Ages when many of the great universities and medical schools of Europe came into being.

All this is necessarily very condensed, but it is so well arranged that a beginner can easily follow what was going on in different parts of the world, greatly aided by map drawings of each region, and so fully dated that he knows exactly where he is in time as well.

The later chapters carry on the story chronologically, leading up to the great clinicians of the 19th and 20th centuries, and the development of systematic pathology and bacteriology. There is an interesting account of American colonial and frontier medicine which will be new to many readers.

It is inevitable, in a book spanning 60 centuries within 180 pages, that some of one's favorites should get short shrift, and it seems a bit unfair that Nobel, the industrial inventor of dynamite, should be allotted two and a half columns and a portrait, just because he provided monetary rewards to a certain number of medical men, while Rokitansky gets but nine lines. Some people, too, may wonder why Almroth Wright gets no mention at all. Following Jenner and Pasteur, Wright successfully broadened the scope of immunization when he used a vaccine of heat-killed typhoid bacilli instead of the live vaccine of his predecessors. With his preventive inoculation, typhoid fever, which had been so disastrous in the Boer War, was completely eliminated from the British Army during the First World War. He might also claim to have been the first true clinical pathologist, when in 1906, he was given beds and the charge of his own patients at St Mary's Hospital. Dr Green writes a pleasant, even prose with relevant anecdotes neatly inserted which rivet the attention and aid the memory. One or two call for a little modification.

The nickname 'Limey' for Englishmen in the USA was derived from the use of limes, not lemons, as an antiscorbutic in the British Navy, limes having replaced the original lemons in order to boost the lime growers of Jamaica, although we know now that they are greatly inferior to lemons in vitamin C content. And James Paget's original work during his first year as a medical student was to dissect and describe the larvae of Trichinae in the human muscle. He had found them in the dissecting room and was unaware of the disease trichinosis caused by them; that followed later from the work of Zenker and others in Germany. These are trivial objections among a wealth of entertaining notes on personalities and name derivations.

The author and publishers are to be congratulated on producing a book so easy to handle, with large clear print and unhackneyed illustrations by Mr De Bock. The portraits, which predominate, undoubtedly adorn the text, though they hardly correspond in likeness with contemporary paintings and photographs of the subjects. It is difficult to believe that so many masters of medicine, often envenomous heroes of character, should have had the appealing eyes of gazelles that Mr de Bock gives them.

N. H. SCHUSTER


'The trouble about the Medical Research Council' said one of its critics 'is the regularity with which it delivers the goods'. This view of the Council expressed by a fair-minded and objective critic is one which even its more obsessively hostile opponents would find difficult to contradict. How does it do the trick? Obviously it is not one performed by all research establishments—least of all perhaps by research establishments having strong connections with governments.

Sir Harold Himsworth, being a Yorkshireman, a University College Hospital student and Professor of Medicine, and a man of reasonable modesty as well as erudition and determination, has understandably felt bound not to comment upon one commonly accepted part of the answer. This lies in two things: (1) the nature and extent of the responsibilities which the constitution of the Medical Research Council has placed in the hands of its medical executive secretary; and (2) the outstanding personal and scientific qualities of the three secretaries who have so far served the Council: Fletcher, Mellanby, and Himsworth. These men, besides being distinguished investigators in their own fields, displayed qualities of character and personality which gained the confidence of their colleagues, of politicians and administrators, and of the scientific community. They made it their policy to see that MRC support was available, without fear or favour, to all persons and groups who appeared to qualified assessors as likely to advance natural knowledge in any relevant field.

The Council, besides being fortunate in its three medical executive secretaries, was also blessed by the quality and insight of those who laid its foundations. As Himsworth tells us (page 99): 'These were the jurist and the philosopher Haldane of Cloan, the ex-professor of anatomy and dean Christopher Addison, and that brilliant and unorthodox civil servant Robert Morant. Their solution to the problem was the independent Research Council standing half-way between Government and its departments on the one hand and research workers and their institutions on the other and having executive authority to administer funds at its sole discretion subject to Parliamentary scrutiny of its transactions. As this device first reached its full development in the council concerned with biomedical research, the establishing of that organization and the significance of this can be taken as an example.'

The importance of the principles thereby embodied to British research, not only in medicine, can scarcely be exaggerated. Readers of this scholarly book will find much to provoke thought concerning the structure of scientific knowledge in general terms; and they will note many perceptive analyses of the different ways in which scientific development may be organized in civilized societies. But they will not fail to grasp the fundamental importance which Himsworth correctly attaches to one of Haldane's fundamental points (page 101), namely, that 'science ignores departmental as well as geographical areas'.

Long may it remain so! And if the publication of this book serves as an 'hands-off' warning to any who might wish to have it otherwise, that is another good reason for welcoming its timely publication.

J. HOWIE


This compact volume is the fourth in a series published by Butterworths and edited by Sheldon Sommers. The choice of subjects for this annual review is very wide in range from chapters on normal values, automation of pathological data, and computer teaching of pathology, through the more sophisticated chapters which include many electron microscope studies, eg, repair and regeneration, to narrow subjects like the histogenesis of cardiac myxomas. Each contribution is of a high order which is unusual in review books and it is unfair in a way to single out any one author. The book does, however, pinpoint a number of anomalies.

A plea for more postmortem examinations is based on the new knowledge gained from necropsies about derangements which follow 'sustained life'.

The book is a review for histopathologists and little appears which might at first glance appeal to other pathologists, except perhaps for the chapter on intervascular coagulation in myeloproliferative disorders. However, the opening chapter is a firm plea for the breaking down of barriers between pathologists and epidemiologists, and in a significant line the contributor sees community...