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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

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defendant of the Acts: "I am astounded at the audacity of his declaration 'Our profession and our profession alone has a right to dictate . . .' in the matter of the Contagious Diseases Acts! This kind of assertion, which I fear expresses the opinion of some of these aristocratic doctors is calculated to make the medical profession (as a friend expressed it) 'stink in the nostrils of the moral and religious people of England'." (p. 249)

Dr. McHugh's monograph complements the recent work on Victorian resistance to vaccination and vivisection by Macleod, French, and others. Between them, these authors have opened up a fertile area which deserves further systematic exploration.

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IAN LEVITT and CHRISTOPHER SMOUT, *The state of the Scottish working class in 1843*, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1979, 8vo, pp. x, 284, illus., £7.50.

In 1843 a Royal Commission began an assessment of the adequacy of the Scottish Poor Law. By comparison with England the Scottish system was no more than a legal skeleton fleshed out very erratically with voluntary contributions. The system, which made no provision for able-bodied paupers, was an object of pride to those who saw the individualistic ethic as the backbone of Scotland. To others such as W. P. Alison, Professor of Medicine at Edinburgh, it was a subject of shame. One of the first acts of the Commission was to send a detailed questionnaire to the minister of the established church in every parish. The seventy questions to which the incumbent had to produce replies covered all those aspects of the lives of the poor that bore on relief: food, work, wages, sickness, emigration, and so forth. Replies were received from 93 per cent of the 906 parishes involved, the bulk of the omissions unfortunately arising from the failure of the large towns, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Paisley, and Perth, to produce answers. The data are stored in the appendices to the *Royal Commission on the Poor Law (Scotland)*. Until now historians have raided it for the isolated illustrative fact.

The authors of the aptly entitled *The state of the Scottish working class in 1843* have used the information for quite different purposes. Selecting the pertinent questions they have produced as comprehensive a picture as possible of the economic life of the poor all over Scotland in a single year. Statistical information about myriad factors is presented in easily readable tables and maps. These are accompanied by lucid essays on the major topics. Fortunately this marriage of essays and tables does not prohibit their being comprehensible independently. The data presented range from the obvious, such as information about wages or diet, to the less immediate but equally important figures on the distribution of public houses.

This book is a model of its kind. Through painstaking research the authors have built up a minute description of the miserable condition of the Scottish poor that is more than a catalogue of numbers. In terms of the overall picture the authors point out how little effect the industrial revolution had had in much of Scotland by 1840. Second, although they reaffirm the old Highland/Lowland distinction, they also point to the vast variegation of poverty and relative affluence within these regions. Included in the volume is an excellent chapter on the sick poor which spells out in numerical