

takes, of now and then becoming the sly trumpeter of his own praises. No doubt this book will be embraced by physicians and others who see themselves living blamelessly in an otherwise imperfect world. Yet it is greatly to Loxterkamp's credit that the reader feels a bond with this forbearing, forgiving, sorely beset man; he is the kind of doctor we all want for ourselves.

Loxterkamp is at his best when offering clinical vignettes and miniature character sketches of his patients, coworkers, and fellow townspeople. One especially affecting portrait is of a woman with Lou Gehrig's disease trying to communicate: "Her struggle, nodding and

grunting at a plexiglass message board. . . . Two letters constructed, then three; a word, then another, till they strung together in a simple phrase."

Only when Loxterkamp's gaze turns inward toward his own marriage do candor and empathy threaten to stray into confession and sentimentality. And when he vents his disapproval of certain post-Vatican II changes in the Catholic liturgy, he merely echoes criticism that has been better articulated elsewhere. Other faults may lie herein, but none would prevent me from recommending this book as a gift to any prospective doctor.

—Richard Selzer

Contemporary Affairs

THE LIPSTICK PROVISIO: Women, Sex & Power in the Real World.

By Karen Lehrman. Anchor
Books. 240 pp. \$23.95

Lehrman, a journalist and former editor at *The New Republic*, calls herself a feminist but disagrees with many of orthodox feminism's central tenets. Doctrinaire feminists, she believes, often fail to appreciate women's individual choices, especially when those choices place women in traditional roles such as "pink ghetto" worker, nurturing wife, stay-at-home mother, or even sex object. In Lehrman's view, these choices reflect the genuine needs and desires of many women, and champions of



true liberation should respect them just as much they respect high-pressure careers. "You may not like my choices (and I may not like yours), but aside from warning me about the possible pitfalls, my choices are really none of your business," she declares.

How does Lehrman reconcile this defense of traditional womanhood with her complaint that "the feminist revolution" is not yet complete? She does so by making biology a factor in private life but not in the public sphere. Sexually and emotionally, she ventures to argue, "biology will to some extent be destiny for women—just as it has been for men." But in the workplace, all that should matter are the human abilities that women share with men. This is a tidy resolution. But as Lehrman forays into the scientific literature on sexual difference demonstrate, biology is no clear or univocal arbiter of how men and women differ—or how they do not. And where science dares not tread, politics is certain to rush in.

—Martha Bayles

Arts & Letters

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE HUMANITIES?

Edited by Alvin Kernan. Princeton
University Press. 268 pp. \$29.95

The current condition of the humanities cannot be traced to a single cause. The dozen academic humanists who contribute to this judicious and informed volume, edited by Kernan, professor of humanities, emer-

itus, at Princeton University, take up various explanatory threads. One is demographic: the increased presence of minorities and women among the student population. One is technological: the impact of computers on the way people read. One is philosophical: the influence of relativistic epistemologies on the old ideal of disinterested scholarship.

Does the garland of causes make a