



Book: Observations on Italy (Cambridge Library Collection - Travel, Europe)

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The Scots surgeon and anatomist John Bell (1763-1820) trained as a surgeon's apprentice and later a student of medicine at the University of Edinburgh. A proponent of a more practical approach to surgical training, he published works of anatomy, some of which were illustrated with his own engravings. He was also keenly interested in the arts, and when travelling through Italy on a journey intended to recover his health after a bad fall from a horse, took notes of all he saw. Sadly, he died in Rome in 1820, and his manuscript was published by his widow in 1825. An entertaining journal of travel, it describes Bell's own lively reactions to the works of art which he was familiar with from prints but was now seeing for the first time. He also analyses his own feelings, most notably when witnessing in Turin the execution of a murderer.