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strictly clinical or strictly scientific. They were often a happy combination of the two as Holmes brought his knowledge of basic anatomy, microscopy, physiology, and pathology to bear on the problems presented by clinical neurology.

Like its predecessor, this volume reproduces Holmes's papers in facsimile, so the individual papers display a profusion of typefaces and layouts, although the original journal paginations have not been retained. The book is handsomely bound; photographs and drawings all are reproduced with little loss of detail. Readers without specialized knowledge of neurology would have benefited from a fuller assessment of Holmes's specific contribution to the neurosciences; but it is useful to have these papers collected into one stout volume.

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JOHN M. EYLER, *Victorian social medicine. The ideas and methods of William Farr*, Baltimore, Md., and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979, 8vo, pp. x, 262, front, £11.75.

Until now William Farr's appearances in the history of medicine have been as the *deus ex machina* of the development of a modern state service. In this book John Eyler has brought him to the centre of the stage. Farr came from a poor Shropshire background, studied medicine in Paris, and attained but one qualification: the Licentiatehip of the Society of Apothecaries. Obviously not cut out to be a practitioner, Farr joined the office of the Registrar General unofficially in 1837 and soon became a permanent official, the Compiler of Abstracts. Though he seemingly coveted, and others thought he deserved, the highest position a serious-minded tabulator could wish for, he never attained it. The Registrar Generalship was as yet immune to the claims of that new Victorian class, the expert. He resigned in 1880, smarting from having been passed over once again. Farr was the driving force behind the compilation of the annual reports of the office and the censuses of 1851, 1861, and 1871. His studies on the patterns of illness, notably during cholera epidemics, established demography as a valuable tool for elucidating the modes of transmission of disease.

The biography of Farr, at least as Eyler presents it, is the history of the dedicated calculator of anything calculable: morbidity, mortality, insurance risks, taxes, the value of life itself. Eyler's achievement in this book is to lay out these projects in detail and show them to be not the product of an obsessional neurosis but an integral part of the rise of *statistics* in the sense of the science of *statism*. Farr is firmly and rightly placed among the new professional order with its alliances among the industrial bourgeoisie and utilitarians, and its commitment to the rationalization of government.

This book was intended, as the author admits, to be a complement to Royston Lambert's study of Sir John Simon and S. E. Finer's *Life and times of Sir Edwin Chadwick*. Yet it is not meant to be a "personal biography" but an analysis of Farr's ideas and methods in order to provide a window into Victorian social medicine (Preface). These are impressive goals to have aimed for, yet it is hard to see how they could both have been achieved however careful the execution. Finer's *Chadwick* and Lambert's *Simon* are truly memorable books, and important accounts of Victorian

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medicine, because they *are* “personal biographies”. The “ideas and methods” of these civil servants were part of the lives of real people: the impersonal and impassioned Chadwick and the diplomatic but authoritarian Simon. Finer’s account of the scandal of the Andover workhouse for example displays vividly the working of Victorian government through the personal frustrations of Chadwick. Amongst historians of science these days, to profess to be writing a biography is equivalent to admitting one is not quite right in the head. As though the very act were incomparable with the very best social, political, or scientific history.

By the end of this book Farr’s bones have little more flesh on them than they had at the beginning. Maybe he was a dull dog, uncontroversial, not given to emotional outburst, a model bourgeois paterfamilias. I doubt it. Sometimes Eyler lets slip things that point to unexplored territories in Farr’s persona. Farr once claimed “There is a relation betwixt the forms of death and moral excellence or infamy” (p. 128). I am not sure if I know what that means, but I should like to know what Farr meant by it, and what sort of a man could say it.

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PAUL MCHUGH, *Prostitution and Victorian social reform*, London, Croom Helm, 1980, 8vo, pp. 306, £12.95.

In 1866, during a sleepy sitting of Parliament, the first of a series of Contagious Diseases Acts was passed. Its aim was to reduce the incidence of venereal disease among members of the armed forces garrisoned in various sites in Britain through the examination, compulsory detention and treatment of prostitutes or suspected prostitutes found to be suffering from venereal disease. The women had little say in the matter. The men were not examined. The Acts embodied an explicit double standard; even more offensive to many Victorian sensibilities was the implicit condonement of prostitution by the State: disease-free girls, once released, were free to ply their trade. Others insisted that the Acts were ineffective in curtailing sexual diseases, but that in any case the State had no business to interfere in the daily activities of her citizens.

Opposition to the Acts, sporadic at first, eventually led to the formation of several national and dozens of local societies aimed at repeal (finally achieved in 1886). Through the activities of Josephine Butler, the repeal movement became associated with more general aspects of the Women’s Movement; through James Stansfeld and others, repeal can be seen as an integral part of the fortunes of the Liberal Party in late Victorian Britain. The repeal movement’s ideological ramifications offer a focus for the moral and religious values current in the 1870s and 80s, and its strategical tactics an example of a Victorian pressure group in action.

This monograph by Paul McHugh explores all these themes. It is based on a sound mastery of relevant printed and manuscript sources and clearly written in a balanced, judicious style. Medical historians will be particularly interested in McHugh’s comments on the increasing identification of doctors with the State during the period, and the public opposition to this growth in medical and State power. As Josephine Butler wrote, after reading a letter in *The Times* by Dr. F. C. Skey, a leading medical