

Book Reviews

time—a dangerous argument when he couples it with an attack on (unnamed) pseudo-scholars of the present day. Faced by the editor's romantic studio portrait (p. 179) his own petard is practically hoist!

Yet, from this scrappy production Stevens is rescued from his undeserved obscurity, though not yet to the extent of becoming 'an important figure in early American history', as Day speculates. The new evidence confirms that Stevens was born about 1755 on the Danish West Indian island of St. Croix (now a Virgin island). He first graduated from King's College (Columbia University) in 1774 before reading medicine at Edinburgh and returning to St. Croix as a doctor. In 1794 he became Professor of Medical Practice at Philadelphia, where it is possible that he helped to inspire Young's thesis on digestion in 1803. (Curiously, Stevens' son crossed the path of William Prout in 1830–1—see *Medical Gazette*, vols. 6–9 and Royal Society archives). He retired to St. Croix before 1809 and died there in 1834.

This study can only be considered as a source book for history. Whatever it lacks as a work of scholarship, it at least whets the appetite to know more of the international connexions between schools of research in digestion from Reamur to Tiedemann.

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