

*Dr. James Sims (1741–1820): a New Appraisal*

useful and within a few years the Medical Society seems to have recovered its balance, for in the early 1830s it was said 'to number amongst its Fellows most of the distinguished members of the Profession'. Debates were said to be carried out with great spirit and it was likened to the House of Commons of the Medical Profession. (*Med. Times and Gazette*, 18 December 1869. Obituary notice to Edward Headland.)

The influence of James Sims might be summarized by saying that his assumption of the Presidency in 1786 saved the Medical Society of London and that his retention of the office for twenty-two years nearly shipwrecked it. Indirectly he was responsible for the coming to birth of the Medical and Chirurgical Society which in due course became the Royal Society of Medicine.

A saying, attributed to St. Thomas Aquinas, runs 'It is the last perfection of a thing that it should be the cause of other things'. By this I suppose he meant that it would be the 'last perfection' of a flower if its ripened seed should be the 'cause' of bringing forth other flowers. If this be so, the soul of Sims may rest in peace. Both the Medical Society of London and the Royal Society of Medicine have blossomed from his ashes.

**CORRECTION**

The Editor regrets that in the article by Dr. Wright-St. Clair, in the July number of *Medical History*, the footnotes on page 287 and 288 were transposed. The first two footnotes on page 288 should come at the foot of page 287 and the footnotes on page 287 transferred to page 288.