

in a competitive marketplace and where those who were successful in their care of patients would be those who would reap financial benefit. Training would be a criterion only insofar as it was useful. But is medicine a consumer product? It is hard to imagine people shopping around when they are ill.

*Canadian Medicine* is an institutional study. It details restrictive legislation but seldom examines its real impact on the provision of health care. The author can show that the number of licensed physicians did not keep pace with the growth of population but what about unlicensed physicians? Much of the legislation had no teeth, for many individuals practised outside its boundaries. Even more significantly, Hamowy totally ignores the fact that there was competition. He is a captive of what he himself criticizes — the monopoly within regular medicine. He is correct — it existed and does exist but it is not the only type of medicine. The real competitors of regular medicine are ignored — the midwives, the patent medicine people, conventional wisdom, the wise old neighbour, and more importantly, the mother within the family who usually had her own favourite remedies. The public did have choice and the choice was far greater than Hamowy is willing to grant. Only if you accept the definition of medicine as accepted by regular physicians do you see the kind of restrictive entry Hamowy discusses.

The book is disappointing. Nevertheless, despite the lack of context, it does bring together much disparate secondary literature and some primary sources and for this it is of use. Hamowy's thesis may not be a new one but this does not make it incorrect. It is simply not complete and does not take us very far. The irony of the book is that many people reading it will agree with his view of the medical profession and its development. What they will not agree with is Hamowy's solution — a medical supermarket.

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R. COLE HARRIS and ELIZABETH PHILLIPS, eds. — *Letters from Windermere, 1912-1914*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984. pp. xxii, 235.

Thirty-five years old when she married Captain Jack Phillips and emigrated to Canada, Daisy Phillips had lived a comfortable middle-class existence in Windsor, England, surrounded by family, friends and neighbours. Windermere in 1912 was a newly-opened fruit-growing district (or so its over-zealous promoters represented it) in southeastern British Columbia. "Certainly we are pioneers of this place," Daisy wrote in one of the twice-weekly letters to her mother and sister that make up this volume, adding "Of course we never see a soul here as there is no road or even a path to our tent at present" (18). With only her taciturn soldier husband for companionship Daisy's lifeline was letters and papers sent out from England; her letters in return were fulsomely detailed, the unstructured chat of someone long accustomed to copious observation and remark on the mundane and seemingly inconsequential.

Daisy is an agreeable but not compelling letter-writer; she is unpretentious and moderately self-revealing but seldom analytical. We recognize that her candour is circumscribed by the knowledge that her relatives at home are anxious about her health and comfort, as well as her frame of mind. Reassurances alternate with exclamations and descriptions of the new and different in her surroundings: spectacular mountain scenery, wildly fluctuating temperatures, a running score on successes and failures as Daisy adjusts to her new way of life.

Daisy learns to raise and prepare food, darn and launder clothes, furnish and run a house for two and then for three. She mourns the absence of servants until one actually arrives; by then she

has learned to do a lot for herself, and besides the bungalow is too small to maintain conventional English-servant relations: there is tension and dissatisfaction on both sides. "You do not talk servants here, but provisions and gardens!" (51). Indeed, food occupies much of Daisy's time and thought, as do clothes, dishes, furnishings, and the fragments of community life that are beginning to take shape around them. She confesses to missing England and her family, but Jack is kind if somewhat fussy and peremptory, and the open-air life keeps her busy and fit. "If you had told me of all the things I was going to put up with and endure and yet be well and happy I should not have believed you!" (84).

In an informative, perceptive introduction Cole Harris focuses on the Phillips' wholehearted endeavours to reproduce an English way of life, particularly an English home and family, in a Canadian frontier setting. Daisy does not hide her disdain for Canadian taste and Canadian-produced goods, yet she is not unconscious of the benefits of their transplantation. If, to use Cole Harris's elegant phrasing in his introduction, "the Windermere Valley had tended to reduce the whole array of custom to a leaner selection of symbols," (xiv) it also forced on the Phillips a leaner selection of things. A major tragedy is occasioned by careless packing of a crate of household goods; on the other hand, the intensity of her response, and the domestic upheaval on both sides of the Atlantic over broken dishes and picture-frames, helps Daisy distinguish between the necessary and the superfluous. "The fact is not that I have not got enough, but before I had too much in some way, more than is necessary, I suppose," (40), she writes early on; later, "This life out here has made me realize how silly I was to worry over silly little things that here I have to do without and really do not miss" (53). Still, *things* predominate, often reflecting a very Edwardian middle-class sensitivity to the symbolic resonances of individual objects: "Mr. Bowden remarked the other day on the brass handle on the front door as all the rest are copper, so I said it was because a brass knocker was coming, but *he* has one that has been in their family over a hundred years" (95).

For two and a half years the Phillips poured their high hopes and considerable energies into a losing struggle to establish a profitable fruit farm. As soon as war broke out they abandoned their entire investment to answer the call of duty to Britain. By April 1915 Daisy was a war widow, the sole support of her infant daughter — somewhat better armed for this fate than she might otherwise have been as a result of skills and independence learned in Canada. Cole Harris fittingly describes these letters as "a large part of her unconscious strategy for survival" (xvi) during her Canadian interlude. Daisy did more than survive; she worked hard, enjoyed life, learned about her own reserves of pluck and competence, and left this record of an experience that was shared by many others no more and no less remarkable than she.

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HÉLÈNE LAFORCE — *Histoire de la sage-femme dans la région de Québec*. Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, Québec, 1985. 237 p.

Assister une femme en couches et recevoir le nouvel être qui « tombe au monde » est sans doute l'une des tâches les plus exaltantes, les plus valorisantes qui soient. Ce fut pendant des générations celle de la matrone ou de la sage-femme : d'une femme en tous cas, puisque l'accouchement était autrefois une affaire de femmes et se déroulait généralement entre femmes.

Mais on sait que la naissance d'un enfant n'est pas seulement un fait biologique, que cet évènement, banal et toujours original, est profondément marqué par l'environnement culturel : toute société a sa manière à elle d'accueillir le nouveau-né. Le Québec n'a pas échappé à la règle; en aurait-on douté que l'excellente étude d'Hélène Laforce nous en convaincrat désormais.