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the blood (the blood does not, however, in the authors' words become "acidic" p. 12), a position he reluctantly renounced. The chapters on the war, like every other one in this book, are wonderfully rich. The Cannon archives have permitted the authors to construct the man's life and work in enviable detail. The tiniest anecdotes are so telling. Leaving for the war, Cannon revealed "I made a horrible mistake this noon . . . in the presence of others I called Major Cushing, Harvey, I will never do that again" (p. 7). Chronicling the war years, the authors trace Cannon's various postings in France and catalogue him cementing alliances with old and new friends: T R Elliot, Joseph Barcroft, Walter Fletcher, J S Haldane (but never Lord Haldane, only his brother made it to the upper house). This book is a must for anyone working on science in Europe; it is not just an American story.

As well written as the first volume and having only a couple of minor blemishes in over 600 pages, this volume is the more fascinating of the two. This is so because much of Cannon's mature physiological theorizing was done in the inter-war years, because he was such a prominent international figure, and because the political crises of these years drew out Cannon's own political views. How far all these were related the authors do not speculate any further than Cannon himself did. The inter-war years saw Cannon develop his theory of homeostasis, the idea of the integration of the various bodily systems conserving a harmonious status quo. It was this that Cannon was later to suggest might be applicable to the understanding of societies. Whether, long before he expressed the latter view, Cannon at some level thought about American society in the same way as he thought about the body is left by the authors to the reader's imagination.

The inter-war years saw Cannon immensely active at Harvard and on the international scientific scene. He was

endlessly in demand by committees, though far from being a yes man. He was diplomatic even when forceful in, for example, his defence of pure laboratory sciences over those who perpetrated the "grave error" of thinking laboratory work should be done only to solve "practical problems" (p. 69). Cannon's life was not just spent in the lab and on committees; he had a home life. This latter is narrated in its happy detail too, including the fact that Mrs Cannon (Cornelia) after raising the children became a successful novelist. Perhaps the most fascinating chapters in this book are those that throw light on sections of the American population's insular, anti-Semitic and xenophobic mentality in the inter-war years. Cannon by any stretch of the imagination was a political moderate, most often voting Republican. He was also warm-hearted by nature. The plight of Republican refugees from the Spanish Civil War and many Russian scientists under Stalin generated his compassion and much more. He worked tirelessly for the relief of both groups. For his pains he was regarded by some as a communist sympathizer. This is a major biography of a major figure. The authors have done him proud.

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Michael French and Jim Phillips, *Cheated not poisoned? Food regulation in the United Kingdom, 1875–1938*, Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press, 2000, pp. vii, 213, £40.00 (hardback 0-7190-5605-5).

The sixteen-volume BSE Enquiry report published in October 2000, followed by the government's response in February 2001, both acknowledged the institutional weakness of the state in failing to prevent

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the outbreak of mad cow disease and also a lack of openness from ministers and officials about the possibility of its transmission to humans. The present reviewer would argue that neither the regulatory lapse nor the secrecy are new and that British food policy has been through many equally discreditable twists and turns over the last 150 years. Mike French and Jim Phillips' book will play an important part in providing a scholarly foundation for an informed debate about the prehistory of modern food scares and the political attempts to counteract them. It is particularly welcome because of the light it throws upon the evolution of food policy-making in its early phase, from the Sale of Food and Drugs Act of 1875 to the Food and Drugs Act of 1938. The authors have written a clear account that uses case studies of various commodities, including beer, meat, margarine and milk, to illustrate the often highly specialized nature of the problems faced by the consumer and the regulator; but they balance these examples well with more general discussions of themes such as the adulteration of food and drink, the use of additives, and the complex currents of public and business opinion that moulded the policy response. Some readers of *Medical History* may be disappointed by the under-emphasis on the potential of food systems for spreading infectious disease (there is no entry for "disease" as such in the index) but this is not really one of the book's priorities.

From the outset, French and Phillips build a helpful conceptual foundation for their work, drawing upon theoretical works from economics and political science. This is an important reference point for later observations about the nature of the "public interest" and the interaction of pressure groups with civil servants and politicians. It does, however, fall short of a full discussion of the theory of food safety and food regulation, since no mention is made of the recent reformulation of ideas about food safety as a subset of a more general

conceptualization of "quality". One thinks here particularly of the work of writers such as Terry Marsden on the political economy of food.

In the book's early chapters there are insights into the structure of the food industry in the United Kingdom, including a commentary on the nascent phase of food-related pressure groups, at first rural and agricultural, and later urban and commercial. There follows an account of legislation from 1875 to 1907, which seems to concur with the received view of weakness and indecision in both the central and local state that was only gradually ameliorated, first by the more effective tools of regulation based on normative compositional standards; second, by the increased evidence base provided by science; and, third, by the restructuring of ramshackle Whitehall departments into the modern Ministry of Health and DEFRA.

Finally in the first half, there are accounts of selected food scares before the First World War. The arsenic poisoning of 3,000 beer drinkers in Manchester and Salford in 1900 is remarkable, not least for the investigatory role of Lord Kelvin, but even more striking is the panic that followed the revelations of Upton Sinclair's 1906 novel *The jungle*, which gave a colourful account of unsanitary conditions in the Chicago stockyards, slaughterhouses and meat packing plants. The loss of consumer confidence in imported meat was such that the British Grocers' Federation were moved to write directly to President Roosevelt, seeking an assurance that his country's meat was safe. Astonishingly by today's standards, they received a telegraphed reply within weeks, via the US Ambassador, giving a guarantee of the fitness of American canned meat.

Putting the curiosity value of such incidents on one side, the nub of this book lies in chapters 5–7. These address in turn the regulation of chemical preservatives in food, the establishment of standards in the period up to 1938, and the conflicts of

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interest demonstrated by a case study of liquid milk. French and Phillips indicate the importance of pressure groups in influencing the views of both civil servants and politicians about the regulatory framework that was desirable and practicable, the latter amounting to the exercise of "bureaucratic discretion". Moreover, the authors hint at a problematized version of Whitehall and Westminster that recognizes a variety of actors and cross-cutting administrative cultures. This could profitably be explored further, for instance by studying the long-standing and at times bitter policy struggles between the Ministries of Agriculture and Health in the area of food, by adducing additional evidence from the book's major sources: Parliamentary Papers and the unpublished ministerial archives held in the Public Record Office.

At £40, this volume is aimed for the shelves of University libraries rather than the bestseller shelves of bookshops, but it will nevertheless quickly become established as a benchmark of food regulation history. We now need similar books on the period after 1939 and histories comparing the situation in the UK with that of other countries.

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Judith Walzer Leavitt (ed.), *Women and health in America: historical readings*, second edition, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1999, pp. ix, 692, £22.50 (paperback 0-299-15694-7).

Until recently, traditional accounts of the history of medicine have largely ignored women's role as either givers or receivers of health care. Over the last few decades, more scholarship has focused on women's experiences, and it has become increasingly sophisticated and nuanced, moving away

from a view in the 1970s of women as victims to women as agents who act in ways that both enable and challenge established medical practice. *Women and health in America* adds more detail to this increasingly complex picture. In this thoroughly revised second edition, Judith Walzer Leavitt has assembled another outstanding group of essays about women's experiences in the health care arena. This book is especially valuable since it collects in one volume existing scholarship that had been previously available only in a variety of disparate sources.

The volume is organized chronologically into three parts: the first covers subjects from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, while the second focuses on the nineteenth century. The third, which addresses health concerns from the late nineteenth to the twentieth century, is the largest unit, containing twenty-eight out of the thirty-five selections that comprise the volume. This final section is further subdivided into specific topics: body image and physical fitness; sexuality; fertility, abortion, and birth control; childbirth and motherhood; mental illness; health care providers (midwives, nurses, physicians); health reform and public health; and the medicalization of health practices.

Twelve brief, but helpful introductions precede every section, providing a concise overview of the subject and a précis of each article. Only six essays from the 1984 edition remain. The remaining twenty-nine were initially published over the last fifteen years, from as early as 1986 to as recently as 1996. Topics bearing on issues of race, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation have a much more prominent place in this volume than in the first edition. Some contributors provide broad overviews of a particular subject, such as Nancy Dye and Daniel Smith's chapter on 'Mother love and infant death, 1750–1920', which tracks maternal feelings and perceptions about children during this period through an examination of women's personal writings.