

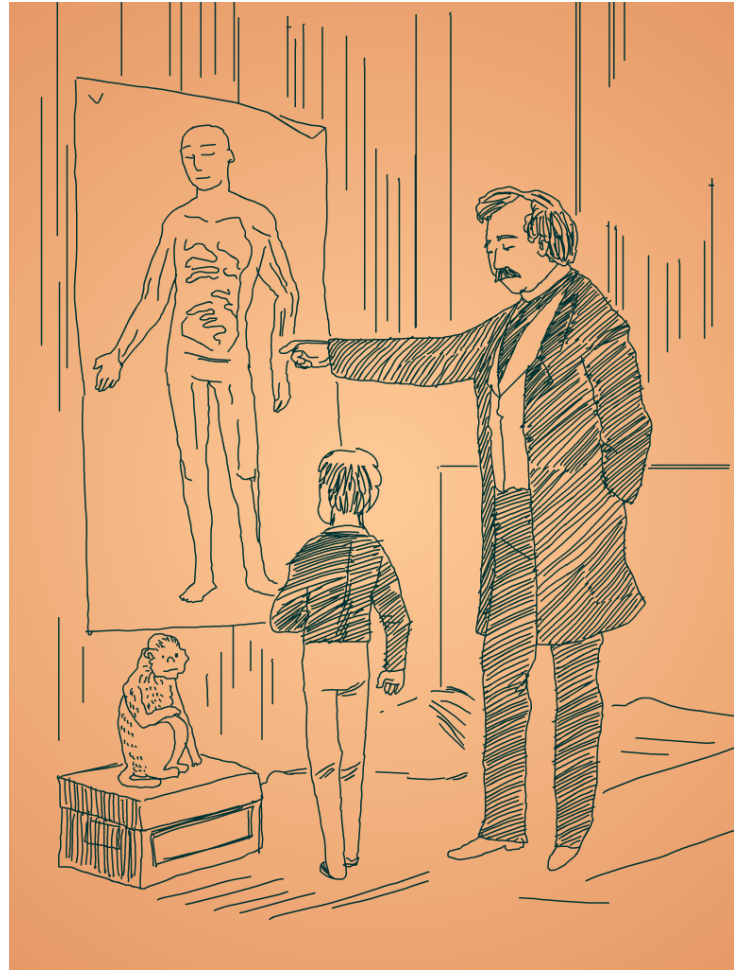


FYI Reproductive System

Today, many kids learn about the human reproductive system in health class. Sometimes, their parents even buy them illustrated children's books that explain the "facts of life" in a simple, yet factual way.

But back in the 1870's, there was no sex education in schools. And the only books that discussed the reproductive system were medical textbooks. These were thick with complicated Latin terminology, and deliberately written so children—as well as most adults—couldn't understand them.

Edward Bliss Foote, a New York-based doctor, believed this was ridiculous. So in 1874, he published a series of children's books called ***Sammy Tubbs, the Boy Doctor, and Sponsie, the Troublesome Monkey***. The first four volumes deal with circulation, digestion, muscles, and the nervous system. And the fifth volume—subtitled *A Book for Private Reading*—deals with the reproductive system.



Tubbs made his lessons interesting and fun by placing them into a narrative about a boy doctor and a mischievous monkey. In the story, a young African-American boy named Sammy is adopted by a doctor, similar to Foote himself, who teaches him anatomy. In the end, Sammy receives a full scholarship to medical school, and becomes a successful doctor and health lecturer.

The book contains detailed color illustrations of the reproductive system, as well as pleas for racial tolerance, health reform, and equal rights for women. Also, there are monkeys! Foote uses their mischievousness to demonstrate the different bodily systems—for example, a monkey getting trapped beneath some floorboards and starving provides a segue into a lesson about digestion.