how the construction of a new disease underpinned the response of an emergent American middle class to the demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural realities of the market revolution. Delirium tremens came to represent an alcoholic nightmare at a historical moment when the dreams of an aspiring middle class were so uncertain.

David Korostyshevsky

*Program in the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine, University of Minnesota,
420 Delaware Street SE, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455*

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Saurabh Mishra. *Beastly Encounters of the Raj: Livelihoods, Livestock and Veterinary Health in North India, 1790–1920*. Manchester, UK, University of Manchester Press, 2015. ix, 208 pp., illus., GBP £70.00.

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Many and varied themes about the relationships between domesticated animals and humans in India are to be found within the six chapters that constitute *Beastly Encounters of the Raj*, but sacred cows are not among them. Rightly pointing out that cattle and religion are inextricably linked, especially in the popular western imagination but also in histories of South Asia (145), Saurabh Mishra has consciously moved beyond the religious to examine different aspects of the integral role of livestock in military, rural, and urban life in India from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, to provide what he calls a “social history of livestock” during the British Raj (4).

Why livestock? In part, argues Mishra, because livestock is relevant for but has been ignored by, agrarian scholars, economic historians, historians of medicine, and other branches of historical scholarship. Mishra’s own project began primarily as a medical history, but as his research progressed, “it became clear that medical issues could not be divorced or completely separated from other themes” (3). Examples include horse-breeding and military history, which reared up when Mishra was examining the concerns of early veterinarians (chapters 1 and 2) and famines, which captured Mishra’s attention when he was investigating animal mortality and epizootics (Chapter 4). Embedded as it is in the India of the British Raj, this book is also a colonial history. Indeed, one of Mishra’s expressed aims was to demonstrate the strong links between veterinary health and the public health policies instituted by the British in India. Furthermore, financial concerns proved to be a strong thread throughout his narrative, making the end product as much a work of economic history as medical or social.

With so many threads to control, *Beastly Encounters* might seem a trifle too ambitious for a book of just over 200 pages. As the author himself admits, the book exhibits “a certain lack of unity” in the narrative (145). But the pay-off is the sheer number of exciting themes that are opened up in each of its chapters. Indeed, a reader might be better off approaching this book not as a single read but as a series of case histories, each of which illuminates a different aspect of the relationship between animal health

and human life from a different period in Indian history. Only the first two chapters show any real thematic continuity, both dealing with the development of the veterinary services under the British Raj. The first chapter focuses on preoccupation with the health of military animals—horses primarily—during the early colonial period, and the second chapter shows how this preoccupation spilled over into veterinary periods even later, and had a detrimental impact on the colonial response to epizootic diseases. Here and in the third chapter, which shifts the gaze from animals themselves to microbiological research on animal diseases, Mishra illuminates the economic concerns that underlay the development of different events, regardless of whether the decisions themselves were financially sound or not—and often they were not. This chapter explores a bacteriological research institute at Muktesar, although Mishra also gives due attention to the fate of the Pasteur Institutes that were set up in different places in the country.

Chapters 4 through 6 constitute the second part of the book and the themes shift from the relationship between veterinary health and the colonial state to the ways in which livestock interacted with social issues such as class and caste. Economics continues to be a running theme, with each chapter offering illuminating insights into completely different topics: respectively, the impact of famines, the urban dairy industry, and the community of leather workers known as the *Chamars*. In considering famines, Mishra's persuasive thesis is that by neglecting the impact of famines on animals—specifically the cattle wealth and livestock of affected regions (93)—historians have neglected to consider a very significant impact on the economic history of the region. Chapter 5 uses the agency of the supply of milk and ghee from villages to urban areas as a vehicle for examining the growing importance of the middle-class urban population in colonial India. The final chapter, an examination of the *Chamar* community of North India, is perhaps the most fascinating and yet seems almost cobbled on to the rest of the book, with its introduction of new themes such as the caste system and thuggees (reminiscent of a John Masters novel) into the mix.

To reiterate my earlier point, then, *Beastly Encounters* is a rich source of multiple histories, making up for a lack of cohesion or grand narrative with a plethora of ideas and new avenues for investigation. For historians of medicine, who are often a separate community from mainstream historians, this book serves as a reminder of how this divide is often an artificial one, and how intricately medical history is woven into the fabric of our broader histories. At the same time, the book also offers some important lessons in the dangers of tunnel-vision in scholarship: while medicine might be a uniquely human endeavor, diseases are by no means confined to human populations. Thus, just as we take for granted the importance of our pets, cattle, and livestock in our lives, we should be careful to include them in our examinations of our societies and histories.

Neeraja Sankaran, Ph.D.

Independent Scholar, S16, 1st Cross Road,

Koramangala 4th Block,

Bangalore 560034, India

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