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physically ill, scotch sectarian competition, and better the sanitary condition of cities and thereby the public's health.

The study is a historical reconnaissance of physicians who counted, and as such takes as its scope the full range of topics the statistical mind in medicine probed. Few components of American medicine escape notice: temperance, urban waste, registration of births and deaths, hospitals and asylums, mesmerism and phrenology, medical sectary, dietary and hygienic habits, medical and surgical research on diagnosis and therapeutics, care of deaf-mutes and the blind, epidemiological surveys, the European origins of the urge to count, and professionalization in statistics all receive attention. Controlling this diversity of subject matter would leave less knowledgeable scholars fumbling and exhausted, but Cassedy manages adeptly by embedding his examples of statistical enterprise within a narrative that is nothing short of a social and intellectual history of antebellum American medicine. While this narrative framework will be largely familiar to anyone well read in the secondary literature on medicine in America, it makes the book's central theme readily accessible to the reader interested in the history of medical statistics but unacquainted or unconcerned with the American context.

Yet if the massiveness of this framework is a strength, it may be one source of the study's most conspicuous weakness as well, for it leaves no room for the medical critics of statistics to be heard. Indeed, except for mentions of physicians who took issue with statistical studies on asylums and sectarian practices, only in the book's final few pages is the sceptical attitude of many physicians toward statistics discussed. And even then, this scepticism is presented as newly arising toward mid-century. On the contrary, throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, many American physicians remained ambivalent about statistics, and some were vocally hostile toward the statistical activities of their medical brethren. In the final analysis, then, this is a study of the statistical enthusiasts among American physicians, and more needs to be written before a balanced appraisal of the place of statistical thinking in American medicine can be made. As it stands, the book Cassedy has written is well crafted and important, and deserves to be widely read.

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PIETRO CORSI and PAUL WEINDLING (editors), *Information sources in the history of science and medicine*, London, Butterworth, 1983, 8vo, pp. xvi, 531, £30.00.

This new reference guide to the history of science and related areas contains twenty-three essays and accompanying bibliographies, loosely grouped into four sections. The first part deals with aspects of the historiography of science and with perspectives derived from philosophy and the social sciences. Part II is made up of just three chapters concerning research methods and sources. Part III focuses on different disciplines (physics, chemistry, natural history, etc.) and historical periods ('Medicine since 1500', 'Experimentalism and the life sciences since 1800', etc.). The last section partly redresses the overall European bias with four contributions on science and medicine in America, China, India, and in Islamic culture.

There are some nice things here: Simon Schaffer's bravura survey of the history of physics (the longest chapter, with the longest bibliography); some minor masterpieces of concise synopsis (Charles Webster on the historiography of medicine, W.H. Brock on chemistry, D.E. Allen on natural history, C.B. Schmitt on the historiography of medieval and Renaissance science); and two valuable and provocative essays that one wouldn't immediately expect to find in a reference work (Pietro Corsi's analysis of twentieth-century French views of science, theology, and philosophy; Margaret Gowing's perceptive chapter on 'The history of science, politics and political economy'). Several of the essays are free of the bland even-handedness that generally characterizes reference works. I think particularly of Ludmilla Jordanova's refreshingly partisan chapter on 'The social sciences and the history of science and medicine', even though some readers may question the reliability of a survey in this area that omits even to mention the existence of microsociological and ethnomethodological research (for instance,

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the work of H.M. Collins, Bruno Latour, Karin Knorr, Augustine Brannigan, Andrew Pickering, Steve Woolgar, *et al.*).

What this enterprise most notably lacks is clear evidence of editorial vision and grip. There is no very obvious sense of what the book was intended to do, what criteria of inclusion and exclusion were imposed, what audience it was designed for. Why was technology systematically treated in one chapter only, when the wisest strategy might have been to do the job properly or not at all? Why were the earth sciences given such short shrift? More fundamentally, the editors do not seem unambiguously to have told their authors whether their task was prescriptive (this is what the history of science ought to be) or descriptive (this is how, in fact, it is). Nor do they seem to have decided whether the book was to concentrate on the subject-matter of the history of science, or on its historiography. Some of the chapters focus on the first; some on the second; and some reflect confusion about the nature of their brief.

It is hard to imagine that Corsi and Weindling's book will become the standard reference guide to the field; it is too quirky and uneven. For that purpose a combination of W.F. Bynum *et al.* (editors), *Dictionary of the history of science*, and Paul T. Durbin (editor), *A guide to the culture of science, technology, and medicine* would be far better. Nevertheless, many of the chapters can be read with benefit, and even though few historians will feel the necessity of having their own copy, it will be useful to have access to one.

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G. A. LINDEBOOM, *Dutch medical biography. A biographical dictionary of Dutch physicians and surgeons 1475–1975*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1984, 8vo, pp. xiii, 2243, xxxi, [no price stated].

This work presents brief biographies of some 2,800 physicians and surgeons who worked in the Netherlands and the Dutch Empire over the last five centuries. The author gives for each of his subjects the date and place of birth and death, a summary of his or her career, details of more notable (or only) publications and references to sources of further information. In some cases, personal observations are taken over from obituaries, while in others, the author gives his estimation of the subject's contribution to his field. The entries are clearly set out with the aid of some admirable conventions used in the *Dictionary of scientific biography*.

The fact that this is essentially a compilation of obituaries should not be held to diminish either the book's value or the author's efforts, for certain decisions made by the author ensure that it will be an invaluable and perhaps never to be superseded point of reference for an international readership. First the book is in English; second, it includes Dutch medical men and women who practised outside the Netherlands, particularly in the Dutch colonies in the East and West Indies; third, it includes non-Dutch doctors who practised in the Netherlands, of whom the largest group is that of Spanish and Portuguese Jews.

Any ambitious biographical dictionary is open to criticism for minor errors and inconsistent inclusions. In this one, for example, Rembrandt's 'Anatomy of Dr Deyman' is said to be in the Amsterdam Historical Museum (*recte* Rijksmuseum), and R.W. Darwin is included because he studied at Leiden but many others in the same position are omitted, and the exclusion of O. Borrichius is all the more unfortunate because his letters provide such vivid information about medicine at Leiden. However, those who know Professor Lindeboom's other works will need no assurance that a high level of accuracy is maintained, though consistency in what is said about each subject is often frustrated by the vagaries of the evidence.

The author's English is usually adequate, but it may be helpful to point out here the often-neglected difference between "the lecture has not been published", which implies that the manuscript still exists, and "The lecture was not published", which makes no such suggestion.

As well as using the volume as a source of reliable information, the reader can use it for