

### Book Reviews

Western Europe particularly, characterized mainly by economic instability with food shortages leading to distress and unrest. But in addition 1816 experienced abnormally cold weather, and from 1811 to 1818 there was extraordinary volcanic activity. The chief result of all these events was an acute subsistence crisis, with high cereal prices, drop in incomes, and general social disruption. Famine was widespread with its attendant typhus, plague, and unemployed beggars.

The author is the first to analyse in a scholarly study this complex situation, involving social, economic, and political factors in about twelve countries, together with data derived from meteorology, demography, economics, and epidemiology in particular. The result is an excellent survey of a vitally important era in the development of medicine, especially in France. It should, therefore, be studied carefully by all concerned with early nineteenth-century medicine or science. A closer examination of the medical implications seems called for.

ALEXIS SOYER, *The Pantropheon or a history of food and its preparation in ancient times*, New York and London, Paddington Press, 1977, 8vo, pp. xvi, 470, illus., £6.95.

Soyer (1809–1859) was an outstanding French chef who served French and English notables, and establishments such as the Reform Club (1837–1851). He also gave his services in the Irish Famine and in the Crimean War, where he collaborated with Florence Nightingale. In 1847 he published *The gastronomic regenerator*, and in it he called for a history of food and cookery. As this was not forthcoming he wrote one himself, *The Pantropheon*, which appeared in 1853 and is now reprinted in facsimile with a very brief introduction. It deals with ancient foodstuffs and their preparation for the table, concentrating mainly on Classical Antiquity. Soyer was able to incorporate an amazing amount of scholarly information into his book, much of which is documented. It is, moreover, written in an engaging style and is well illustrated; in an appendix he records accounts of memorable banquets of his own time. There are also chapters on water, beverages, drinking cups, wine, repasts, the dining-room, the table, the servants, etc.

The reappearance of this classic in the history of cookery is most welcome and the book will find a wide audience, especially as the price is modest in relationship to size and content.

PHILIP E. JONES, *The Butchers of London. A history of the Worshipful Company of Butchers of the City of London*, London, Secker & Warburg, 1976, 8vo, pp. x, 246, illus., £9.75.

The author, at one time Deputy Keeper of the Records of the Corporation of London, is an outstanding authority on the history of the City. His latest book is a scholarly survey of one of the oldest livery companies, which, along with the others, have for centuries figured importantly in the maintenance of the City's trade, wealth, and government. Mr. Jones surveys these wider spheres of activity as well as the details of the Company's activities. He deals with problems such as price controls and supply regulations, and with their central aim of providing the City with a plentiful supply of healthy meat. The medical aspects of their affairs are obvious and the health

### Book Reviews

hazards of the market and slaughterhouse are of considerable interest.

Although dealing with a specific livery company, this book also contributes importantly to the history of London and provides excellent background information for the historian of medicine concerned with city life in general.

NORMAN SMITH, *Man and water. A history of hydro-technology*. London, Peter Davies, 1976, 8vo, pp. xiv, 239, illus., £6.00.

In view of the fact that water has played and continues to play a vital and essential role in man's existence, it is curious that little has been written on its history and human relationships. Dr. Smith, of Imperial College London, is an outstanding historian of technology who has already written the first books on the history of dams, and in this work traces the use of water and its attendant hydraulic problems from Antiquity to the present day: from ancient irrigation to hydro-electricity.

As he points out, he is concerned "... with society's fundamental need to master the basic problems of food production, the supply of potable water and the generation of power . . . ." (p. xiii), and accordingly he divides his book into these three parts. In view of the immensity of the topic only a broad survey can be given, but sufficient material is supplied not only to provide this but also to indicate the many areas that need further investigation, amongst which are several of medical importance.

Dr Smith has, therefore, produced a pioneer work containing a great deal of important information presented in a scholarly fashion, and at the same time he has opened up new areas for research. It deserves a wide audience, which it will no doubt achieve because, in addition to historians of technology, science, and medicine, this book will be of interest to hydro-technologists and public health workers.

R. TED STEINBOCK, *Paleopathological diagnosis and interpretation. Bone disease in ancient human populations*, Springfield, Ill., Charles C Thomas, 1976, 8vo, pp. xvi, 423, illus., \$22.75.

Palaeopathology as an independent discipline has developed rapidly in the last few years, thanks to the devoted efforts of individuals such as the author of this book. His work is an important contribution to the subject, and it deals with trauma and many varieties of disease occurring in osteo-archaeological material. It is profusely illustrated with 274 excellent photographs, drawings, and X-rays of specimens, and has full bibliographies, and comprehensive indexes. Of special interest are the sections which consider the effects of infectious diseases such as syphilis, leprosy, and tuberculosis, and of nutritional deficiencies on bones, where the author relates palaeopathological findings with clinical events. Here, however, he is less authoritative and has at times used literature that cannot be fully accepted. He has included only gross pathological and radiological changes, explaining that his book is intended more for the physical anthropologist than for the pathologist or radiologist. However, some discussions of new X-ray and microscopical techniques should have been included, even if the author considers them less informative. One can also cavil with his definition of "palaeopathology" as including only bony remains. It surely covers pathological changes in any tissue in the human or animal body.

Nevertheless, the book will be of great value to those working in this small but expanding specialty.