

Book Reviews

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