
The only serious omission detected so far is Robert Curzon, 14th Baron Zouche, one of the most appealing collectors of the nineteenth century. The manuscripts collected by him in the Middle East were deposited in the British Museum shortly after his death in 1873 and became its property through the will of his daughter. The Parham Manuscripts are Add. MSS. 39583-39671 and Oriental MSS. 8729-8855 and Lord Zouche deserves at least a footnote. However, this book is a wonderful accomplishment and fully deserves the rather large niche it will occupy on the shelves of anyone who seriously cares about the history of the book.

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As scholarship in medical history has developed over the past few decades, it has focused on issues of interest to social historians: race, class, and gender; patients, their care and institutionalization; public health; the occupational organization of medical practitioners and their antagonists; and so on. Research for such study relies upon an array of sources to capture the many voices of medical encounters — patients, politicians, administrators, doctors, and other health care practitioners. That historians can add popular serials to their quiver becomes clear in E.M. Palmegiano’s useful checklist of health matters in British magazines.

The annotated checklist follows the Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals for its time frame from 1824 to 1900 and adds eleven serials from Poole’s Index. Organized alphabetically by serial title, it provides a brief introductory statement on each of the forty-eight included. Although the focus of the material rests squarely on England, it embraces Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Palmegiano has offered a lengthy introduction to sketch the main contours of the subject in this period, but without reference either to specific examples in the serials themselves or to the many superior historical monographs on the topics discussed, the essay is less than helpful. Worse, at every line it strains so hard to sound articulate and erudite that it becomes merely ponderous and unreadable.

On the other hand, with just over 2,600 entries, the checklist would have been impenetrable without the comprehensive subject and author
indexes Palmegiano has provided; indeed, together they form the most valuable feature of the whole work. The subject index reveals at a glance the sweep of contemporary British concerns about health and illness: large entries exist for air, food, and water; diseases (general and specific) and hospitals; children and women; housing, jobs, and the poor; alcohol and drugs; insanity and disabilities. The author index shows how these broad concerns attracted a wide range of writers, including the most illustrious of the period: Lewis Carroll on vivisection; Thomas DeQuincey on animal magnetism and the temperance movement; Charles Dickens on various hospitals and other topics; Havelock Ellis on mescaline; T.H. Huxley on education for the layperson and medical profession; Beatrice Potter on occupational health; and H.G. Wells on surgery from a patient’s perspective. As well, prominent physicians and scientists addressed a variety of issues in the pages of these popular magazines, among them T. Lauder Brunton, J.S. Burdon-Sanderson, J.M Charcot, Ernest Hart, St. Clair Thomson, and Thomas Wakley.

These indexes also help to uncover obscure references. ‘Jobs: printing,’ for instance, has one entry for an article that appeared in All the Year Round in the 1860s on skin and lung ailments of printers or producers of lead and mirrors. Under ‘Canada’ is another single entry: an item on houses of industry that instructed the starving young before sending them here. Canadian connections can be inferred, however, from the names of authors then resident in England. For example, J.G. Adami, soon to become an eminent professor of pathology at McGill University, co-authored an article on women’s stays in The National Review as a freshly-minted Cambridge doctor in 1889; and Francis Bond Head, bellicose lieutenant governor of Upper Canada who wrote extensively in The Quarterly Review (addressed to ‘aristocratic Anglicans’), has two entries on both the infirm and sanitation for the labouring classes.

Though its title suggests an investigative study, Health and British Magazines in the Nineteenth Century in fact affords welcome access to much information in popular serials. It clearly was a labour of love for the indexer and should be a boon for the historical researcher.

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