsewhere often seems more familiar. When handling Dutch surgery, de Moulin presents ledgers, diaries, and visual evidence which are the fruits of his own research. It is the traditional structure of the book which, unfortunately, lets it down in some ways. National, social and technical histories are juxtaposed, but never interdigitate. No challenges are thrown out, or new questions posed. Similarly, there is an excellent bibliography but no critical bibliographical writing. In this regard it would be interesting to learn why the author omits to mention Owen and Sarah Wangansteen's splendid *The rise of surgery*, to which this volume forms such a valuable companion piece.

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J. M. H. MOLL, *The Heberden Society: histories, portraits and biographies*, London, Chapman and Hall Medical for the British Society for Rheumatology, 1987, 4to, pp. xxxii, 381, illus., £35.00 plus postage and packing from The British Society for Rheumatology, 41 Eagle Street, London WC1R 4AR, UK.

The desire to associate oneself with greatness is not confined to the medical profession. It is a feature of modern specialization that doctors devoted to individual organs or systems of the human body choose to dignify themselves with a connection to a distinguished figure from the past. Cardiologists have always claimed that father of clinical science, William Harvey, for their own, and British rheumatologists have chosen the elder William Heberden as their patron saint. Heberden, the physician Dr Johnson most admired, is remembered by medical historians for much more than his contributions to rheumatology. Nevertheless, when the Committee for the study and investigation of rheumatism became the Heberden Society in 1936, the appellation was, in the words of W. S. C. Copeman, to commemorate the celebrated eighteenth-century physician who gave early descriptions of rheumatism and gout and was the first to name the *digitorum nodi*, later known as "Heberden's nodes".

Dr Moll's book *The Heberden Society* is published in a limited edition of a thousand copies. It contains a historical introduction that gives a brief account of the life of William Heberden, with considerable emphasis on his descendants. The work goes on to describe the origins, growth, and development of the Heberden Society, and its ultimate incorporation into the British Society of Rheumatology in 1983. There are designs for the Society's tie, descriptions of its Annual Dinners, and even a reproduction of the menu card at the feast with which its members celebrated their last meeting.

The main part of the book, however, is taken up with more than a hundred pencil portraits by the author himself. All the Presidents, Orators, Roundsmen and Honorary Members of the Society are portrayed. Whilst lost in admiration for the author's indefatigable industry, and making no pretence to any virtue as an artistic critic, I have to confess to some dissatisfaction with the portrayal of many individuals whom I have known well, for example Lord Brain, Sir Francis Fraser, Eric Bywaters (a distinguished artist himself) and my colleague at the Clinical Research Centre, Dr Barbara Ansell. The portraits are, in general, of modest distinction. They are accompanied by the sort of biographical details appropriate to *Who's who* or to an obituary.

The book may well have some appeal for that group of nostalgic British rheumatologists who belonged to the Heberden Society. For the medical historian, it would be more worthwhile if it had included a comprehensive biographical account of Dr Heberden that did justice to the wide range of his interests and his specific involvement in matters to do with rheumatology. It would equally have been a more effective contribution to scholarship if the place of rheumatology in respect to other medical disciplines and the wider world had been examined. It is also curious that little is said of the