

Book Reviews

buted to the corpus of medical knowledge his own highly original ideas and experimental data. As is the case elsewhere in this book the author makes use here of unreliable and occasionally out-of-date secondary sources. Thus Sarton's small book on Galen is well-recognized as treacherously untrustworthy.

Dr. Phillips' book can be strongly recommended to those who seek a reliable and competent account of Hippocratic medicine, but an adequate assessment in English of Galen and his works is still awaited.

JOHN KOBLER, *Ardent spirits. The rise and fall of prohibition*, London, Michael Joseph, 1973, 8vo, pp. 386, illus., £5.00.

A great deal has been written on the remarkable American experiment of prohibition (1920–1934), but less on events that led up to it. Mr. Kobler begins by surveying temperance, 1609 to 1860 (pp. 23–91), and temperance groups 1869–1919 (pp. 95–218). The rest of the book deals with “the Noble Experiment” itself. The latter when seen in the context of its historical background of excessive drinking makes better sense, and it should not be dismissed as a curious aberration doomed to failure. It can almost be claimed that in its early days the nation was built with the aid of alcohol, when its abuse amongst the Indians is added to its widespread use amongst the white men. But there was always a strong force against this evil influence and out of it in the second half of the nineteenth century grew the prohibition movement, and by World War I two-thirds of the states were “dry”. Religion, militant women and fanatical individuals helped to create the Women's Christian Temperance Union (1874), the Anti-Saloon League and similar crusading bodies. Their campaign was crowned with success on 17 January 1920.

Naturally, the events of the period ending in the imposition of prohibition and of the “dry” years themselves make a good story, teeming with anecdotes, which Mr. Kobler draws on liberally and with very good effect. His book is an important contribution to social history and although the text is not annotated there is a good bibliography at the end.

NOEL G. COLEY, *From animal chemistry to biochemistry*, Amersham, Bucks, Hulton Education Publishing, 1973, 8vo, pp. 272, illus., £2.20 (paperback).

The author's object is “. . . to trace the development of those parts of biochemistry which have grown from the study of animal matter and functions . . .” and to neglect plant chemistry. In so doing he hopes to place in perspective some of the main biochemical problems of today and to emphasize the importance of historical perspective.

He deals first with early studies in the chemistry of life, beginning with the seventeenth century, and then with founders of animal chemistry and its involvement in physiology and medicine, with vitalism, the contribution of physical chemistry and then again chemistry, with special attention to Liebig, and with Claude Bernard. He gives a well written and competent account of the way in which biochemistry has evolved from an empirical, applied science to a complex, theoretical study embedded in physical and organic chemistry, the main motive force being the demands of physiology and clinical medicine. There are no notes to the text, although there is a useful terminal bibliography.

Book Reviews

As a summary of the history of a subject of ever-increasing importance today, this book can be recommended. Dr. Coley brings his narrative up to date, with a terminal chapter on "some techniques of modern biochemistry" and a peep into the future. His book will, therefore, prove useful to the practising biochemist as well as to those more professionally concerned with the history of the subject. Another, and important, attraction to the student is the relatively modest price.

CARMEN BLACKER and MICHAEL LOWE (editors), *Ancient cosmologies*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1975, 8vo, pp. 270, illus., £5.95.

A great deal has been written on how individual ancient civilizations have imagined the universe was shaped, but never before have these early notions been collected together. In this excellent book nine outstanding scholars have contributed essays on the cosmological concepts of ancient peoples; eight of them are based on lectures delivered in Cambridge University in 1972. The names of the authors alone indicate the very high level of scholarship and authority achieved: J. M. Plumley on Ancient Egypt; W. G. Lambert on Sumer and Babylon; Louis Jacobs on Jewish cosmology; J. Needham on that of early China; R. F. Gombrich on Ancient Indian; Edith Jachimowicz on Islamic; H. R. Ellis Davidson on Scandinavian; G. E. R. Lloyd on Greek; and finally Philip Grierson discusses the double heritage medieval Europe derived from the Greek and Jewish cosmological traditions.

Each community was faced by the same questions. How were the earth and heavenly bodies located? What arrangements were made for the accommodation of the dead, in a heaven or hell? How were the gods and demons provided for? With very scanty knowledge of astronomy and geography they tackled these fundamental problems differently, and to be able in one book to compare and contrast the remarkable range of answers is one of the volume's several noteworthy attributes. Moreover, it is well produced with thirty-four illustrations altogether, and in view of this and the high quality of the text, the price is modest.

It is an essential work for all who are studying the history of medicine or science in the ancient world, and it can be recommended unhesitatingly. It helps to provide the background needed by the historian of special aspects of early civilizations, without which his studies and products are rendered shallow and worthless. No doubt, it will become a classic, enjoyable and informative to read, and full of accurate data and documentation for reference purposes.

RENÉE C. FOX and JUDITH P. SWAZEY, *The courage to fail. A social view of organ transplants and dialysis*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1974, 8vo, pp. xviii, 395, illus., £7.80.

Modern techniques of transplantation and dialysis have generated a series of social and ethical problems, and it is with these that the authors, a sociologist and an historian of science, are involved, using a case study and historical method of presentation and extending up to 1970. They bring to bear on their biological, clinical and social data a social scientific perspective which affords new insights into biomedical research. They examine the "gift-exchange" aspects of transplantation as it affects