When women agitated to join the medical profession in Britain during the 1860s, the practice of surgery proved both a help (women were neat, patient and used to needlework) and a hindrance (surgery was brutal, bloody and distinctly unfeminine). In this major new study, Claire Brock examines the cultural, social and self-representation of the woman surgeon from the second half of the nineteenth century until the end of the Great War. Drawing on a rich archive of British hospital records, she investigates precisely what surgery women performed and how these procedures affected their personal and professional reputation, as well as the reactions of their patients to these new phenomena. Also published as open access, this is essential reading for those interested in the history of medicine. 

British Women Surgeons and their Patients, 1860–1918 provides wide-ranging new perspectives on patient narratives and women’s participation in surgery between 1860 and 1918. This title is also available as Open Access.

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British Women Surgeons and their Patients, 1860–1918

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