

### Book Reviews

GARLAND E. ALLEN, *Life science in the twentieth century*, New York and London, John Wiley, 1975, 8vo, pp. xxv, 258, illus., £6.30 (£3.55 paperback).

The author's aim is to present a general history of biological ideas as they came out of the nineteenth century to create the experimental, analytically rigorous and interpretative life science as we know it today. He recognizes the need to deal with both the internal, or scientific, content of this process, and with the external, or "social", factors, but prefers to consider only the former. Areas examined are those that have proved to be so influential, such as genetics, embryology, evolutionary theory, general physiology, molecular biology and biochemistry, during the selected period of 1890 through 1965. It seems to have been the influence of the physical sciences at the end of the nineteenth century that promoted their rapid growth. The younger workers were then moving away from the descriptive and speculative approach of their teachers and the weighty influence of Darwinian theory, and were seeking for more scientific precision. To facilitate his handling of this complex subject, Professor Allen uses the interaction of mechanical with dialectical materialism as a guide, and he shows how the former has served biology in its earlier steps towards an essential experimental methodology, although the latter also has a role.

He is least effective when discussing molecular biology and biochemistry, and in the latter there are several significant errors and omissions. However, this is a thoughtful book written in a lively style, although without notes; the critical bibliography to some extent makes up for this omission. There are numerous typographical errors, no legends to the illustrations and the index is meagre.

R. R. BOLGAR (editor), *Classical influences on European culture A.D. 1500–1700*, Cambridge University Press, 1976, 8vo, pp. xviii, 383, illus., £12.50.

These twenty-seven scholarly essays were presented at a King's College, Cambridge, conference, without formal discussions. In 1971 a similar conference led to a well-received book, *Classical influences on European culture A.D. 500–1500*. The question, "What needs to be done?" added to the title of the meeting, but not to that of the book, indicates the intentions of the organizers: "to call attention to the gaps in our knowledge about the influence of classical learning". An item in the excellent index will lead the reader to "Research opportunities".

The papers are grouped into 'Catalogues and editions of humanist works' and 'The humanists in the Renaissance'. In the latter there are articles on 'The humanist contribution to the arts of discourse', 'Humanism and religion', 'Humanism and political thought' and 'The contribution of the humanists to the useful and the fine arts'. Although science and medicine have been purposely excluded, there is a great deal here for students of renaissance and seventeenth-century medicine. The essays are by renowned experts, written with authority and impeccable scholarship. Their book can be strongly recommended.

T. E. ALLIBONE, *The Royal Society and its dining clubs*, Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1976, 8vo, pp. xv, 457, illus., £16.50.

It seems likely that six or more dining clubs have been associated with the Royal

### Book Reviews

Society since its inauguration in 1660. There were several in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and the present club probably began in 1731. However, during its lifetime other subsidiary clubs have been formed: Sir Joseph Banks', The Royal Society Club, 1775 to 1784; the 47 Club, from 1874 to 1901 when it amalgamated with the older club. Naturally there have been several accounts of these clubs produced, all published in the last century or in the first two decades of this. Since their appearance, however, a good deal of additional and vital information has come to light, including the diaries of Hooke, John Byrom and Thomas Birch, and the Minute Book of Banks' Club. A new history was, therefore, amply justified and the author has produced a well-researched study with which to supplement and complement the accounts already available. He has drawn liberally on primary sources and cites extensively from them, but unfortunately he gives no precise references to their origins. In fact there are no notes or references at all, and the text tends to be a recitation of events without much discussion or attempts at relating with comparable events elsewhere in the world. Welcome though this detailed history may be, yet another will be needed in which full documentation and wider scholarship are employed.

KEITH TAYLOR (translator and editor), *Henri Saint-Simon (1760–1825). Selected writings on science, industry and social organisation*, London, Croom Helm, 1975, 8vo, pp. 312, £3.95 (paperback).

The influence of Saint-Simon as the founder of social science and socialism was widespread in Europe, despite the fact that his writings made little immediate impact. Although it is 150 years since his death, few of them have appeared in English, and the author's aim in this book is to present a collection of comprehensive and representative selections from them, with the object of making his ideas better known and of dispelling the frequently manifested confusion over his thoughts.

The pieces are arranged chronologically to facilitate a survey of the evolution of his doctrine. They are divided into three parts, after an introduction to the man: 'Science and the progress of human mind (1802–13)'; 'Proposals for post-war reconstruction (1814–15)'; 'From the government of men to the administration of things (1817–20)'; 'The true Christianity (1821–5)'. Of particular interest are ideas which deal with the application of scientific method to the study of man and society, the advent of the new science and technology, and the state's role in the promotion of social welfare.

Medical historians will find much of value in this excellent book, in view of the fact that Saint-Simon was of the greatest importance for the development of social thought in Europe during the nineteenth century and since.

JOHN DONNE, *Devotions upon emergent occasions*, edited, with commentary, by Anthony Raspa, Montreal and London, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976, 4to, pp. lvi, 192, \$18.00.

In 1623 Donne was convalescing from an illness, which was either typhus or relapsing fever, and he used the enforced inactivity to construct these devotions which are arranged chronologically. Each attempts a spiritual diagnosis for each stage of