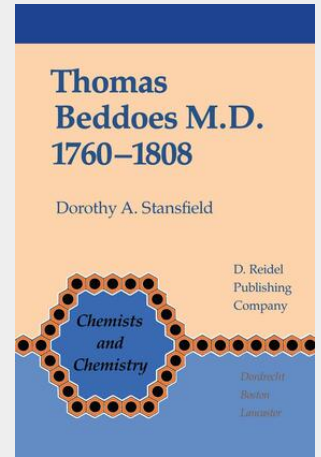


Stansfield

Thomas Beddoes M.D. 1760-1808

Chemist, Physician, Democrat

We meet in Thomas Beddoes an able chemist, engaged in a field where important new discoveries were being made; a good doctor eager to find experimentally sound ways of healing and to make known the principles of maintaining good health; a vigorous, independent man sharing the hope which the ideas of the French Revolution gave so many of his contemporaries. In his life he was a controversial figure and judgement and detached appreciation of his work was often made impossible by anger at his 'revolutionary' political views. It becomes evident that where Beddoes was held in esteem and where he had influence it was not for particular activities but for what he was 'in the round'. With due respect - and with gratitude - to specialist accounts of his achievements as a chemist and of his endeavours to find a cure for pulmonary consumption and his efforts to bring about an understanding of the importance of preventive medicine, I have tried in this account to 'see him whole'. Historians of chemistry and of medicine; educationalists; and those concerned with 'women's studies' will each continue to find particular episodes or parts of Beddoes' life of special interest. At the same time I hope this, the first attempt at a biography - for J. E. Stock's 1811 account is truly named "Memoirs" - will add to our understanding of his varied activities.



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