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Dr. Jennifer Connor, who co-edited this special issue, has brought together a series of contributions which has resulted in a thoroughly comprehensive introduction to the history of the book for those to whom this journal is specifically directed — historians of medicine. Divided into articles, case histories, methods and issues, artifacts and archives, the contributions to this special issue are in keeping with its subject area — book culture and medicine. The sole exception being Joseph Lella's *The Osler Club of London, 1928-38*, but more on this in a moment.

Connor's introductory essay elucidates the differences between the traditional, and sparse, treatment of the book by medical historians — simply as objects, versus the more recent expansive research undertaken which looks at the context of the book in commercial, economic, legal, political, religious, cultural, and educational areas. The best Canadian example with which one can readily track this change in scholarly behaviour is Charles Roland's *Bibliography of Secondary Sources on the History of Canadian Medicine*. First published in 1984, this work is soon to be reprinted with significant additions and revisions. This example of the Canadian context at least shows that until the late 1980s, none of the 'new' type of research was undertaken. Connor's doctoral dissertation on the culture and context of medical publishing in Canada is an example of this more expansive and revealing form of research into the history of the book. While Roland's separate work tracks the trend towards a broader based approach, which Connor introduces, Lella's contribution serves as an example that the old ways of doing things haven't changed at all, despite Connor's introduction. Despite Lella's title including the word *books* in it, books are only mentioned sparingly, as if they were an aside.

Space does not permit the highlighting of each contribution but a few deserve specific mention. Thomas Horrock's 'Promoting Good Health in the Age of Reform: The Medical Publications of Henry H. Porter of Philadelphia, 1829-32,' discusses Porter's struggles as a publisher in this hectic and financially unstable business sector in Philadelphia. Producing five journals, six books, and an almanac, Porter attempted to link the contents of his publications with the then popular American reform movements. Porter's relationships with his authors, his marketing, and his ultimate business failure are all discussed.

Connor's 'Thomsonian Medical Books and the Culture of Dissent in Upper Canada,' discusses the publishing of pirated publications and ideals of the American lay healer Samuel Thomson, his system of medicine, and the environment of Upper Canada which seems to have encouraged these actions. Independently of Thomson's agents and without grant of rights, the publishers apparently pursued for economic and reformist reasons the publication of pirated material in several editions. Connor discusses the rarity of any multi-edition publication in the Upper Canada of the late 1820s and early 1830s, and the laborious nature of printing with which these publishers had to contend. Most importantly, she illuminates

the culture in which Thomsonian medical and Reformist ideals were promoted within a highly diverse and an as yet uncontrolled medical establishment, without professionalization and the dominance of a particular medical élite and belief system.

Stephen Otto's 'Identifying a Family Heirloom: The Indian Doctor's Dispensatory,' and Bertrum H. MacDonald's 'A Search for Gold: Reconstructing a Private Library — The Case of Dr. Robert Bell,' both illustrate the tenacity with which an historian of the book must be equipped. The story of Otto's quest to identify a treasured family heirloom unfolds over a thirty-five year period, while that of MacDonald is not as long but does commence thirty years after a huge personal library had begun to be dispersed, forty-five years after its creator's death. Otto's account is a brief one of an 'on-again' 'off-again' hunt for clues for one book, with providence shining through after the most unlikely length of time has elapsed. MacDonald's quest for the library portion of a collection of books and artifacts, which he states was estimated to be an accumulation of twenty-six tons of material, is a detailed 'how-to' manual for the historian seeking to reconstruct a library collection.

Finally, Christine Cerdeira adds to MacDonald's 'how-to' by showing that wills offer opportunities for further insights. Wills have rarely been used before because, as Cerdeira quite rightly points out, they are a very specialized series of documents more difficult to wield than the more typically used tools and methods. Wills in this case are Early Modern English Medical Wills dating from 1584–1602. The impetus to use them is the apparent scarcity of sources which can shed light on the collecting and use of books, the audience for which they were written and the dissemination of their contents, late in Queen Elizabeth I's reign (1558–1603). That Cerdeira was able to derive satisfactory insights holds out the possibility of furthering this specialized research for other genre and time periods.

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Joseph Melançon, Nicole Fortin et Georges Desmeules, dir. *La lecture et ses traditions*. Québec: Nuit blanche éditeur, 1994. 246 p.; 22,95\$ (papier). ISBN 2-921053-24-1.

Denis Saint-Jacques, dir. *L'acte de lecture*. Québec: Nuit blanche éditeur, 1994. 306 p.; 23,95\$ (papier). ISBN 2-921053-29-2.

Au cours des années 1960, un certain nombre de jeunes chercheurs français donne le branle à un secteur de la recherche jusque-là peu exploré: l'histoire du livre.