

Book Reviews

RICHARD D. FRENCH, *Antivivisection and medical science in Victorian society*, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1975, 8vo, pp. [xiii], 452, illus., £10.50, (£4.95 paperback).

One of the most fascinating aspects of nineteenth-century experimental medicine is the role of so-called vivisection in securing advances and, at the same time, earning vehement criticism. Dr. French deals with the latter in his scholarly and comprehensive study, and he traces the anti-vivisection movement in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Objectors to animal experiments had, of course, been active before 1870 and they are still with us, but in the period under discussion there were times when it seemed that a large part of experimental medicine was to be prohibited, at the very time that outstanding achievements were being made. Perhaps it is understandable that linked with the anti-vivisection crusade was an associated objection to contemporary medicine. It was surely becoming too scientific, and although remarkable advances were being achieved the patient himself did not seem to be benefiting greatly from the new scientific medicine, nor was his community, and not enough regard was being given to preventive measures against disease.

There are, therefore, close parallels between the latter part of the last century and today, which the author emphasizes. Similar criticisms are now being voiced concerning the highly scientific nature of present-day medical science, and the return of the anti-vivisectionists may reflect a loss of faith in science, active today as it was a century ago.

Dr. French's book is based on extensive research into a variety of materials, including manuscripts previously unused, and his documentation is impeccable, his prose eminently readable. In addition to his main theme, he also deals with several related areas, such as Victorian political and administrative history, voluntary associations, man's attitude towards animals, Victorian feminism, and scientific communities. It will, therefore, be of value to a wide spectrum of scholars, including historians of nineteenth-century medical science, and of the social history of medicine. To all of them it can be confidently recommended, not only as an important contribution to nineteenth-century studies, but also as an excellent example of first-class scholarship and medical historiography.

OWEN GINGERICH (editor), *The nature of scientific discovery*, Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1975, 8vo, pp.616, illus., \$15.00.

This book contains the proceedings of a symposium held in 1973 to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the birth of Nicolaus Copernicus, which represented the major tribute of the United States in the worldwide observance of the Copernican quinquecentennial. All of the meeting's activities are recorded: the festival with opening address and general papers; the symposium of ten papers; the three collegia dealing with 'Science and society in the sixteenth century', 'The interplay of literature, art, and science' and 'Science, philosophy, and religion in historical perspective' in seventeen papers and discussions, mainly analysing and criticizing the symposium addresses. There are several excellent contributions to these wide-ranging topics which deal with general matters more than specifically with Copernicus. Amongst these are: A. R. Hall's 'The nature of scientific discovery in the sixteenth century';