

### Book Reviews

physiology', which describes the work of the Cambridge school of nerve function, 1934 to 1952. A continuation of Sharpey-Schafer's *History of the Physiological Society during its first fifty years 1876–1926* is provided by Dr W. F. Bynum in an excellent essay, 'A short history of the Physiological Society 1926–1976' (pp. 23–72), and there are descriptions of 'Historical exhibitions and demonstrations' (pp. 18–97P) which include papers on a wide variety of topics concerning the history of British physiology. They include contributions by outstanding living physiologists, such as A. V. Hill, Barcroft, A. F. Huxley, Whitteridge, and Feldberg. The rest of the number concerns demonstrations and communications of present-day physiology.

This is an important contribution to the history of physiology, which may be overlooked by historians. It deserves, therefore, to be published separately.

ERNA LESKY, *The Vienna Medical School in the nineteenth century*, Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976, 8vo, pp. xv, 604, illus., £16.00.

In 1965 Dr Erna Lesky, the distinguished Professor of the History of Medicine in the University of Vienna and Director of the Institute for the History of Medicine there, published *Die Wiener medizinische Schule im 19. Jahrhundert* which was received with justifiable acclaim; it was described by Professor O. Temkin as "... a magnificent achievement ... a work of great industry, of intelligent analysis, and of personal dedication. It deserves to appear in translation ... ." (*Bull. Hist. Med.*, 1965, 39: 587–589, see p. 589; see also review in *J. Hist. Med.*, 1965, 20: 422–424). It is one of the most scholarly and detailed accounts of a medical school in existence, and this, along with the importance and widespread influence of the New Vienna School itself, destined it to be an outstanding contribution to the history of medicine. It is now translated, with updating, which consists mainly of supplementing the bibliography and the notes, especially with recent publications, especially those in English. It remains a remarkable work, packed with information and dealing with a topic no student of nineteenth-century medicine can ignore. This translation is, therefore, most welcome for the book will now reach the wider audience it richly deserves. Dr. Lesky's masterpiece can be recommended unreservedly.

DAVID KNIGHT, *The nature of science. The history of science in Western culture since 1600*, London, A. Deutsch, 1976, 8vo, pp. 215, £4.95.

In an attempt to elucidate science as an intellectual, social, and practical activity overlapping other areas of knowledge and as an expression of culture, Dr. Knight, a historian of science, adopts a thematic, rather than the more traditional chronological, presentation. By this method he can cover a much wider canvas. Throughout, he is concerned with the whole of science and not a single science, and the entire book is based on historical material used judiciously and expertly as illustrative examples of the matter under consideration.

First, the author describes the ways in which investigators have assessed their own attempts to describe and explain nature, and then the relationships between science and other activities, the scientific community with its various institutions, science as a career, science and government, and the utility of science. His 'Epilogue' deals with science today and the problems it will face in the future.

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Dr. Knight has written an excellent book that will prove invaluable as an introductory explanation of science for a wide audience, but especially for the younger person entering this discipline. It will also be a useful text for those interested in the history of science and medicine. It is very well written and does not demand of the reader much previous knowledge of science. It richly deserves a cheaper, paperback format.

DAVID KNIGHT, *Sources for the history of science 1660–1914*, Cambridge University Press, 1976, 8vo, pp. 223, £7.00 (£3.00 paperback).

The history of science draws on a vast literature, ranging from travel books to those on higher mathematics or molecular biology. A guide to these research sources is, therefore, an essential need and Dr. Knight provides us here with an excellent one. He first discusses the history of science in general, then histories of science, manuscripts, journals, scientific books, and surviving physical objects. To some extent the book reflects the author's own interests, which are mainly concerned with chemistry from the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century, but this is bound to happen, for no-one can cover the whole field at research depths. Again on a personal note, the author's opinions about the history of science as a discipline and those who practise it, are very valuable. However, British sources are given prominence, which the author admits, and it is also a pity that there is no cumulative bibliography, although copious footnotes are provided.

Nevertheless, as a readable, reliable and up-to-date survey and guide this book can be strongly recommended. It will provide an excellent introduction to the history of science for students. It is to be hoped that a companion volume on history of medicine sources will also appear in this series *Sources of history*, which is edited by G. R. Elton.

JOHN REDWOOD (editor), *European science in the seventeenth century*, Newton Abbot, David & Charles, 1977, 8vo, pp. 208, illus., £6.50.

The author's purpose is to illustrate by readings ". . . of literature telling men how to think scientifically and recording the thoughts of those who had tried patent methods. . . ." (p.10). The anthology is intended for the student and lay reader and it has four sections: 'Aims and methods' of selected men of letters and philosophers; 'Enterprise and achievement' of contemporary natural philosophers; 'Journals and scientific institutions' of the late seventeenth century; 'Instruments and men', dealing with the microscope. It is intended to display the diversity of seventeenth-century intellectual endeavour and achievement, the inter-relationships of disciplines, and a common bond that united them.

However, despite the fact that the word "European" occurs in the book's title, no less than twenty-two of the thirty authors selected are British. This can be due either to Britain's overwhelming importance in seventeenth-century science, or to the fact that an author writing in English is easier to include than one employing a foreign language.

In the case of the section on 'Anatomy and medicine' (pp. 103–127) the selections are unrepresentative: Harvey and Malpighi yes, but why Gassendi and Digby at the