

Book Reviews

The author is concerned with a relatively neglected theme in the sociology of knowledge: the growth and content of scientific ideas as influenced by the social structure in which they flourish, or fail to flourish. The two areas she examines are agricultural innovation in the field of rural sociology and that part of mathematics which deals with the theory of finite groups. She discusses in particular the similarities between communities, some that produce scientific ideas and others in which religious, artistic or literary concepts are more prominent. It is the "invisible college", a group of eminent and productive scientists, that fosters scientific knowledge and stimulates its growth in relationship with social organization and communication.

Anyone involved with the history of scientific ideas and the social nature of science should peruse this book, but although it provides new insights the conclusions are mostly predictable.

GEORGE ORDISH, *The constant pest. A short history of pests and their control*, London, Peter Davies, 1976, 8vo, [5 11.], pp. 240, illus., £6.50.

Mr. Ordish has a life-time's experience of the pests that infest crops, domesticated animals and man, and of attempts to control them. He has written extensively on his specialty, and now presents the first history of it, ranging from early neolithic times to the present day. Arranged in chronological order it is full of fascinating and important information; it is a pity, therefore, that documentation is scanty, although a list of source references extends to 226 entries. The many and varied methods used for pest destruction are described and it seems certain that all were of limited value before the modern chemical industry entered the fray. The reaction against the latter, instigated by Rachel Carson's *Silent spring* of 1962, is now being reversed, and Mr. Ordish's book helps by putting these events in historical perspective.

A topic of vital relevance to the history of nutrition, it should be studied carefully not only by those involved in medical history but also by those tackling the nutritional problems of the world today. The dimension of history increases understanding and helps in the foundation and promotion of programmes of action.

LAWRENCE STONE (editor), *The university in society*, Volume I, *Oxford and Cambridge from the fourteenth to the early nineteenth century*, Volume 2, *Europe, Scotland, and the United States from the sixteenth to the twentieth century*, Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press; London, Oxford University Press, 1974, 8vo, pp. ix, 1–352, 10 11., and ix, 355–642, 10 11., illus., £9.50 the set.

There are thirteen essays in these volumes and their central aim is to seek a true sociology of education based on that greatly neglected topic, the history of education. Each is of a high quality and will supply the historian of medicine with a great deal of data and informed opinion as a background to his studies of medical education. They are mostly lively, with new ideas and transmitted enthusiasm, but one or two of them are less so, on account of their content of statistics. The contributors point out the importance of studying universities as societies in miniature, influenced by local social, economic and political factors. Their impact upon society is also of vital importance. As in medical history where the patient is often neglected, or in naval history the man between decks, so has been the case in the history of education where the teacher has

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been dealt with liberally but the student to a much lesser extent. Only by looking at them closely can the effects of social changes such as the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Industrial Revolution be assessed adequately.

This book will not only provide a basis for the study of medical education but should also stimulate new areas of research and the re-evaluation of old ones.

J. M. ZIMAN, *Public knowledge. An essay concerning the social dimension of science*, Cambridge University Press, 1974, 8vo, pp. xii, 154, £1.40 (paperback).

This book appeared first in 1968 and is now reprinted (see reviews, *Bull. Atomic Sci.*, 1969, 25: 36; *Science*, 1969, 164: 669; *Choice*, 1969, 6: 80). It is a well-balanced treatment, aimed at the educated layman, of the philosophical, psychological, and sociological consequences of the thesis that scientific research contributes to the store of accepted knowledge. The scientist's need to explain and communicate ideas determines the intellectual form of scientific knowledge and the internal social relations of the scientific community are of central importance.

All those working in the fields of history of science and of medicine should read this book, especially in view of the increased awareness of social factors now found in these disciplines. Without doubt it will be beneficial.

W. R. MERRINGTON, *University College Hospital and its Medical School; a history*, London, Heinemann, 1976, 8vo, pp. xvii, 301, illus., £7.50.

U.C.H. and U.C.H.M.S. have had an illustrious career, for as well as being a renowned centre for healing they have been, and still are, outstanding institutions in the field of medical science. In fact, at one time they could boast of having more Fellows of the Royal Society on their staff than any other hospital and medical school in the land. But despite such eminence no comprehensive history of this remarkable achievement has been available until now.

Mr. Merrington, who at one time was a surgeon on the staff of the hospital, supplies this need. His history is an accurate and lively account of the almost 150 years of service to patients and to medical advancement. If it lacks depth by the omission of events elsewhere in the medical world, it also lacks the biased opinions and judgments common amongst those who record the histories of their own institutions.

The story unfolds chronologically and it is revealing to note how many men of distinction have been associated with this great hospital and school: Sir Charles Bell, John Elliotson, Liston, Connolly, Quain, Carswell, Syme, William Jenner, Henry Thompson, Wilson Fox, Ringer, Gowers, Godlee, Thomas Barlow, Horsley, Marcus Gunn, Wilfred Trotter, Thomas Lewis, Francis Walshe, Lord Rosenheim, etc. Joseph Lister was a product of the school, as were many others, but whose fame was established elsewhere. The medical advances too are impressive and include the first general anaesthetic for a major operation, and pioneer work in neurosurgery, cardiology, metabolic studies and clinical science in general, to mention only a few. Even the hospital of 1906 itself was of revolutionary design being the first example of the "cross" plan.

The author is to be congratulated on his excellent book which will be enjoyed by a wide audience.