sporadic tales of poison we have moved to unprecedented and pernicious pollution. This book tells the path of this journey and explains, in a way only an accomplished historian can, why and how we live in 'an age of poisons'.

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John M. Dixon, **The Enlightenment of Cadwallader Colden: Empire, Science, and Intellectual Culture in British New York**. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016. Pp. xi + 243. ISBN 978-0-8014-4803-4. $35.00 (hardback).
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Cadwallader Colden, a New York politician and intellectual, was an important figure in the Moderate Enlightenment of the first half of the eighteenth century. Colden, and other New York elites, attempted to enhance the production and circulation of knowledge by various tactics, including importing books, exporting information, publishing their research and corresponding with fellow intellectuals. Despite New York's poor contemporary reputation as a haven for drunkards, the colony attracted numerous learned officials like Colden. Intellectualism went hand in hand with imperialism and elitism to produce a 'socially and ideologically narrow form of enlightened culture in New York' (p. 4). Colden's historical reputation has not fared particularly well. Indeed, his grave lost its marker at some point during the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, Colden's story provides a vital counterpoint to a narrative of the American Enlightenment that emphasizes libertarianism and the American Revolution. Colden's Enlightenment, marked by imperialism, elitism, and conservatism, is no less valid. Dixon urges readers to revisit colonial culture and thought and to take them on their own terms rather than as simple precursors to the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution. The Enlightenment, in other words, does not just belong to Jefferson but also to Colden.

Cadwallader Colden's world was one of ferment and motion. Dixon rejects the idea that America was detached from Europe. Rather, this was a period of dynamic transatlantic exchange. People, information, objects and inventions frequently passed across the Atlantic. Colden himself, born and educated in Scotland, found he could not make his fortune in London and chose to migrate to America. He settled in Philadelphia and made his mark as a physician. However, after several years, Colden became dissatisfied because he could not translate his good relationships with influential men into offices, land or a steady income. What Colden did have, however, was a reputation as a colonial intellectual, and he relocated to New York. Colden quickly established connections with the elite and was appointed surveyor general in 1720, a position that guaranteed him an income and an important place in New York politics.

'Scientific and political lives', Dixon observes, 'intertwined in early eighteenth-century New York as never before and perhaps as never since' (p. 53). Colden continued to discuss medical topics with his correspondents but he soon turned to other topics. He accompanied Governor William Burnet to a conference with the Iroquois in Albany. Furthermore, Colden's subsequent *The History of the Five Indian Nations* brought him a measure of fame as the leading authority on New York's geography and history. Colden challenged theories of progress and expressed ambiguity about European and Euro-American society. Colden, therefore, joined a list of Europeans who either praised Native American society or used it to critique European society.

Colden spent a great deal of time on his estate, Coldengham, pursuing *otium cum dignitate* (leisure with dignity) and pursuing philosophy for the public good. While the narrative of the Enlightenment foregrounds urban locations, many contemporaries would have understood that intellectual activity required seclusion and quiet. In reality, Colden's pursuits required not so much seclusion as substantial labor, of his family as well as of free and enslaved assistants, and

a transatlantic group of agents, printers, booksellers and readers. Colden may have sought seclusion but he continued to read and correspond with people in America and Europe. In addition, Colden trained his daughter, Jane, as a Linnaean expert and maintained a regular correspondence with Benjamin Franklin. From his perch at Coldengham, Colden renewed his interest in medicine and physiology as well as mathematics and physics. The two latter topics led Colden to publish *An Explication of the First Causes of Action in Matter* (1746) and, shortly thereafter, a longer version entitled *The Principles of Action in Matter* (1751). These volumes sparked debate in Europe and America by offering a mathematical explanation of the universe and explaining, among other things, gravity, the orbits of planets and the rotation of the Sun.

Colden's historical reputation might have fared better had he remained a gentleman scholar and colonial intellectual at Coldengham, conducting experiments and corresponding with his fellow scientists and philosophers. However, Colden was also a politician. This aspect of his life brought him much grief. Colden never appreciated political partisanship and argued that New York's volatile politics were irreconcilable with a moderate and enlightened culture. That did not, of course, preclude his involvement in politics. As politicians are wont to do, he made political enemies and they mercilessly mocked him for unwarranted arrogance because of his intellectual authority.

The final chapter, entitled 'Colden's ordeal', examines Colden's tumultuous term as lieutenant governor of New York. This was a great honor, but Dixon is surely correct when he argues that it came too late in Colden's life. At the time of his appointment, Colden was seventy-two. Throughout his time as lieutenant governor, Colden engaged in a variety of quarrels with his political opponents. Colden's tendency to attribute every criticism or action by his rivals to sedition blinded him to the sheer extent of popular discontent during the Stamp Act crisis. When he died, on 20 September 1776, the British and Washington's armies faced each other in New York. Dixon concludes Cadwallader Colden's story by observing, quite sensibly, that the American Enlightenment is tied to the American Revolution. Thus it becomes a story of ever-unfolding liberty and equality. For Colden, however, the onset of the American Revolution did not spell liberty at all, but chaos and disorder.

Cadwallader Colden, Dixon argues, deserves to be recognized and studied because he 'was an important champion of colonial intellect who helped to define the social and ideological contours of moderate, transatlantic enlightenment' (p. 167). Dixon is absolutely correct and this book is a call for scholars to conduct more research on Colden and his transatlantic world. This book will appeal to anyone interested in the history of science, empire, British North America and intellectual history.

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Vicky Albritton and Fredrik Albritton Jonsson, **Green Victorians: The Simple Life in John Ruskin's Lake District**. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016. Pp. 209. ISBN 978-0-226-33998-6. £28.00/$40.00 (cloth).
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There can be few figures from nineteenth-century Britain as perplexing as John Ruskin. So often a man of contradiction, it is easy to fall for his rich prose and deeply felt sentiment. Vicky Albritton and Fredrik Albritton Jonsson's *Green Victorians* is a thorough analysis of Ruskin's dream of returning to a simpler way of life. They argue that Ruskin's proposals for a more sustainable economic model than the consumption-driven, coal-powered, capitalist system has never been more relevant. His objection to the mechanized industries of mass production and pollution, with all their social evils, clearly resonates. This book explores Victorian efforts to escape the monotony