

Plymouth in his native Devonshire. Avid for clients, Huxham advertised himself by arranging to be summoned urgently from church to attend patients and by galloping his horse through the streets. Despite such transparent devices, he became one of the leading physicians of Plymouth, accustomed to walk abroad adorned in a scarlet coat, carrying a gold-headed cane, and followed by a footman bearing his gloves. In later life, although born and educated a Dissenter, he was a communicant of the Church of England.

In 1755, after almost 40 years of practice, Huxham published his *Essay on fevers*, perhaps in emulation of Thomas Sydenham's *Methodus curandi febres* of the previous century. But whereas Sydenham had been concerned largely with intermittent fevers, so common in the 1660s in the marshy areas around Westminster, Huxham, although familiar with intermittent fever, was preoccupied by different diseases. During the wars with Spain and France in the 1740s ships of the fleet returned to Plymouth with multitudes of sick sailors, soldiers, and prisoners of war. In addition to scurvy, so common among sailors, sick men were often brought ashore from naval ships with such infectious diseases as the "putrid, malignant or pestilential, petechial fevers", which, Huxham noted, was very different from the "slow nervous fever" common at Plymouth (pp. 38–9). Huxham thus distinguished epidemic typhus fever (petechial fever) from the less severe, but more prolonged typhoid fever (slow nervous fever). In 1745 both petechial fever and smallpox became severely epidemic among soldiers, sailors, and prisoners of war at Plymouth. Huxham also described pneumonia, pleurisy, and what he called *peripneumonia notha* (bronchitis). Both to cure and to prevent the scurvy that attacked sailors especially on long voyages Huxham recommended fresh fruits and vegetables. "Apples, Oranges and Lemons, alone," he said, "have been often known to do surprising Things in the Cure of very deplorable Scorbutic cases . . ." (p. 138).

The present work is a facsimile reprint of the third edition of Huxham's *Essay*, published at London in 1757, and chosen because it includes Huxham's 'Dissertation on the Malignant, Ulcerous Sore-Throat'. At Plymouth in 1751 Huxham encountered this new disease, that he noted had already been described in England three years earlier by Dr John Fothergill of London. It was familiar to Spanish and Italian physicians as the *garotillo* because of its strangling effect on its victims and to later generations as diphtheria. During the following year (1752) the malignant ulcerous sore-throat became epidemic in Devonshire. It seemed, wrote Huxham, "to be a *disease sui Generis*, yet it certainly had a very great Resemblance of the *Febris anginosa*, which I formerly described . . ." (p. 156). The *Febris anginosa* was probably scarlet fever. Huxham was thus aware of both diseases, but could not distinguish them clearly.

In his erudite introduction Saul Jarcho analyses Huxham's concepts of fever, tracing their Hippocratic and Galenic roots. As Dr Jarcho so aptly notes, one of Huxham's great merits is the clarity with which he explained his concepts of disease and what he was attempting to accomplish in treatment. "Hence," writes Jarcho, "his treatise can be used as a textbook of eighteenth-century medicine, a subject which the lapse of two centuries has made increasingly difficult to understand."

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JOHN R. MILLBURN, in collaboration with Henry C. King, *Wheelwright of the Heavens: the life and work of James Ferguson, FRS*, London, Vade-Mecum Press, 1988, 8vo, pp. xi, 328, illus., £30.00/\$55.00.

John Millburn has already given us a first-class biography of the eighteenth-century instrument maker Benjamin Martin. He has now turned to Martin's sometime neighbour in the Strand, the inventor and lecturer in natural philosophy, James Ferguson. In doing so Millburn has surpassed himself. It would be difficult to praise this book too highly.

James Ferguson's spectacular career might have been a model for the thousands of eighteenth-century Scots who left their native land and plundered the English Enlightenment. Born in 1710, this son of a lowly Banffshire shepherd, and self-taught mathematician, set off for London in 1743 to seek his fortune. In 1776 he died rich, well known, and an FRS. Now

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relatively obscure, he was once sufficiently distinguished to attract an assiduous nineteenth-century biographer, Ebenezer Henderson. Not quite assiduous enough, however, for as Millburn shows, on several occasions, Henderson writing in Scotland must have been fed spurious manuscripts by his creative researcher in London, Mr Augustus Bart.

Ferguson began his London career as a limner, drawing relatively cheap portraits in China ink. From the start, however, he endeavoured to turn his astronomical and mathematical talents into coin. He began by producing *Astronomical Rotulas*—paper discs bearing scales and calendar information. Next he began to design orreries. He then moved into the lecture circuit, discoursing on Newton and the Creation. Writing popular expositions of astronomy came next. Innovation fed on innovation, his lectures illustrating his devices and his devices illustrating his books. Much of Ferguson's life was spent away from home on the provincial circuit, and he spent months on end in Bristol, Bath, and Birmingham.

These bare bones of Ferguson's life Millburn animates and clothes with extensive historical research and restrained narration. Every conceivable source that might throw light on Ferguson's career seems to have been exhausted. Millburn chronicles in precise but never tedious detail the career of Ferguson's public face: the inventor, the lecturer, the impoverished author, and family man. Millburn also reveals the private world which contained the ambitious entrepreneur, the affluent Scot, and the unhappy husband. For the medical historian Ferguson's career has only a few obvious points of contact: he lectured on natural philosophy at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and, on his death, William Buchan purchased his instruments. Ferguson's significance for the history of medicine lies elsewhere. Using the example of William Hunter, Roy Porter has shown how it is possible to illuminate the career of eighteenth-century doctors by mapping them not on to medicine, but on to the Enlightenment economy. Millburn does not attempt any such analysis with Ferguson, the aim of the book being more limited in this respect, but the parallels between Ferguson's career and that of William Hunter leap out at the reader. Both left Scotland for London. Both hunted out patrons: William Smellie and James Douglas in Hunter's case; the Rt. Hon. Stephen Poyntz, Martin Folkes, and Colin Maclaurin in the instance of Ferguson. Both cornered an emerging market: Hunter pioneered anatomy for surgeons and Ferguson created astronomy for the layman. Both attached their names to worthy intellectual products: Paris anatomy in Hunter's case, John Senax's Globes in Ferguson's instance (he bought them). Both claimed to be original inventors or discoverers and both engaged in vigorous priority disputes: Hunter over the discovery of the lymphatics, Ferguson over the means of attaining an accurate scriptural chronology. Both were talented in self-advertisement: Hunter on his method of teaching anatomy, Ferguson on such inventions as the orreries and clocks. Finally, both Hunter and Ferguson turned to account an Enlightenment creation not usually construed in economic terms—female sensibility. Hunter, through his midwifery, and Ferguson, in his astronomy for young ladies, exploited the new model of female refinement. These and many other parallels suggest the essential correctness of Porter's model and indicate how it might be employed to explore and help explain the success or failure of other careers in the emerging consumer society of the Enlightenment.

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JOHN T. ALEXANDER, *Catherine the Great: life and legend*, Oxford University Press, 1989, 8vo, pp. xii, 418, illus., \$24.95, £16.95.

John Alexander, Professor of History and Soviet and East European Studies at the University of Kansas, has spent 20 years, one of them at Moscow and Leningrad, researching this book. Surprisingly enough, there is no Soviet biography of Catherine the Great who reigned from 1762 to 1796. The author aims at bridging the gap between specialized studies and popular accounts, "long on gossip and drama, but short on facts and context", to present a fresh portrait of Catherine, the ruler and woman. In reconstructing her life he has stressed the questions of health, mental and physical, and attempted to "address soberly the issue of her sexuality".