

### 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