

### Book Reviews

more famous grandson Charles, but his practical inventions included a speaking-machine, horizontal windmills, and a new type of carriage. As one of the leading members of the celebrated Lunar Society of Birmingham, he became a close friend of Boulton, Watt and Wedgwood, while he became involved in a bitter controversy with another member, William Withering, over priority in the use of digitalis in cardiac dropsy. In his brief comment on this episode, the editor completely misses the point, scientifically, by denying it to either since it 'had been known to Galen'. Nevertheless, this is a most useful and attractive little book which should introduce more readers to one of the more colourful characters in English scientific history than have ever been gained by the original texts.

F. N. L. POYNTER

*A Surgeon in the Early Nineteenth Century: the Life and Times of John Green Crosse, M.D., F.R.C.S., F.R.S. (1790–1850)*, by V. MARY CROSSE, Edinburgh and London, E. & S. Livingstone, 1968, pp. xii, 210, illus., 40s.

John Green Crosse was a prodigious worker; no task was too great to be faced, and no event too small to be recorded in case-books, diaries, and letter-books, now fortunately preserved.

It would be difficult to select any one particular chapter from this notable book for special commendation; all the chapters are packed with information. Dr. V. Mary Crosse traces the career of this astonishing man from his early life in Suffolk. There are entertaining accounts of formative years in London at the Great Windmill School of Anatomy at the time of Sir Charles Bell. Mention is also made of many famous physicians, apothecaries and surgeons—including Sir Everard Home, whose dresser Crosse was at St. George's Hospital. Conditions were not always easy for Crosse. There were setbacks in Dublin, and others followed.

After settling in Norwich, Crosse's achievements were amazing. There were the exigencies of practice, coupled with writing, reading, research on smallpox and notably on urinary stones. But this was not all; he was constantly occupied with the formation of societies, the organization of departments, and a multitude of other activities. These are exemplified and tabulated in the eight appendices which the author has wisely added. It comes as no surprise that John Green Crosse of Norwich became Jacksonian Prizeman at the Royal College of Surgeons of England and was elected to the Fellowship of the Royal Society.

Throughout, this book reads so smoothly that when once started it is difficult to set it aside. With animated comments on times and customs, it is more than a biography—an indispensable aid to anyone studying the complex facets of the first half of last century. The illustrations are superb and particularly well placed in regard to the continuity of the text. To this pleasing sequence the author has obviously given much thought. This volume contains so much information which is not readily available elsewhere, that the author must be complimented on the splendid outcome of her detailed and patient research.

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