

### Book Reviews

Despite these criticisms, Dr. Smit's book can be hailed as one of the most important bibliographical tools made available in the history of medicine and of the biological sciences. It should be in every university library and library dealing with the history of science and of medicine.

TERENCE DOHERTY, *The anatomical works of George Stubbs*, London, Secker & Warburg, 1974, F°, pp. ix, 345, illus., £25.

For his paintings of horses George Stubbs (1724–1806) is justly renowned. It is also common knowledge that, like the artists of the Renaissance, to perfect his art he practised anatomical dissection. The extent of the latter, however, is revealed for the first time by this superb book. Stubbs' entire anatomical works have never been published before, but this has now been made possible by re-discoveries of his drawings in 1957 and 1963.

The author's introduction contains a short biography of the artist and there is a brief history of anatomy, with a consideration of his contacts with contemporaries, such as Dr. John Burton, Josiah Wedgwood and the Hunter brothers. The production of his famous book *The anatomy of the horse* (1766), and of *A comparative anatomical exposition* (1804–1806) is also discussed in detail.

Altogether there are 272 excellent illustrations in black and white, and mostly whole-page. They include 57 engravings illustrating Burton's *An essay towards a complete new system of midwifery* (London, 1751), those from *The anatomy of the horse* (24 plates) and from *A comparative anatomical exposition* (12 plates), and a final group of additional illustrations which is made up of classical anatomical drawings by other artists, and some of Stubbs. There is also a bibliography, facsimile reproductions of the introduction to Albinus' *Table of the skeleton and muscles of the human body* and of legends from *The anatomy of the horse*.

Although Stubbs made no discoveries in anatomy he should nevertheless be included amongst eighteenth-century dissectors. He can, in fact, be said to be unique in English art in this regard. His contribution to anatomy was entirely in the realms of dissecting techniques and illustrations. The exquisite reproductions of the latter in this book indicate the degree of his skill. Although not many individuals will own a copy of this book, its existence should be known to medical historians. Thanks to it, George Stubbs will merit more attention in future histories of anatomy than he has received in the past.

A. LYTTON SELLS, *Oliver Goldsmith. His life and works*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1974, 8vo., pp. 423, illus., £6.75.

Professor Lytton Sells aims his book at a general audience, and it contains little that is not already known of Goldsmith (? 1730–1774). The first portion (pp. 22–197) deals with his life and the second (pp. 201–379) with "The works". Each is likely to be dealt with harshly by literary critics.

Concerning Goldsmith's medical career, the mysteries surrounding it are not further elucidated, except that Professor Sells could find no record in the university, cathedral, or city archives of his stay in Padua during 1755. Our knowledge of his

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attendances at the medical schools of Edinburgh, Leyden and Paris also remains very scanty and he seems not to have been granted a degree at any of them, or even to have received certificates of attendance. Goldsmith was a puzzle to his contemporaries, and he still is to us. He practised briefly in London (about 1756 to 1757), but on 21 December 1758 he was judged unqualified by the Surgeons' Company for a job as hospital mate in the East India Company. It is recorded that ". . . Rejections were not frequent. . . ." (C. Wall, *The history of the Surgeons' Company 1745–1800*, London, Hutchinsons, 1937, p. 119). He was again in practice for a short while in 1765, but his only other contact with clinical medicine was when he seems to have accelerated his own death by overdosing himself with James's antimonial fever powder. He suffered the symptoms of toxicity reported by others (J. Pereira, *The elements of materia medica and therapeutics*, 4th ed., Vol. 1, London, Longman, et al., 1854, p. 730) and no doubt aggravated his state of terminal uraemia. The best account of Goldsmith and medicine is by Raymond Crawford, *Proc. Roy. Soc. Med.*, 1914, 8 (Sect. His. Med.): 7–26.

It would be natural to expect that some evidence of Goldsmith's medical knowledge, whether it authorized him to practise or not, would be found in his writings, but this aspect is not discussed here. In fact, interestingly enough, and unlike other literary medical "truants", there seems to be little or none. He did, however, compose *An history of the earth and animated nature* (London, 1774, in eight volumes), based mainly on Buffon, and discussed in detail here (pp. 368–376).

FRANCES A. YATES, *Astraea. The imperial theme in the sixteenth century*, London and Boston, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975, 8vo., pp. xvi, 233, illus., £6.95.

Although Miss Yates' books do not deal directly with the history of medicine, they help to provide the wide general background necessary for those concerned with the subject during the Renaissance. They are therefore essential reading.

The present work is a collection of nine essays, two of which are new, and the old ones have been re-written. The central theme is the associations made between certain sixteenth-century monarchs and the pagan goddess Astraea who fled the earth at the end of the Golden Age, but, like the Son of God was expected to return re-incarnated to begin a period of universal harmony and peace. Elizabeth I and Charles V of France are considered in this connexion, and, with her usual formidable erudition, Dr. Yates examines symbolism in the pageantry, literature and allegory of the Elizabethan and late Valois courts.

Contrary to her previous literary achievements, in this book Dr. Yates seems to be less successful in the support of her contentions, and as she omits to examine certain relevant sections of society her thesis is necessarily limited and biased. Nevertheless her book is another outstanding contribution to renaissance studies, which brings to our attention many previously unknown, or vaguely known, phenomena and it may inspire others to extend the theme. As well as being of general interest to the medical historian, he can also learn from Dr. Yates' techniques. Like the history of medicine, her field of study covers several areas and in her interdisciplinary research she has often been able to demolish the walls between them.