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treatment on the agenda. Gradually state policies on facilities and prevention of alcohol problems emerged. The 1980s saw a federal plan put in operation, its focus, as elsewhere, primarily on illicit drugs, despite the much greater degree of social harm occasioned by alcohol consumption. Lewis's "lesson" for the future is an optimistic one. Drinking, he argues, like smoking, could follow the same path of declining public acceptability. Prohibition, tried with the Australian aborigines, did not work as a control option.

With such a broad sweep, this book can only touch on many of the fascinating issues raised by the study of alcohol policy. Lewis's coverage of the post war period is one virtue. In encompassing the recent history of alcohol he covers ground on which British historians are only beginning to work. Let us hope that this Australian example helps stimulate further research on the history of alcohol policy both there and in Britain.

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GEORGETTE LEGÉE, *Pierre Flourens, 1794–1867: physiologiste et historien des sciences*, 2 vols, Abbeville, F. Paillart, 1992, pp. xvi, 662, illus.

Pierre Flourens (1794–1867) was a prominent member of the scientific establishment in nineteenth-century France. The *éloges* for deceased colleagues that he composed as Perpetual Secretary of the Académie des Sciences were regarded as outstanding exemplars of the genre. Flourens is, however, chiefly remembered for his highly influential experimental investigations into the functions of the brain. His researches on the cerebellum are regarded as marking an epoch in the understanding of the functions of that organ. Flourens' work on the cerebral hemispheres is, in contrast, usually seen as reactionary in its effect because it delayed the general acceptance of the doctrine of cerebral localization.

The present work is a curious production which defies easy classification. It is not a biography of Flourens although it does contain what might be considered notes and materials for such a life. These two volumes are in fact a series of essays on various aspects of Flourens' life and career, some of which have appeared previously. Perhaps the most interesting are those which deal with the early parts of both. The discussion of the role that concepts drawn from Montpellier vitalism may have played in framing his problematic are especially stimulating and suggestive. There are also some valuable new insights into Flourens' relations with such contemporaries on the Paris scientific scene as Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire and Georges Cuvier. Ultimately, however, this attempt to place Flourens in his intellectual and social context leaves too many crucial questions unanswered. In particular, Flourens' dramatic shift from enthusiasm for Gall and Geoffroy to an equally pronounced opposition remains unexplained. This is especially disappointing in view of the access to previously unexplored archive material that Legée evidently enjoyed.

There is also a surprising neglect of relevant secondary literature. For instance Legée's extended discussion of the relations between Geoffroy and Cuvier proceeds without any reference to Toby Appel's definitive study of the controversy between the two men. There is, more generally, more than a whiff of historiographic archaism about these handsomely produced volumes. The comprehensive bibliography of Flourens' works that they contain is, however, a genuine asset.

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J. TREVOR HUGHES, *Thomas Willis 1621–1675: his life and work*, Eponymists in Medicine, London and New York, Royal Society of Medicine Services Ltd., 1991, pp. xiv, 151, illus., £12.95 (hardback, 1–85315–162–9), £7.95 (paperback 1–853150–161–0).

Thomas Willis's medical writings have attracted attention for three centuries. In this most recent biography of Willis, J. Trevor Hughes provides readers with a cursory cradle-to-grave account of the life and work of the seventeenth-century Oxonian physician in sixteen brief chapters. As this volume was written for the Royal Society of Medicine's series of 'Eponymists in Medicine', the author duly addresses Willis's eponymous immortality via anatomy's Circle of Willis, *Chordae Willisii*, the

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nervus ophthalmicus Willisii, *nervus accessorium Willisii* and the otological symptom, *paracusis Willisii*. But Hughes probes much further than merely tracing the etymology of these eponyms. Willis's family, teachers, colleagues and pupils are chronologically paraded past the reader's view in five early chapters. Additionally, Hughes, a neuropathologist, devotes four chapters to a survey of Willis's medical writings, focusing primarily upon his "contribution to Neuroanatomy and Neurophysiology". And as a helpful guide for supplementary information about Willis, Hughes has compiled an extensive thirteen-page bibliography.

Although painstakingly accurate in detail, Hughes is prone to overstatement and laudatory comment, especially when describing the family, friends, and fellows of Willis's acquaintance. Rather than pinpointing Willis's precise affiliations with his contemporaries, the author seems to be content with speculating about Willis's associations with the frequent use of statements such as "but must have known of" or "might have encouraged" a particular Restoration figure. Allusions to Willis's Royalist leanings as a contributing factor to his reversal of fortune are most disappointing. This reader believes Hughes could have more accurately contextualized Willis's relationship to, or reliance upon Charles II by drawing upon some recent scholarship of the Restoration monarch, especially that of Ronald Hutton. Indeed, all the chapters of this work show a marked unawareness of the historical scholarship written during the past few decades. Readers will also encounter the occasional anachronistic wanderings such as "here Willis speaks as a twentieth[-]century pharmacologist rather than one 300 years earlier" (p. 79).

Despite general Whiggish historiographical shortcomings, Hughes's brief synopses offer the most concise yet complete account of Willis's seven medical publications to date. To use the words of a commentator on Willis, J. Trevor Hughes has become a "gifted gatherer of data". His data have been gathered into a useful ready reference filled with details, illustrations, and synopses about the life and work of this "Great Doctor" in English medical history.

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LOIS N. MAGNER, *A history of medicine*, New York and Basel, Marcel Dekker, 1992, pp. xvii, 393, illus., \$55 (0-8247-8673-4).

It is a commonplace and richly warranted complaint among those who teach survey courses on the history of medicine that we have no historiographically up-to-date textbook introducing the field. Lois Magner seeks to fill this gap with *A history of medicine*, a serious work of synthesis that explores themes in western medicine from classical antiquity to the present and offers several chapters on non-western traditions. The writing is engaging, and the author recognizes the pedagogic value of relating past to present (tapping into contemporary fascination with AIDS, for example). At the same time, the volume encourages an ahistorical perspective on the medical past, and, assigned to students, would tend to undermine any instructor's efforts to convey an historian's way of thinking about medicine.

What is most disturbing about this work, and what most undercuts its potential to make past medical worlds understandable or to convey a sense of change over time, is the author's practice of indulgently wandering out of chronology. Although the chapters are placed in roughly chronological order, the author is inclined to move from the period under discussion to a digression that carries the reader rapidly through time, sometimes traversing centuries in the course of a few pages. The chapter titled 'Selected aspects of clinical and preventive medicine' is a representative hodgepodge. A discussion of Thomas Sydenham merges into a review of quinine use and anti-malarial campaigns of the mid-twentieth century. Later in the same chapter, an account of James Lind and scurvy includes the perils of Zen macrobiotic diets in the 1960s and the claims of Linus Pauling. One heavy price for such roaming across time is the subversion of any meaningful placement of Sydenham and Lind in their respective historical contexts. The student would find it very difficult to come away from this volume with any solid comprehension of the character of seventeenth- or eighteenth-century medicine.

This achronological treatment goes far toward sacrificing historicity, but it is hardly the only choice the author has made that leads toward that end. Another particularly regrettable decision is to