

## Book Reviews

prisingly, figures as the chief villain in Szyfman's story. When Szyfman claims, however, that "the paleontological facts became for [Lamarck] the open book of the development of animate nature which confirmed his theory and constituted an irrefutable argument against . . . Cuvier" (p. 118), this simply betrays Szyfman's ignorance of the state of the fossil record at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The author indicates in the preface that he began the book in 1958 and essentially completed it in 1967. This is easy to believe. There is little evidence to indicate that the author has taken cognizance of work done either in evolutionary biology or in the history of science since then. Thus, for example, in the chapter entitled 'The Lamarckian theory of heredity and contemporary genetics' there is only one reference to a publication after 1967, and that is to a 1971 book by Grassé. To make things worse, Szyfman does not appear to have been historically or scientifically up to date even in 1967. Though this book may please a few French biologists, it is unlikely to impress historians of science in France or elsewhere.

The primary virtue of this book remains its lengthy quotations from Lamarck's own writings. The text in which the quotes are imbedded, however, simply does not do justice to the subject.

Richard W. Burkhardt, Jr

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

K. DAVID PATTERSON. *Health in Colonial Ghana: disease, medicine, and socio-economic change, 1900–1955*, Waltham, Mass., Crossroads Press, 1981, 8vo, pp. xiv, 187, [no price stated].

The author, Professor of History at the University of North Carolina, addresses this book primarily to historians although hoping that it will also interest professionals in health-related fields. His objectives are "to describe changes in the epidemiological environment confronting Ghanaians between 1900 and 1955; to examine the medical and socio-economic forces which affected the distribution, prevalence, and the severity of particular diseases; and to assess the demographic impact of these diseases." The period covered starts at the time when British rule was asserted over the entire Gold Coast (except for mandated Togo) and ends at the eve of independence. It also covered the two world wars and the depression period of the 1930s.

In the first chapter the major socio-economic changes are discussed in relation to the ways in which these changes influenced human health. For example, the rapid spread of the road and rail network in the early 1920s, although of great economic benefit, encouraged travel and, with this, the spread of disease. The growth of the cocoa industry and of mining, especially gold mining, brought an influx of migrants to the towns with overcrowding in slums and shanty towns and all the accompanying health problems.

The second chapter deals with the development and reception of modern medical services and the reviewer was pleased to see that Professor Patterson found much that was good. True, he criticizes, but his criticisms seem to be fair and well supported by references. Much is said of the efforts of enlightened Governors and Directors of Medical Services, frustrated though these often were by financial stringency. Other dedicated workers, some of them known personally to the reviewer, are also mentioned by name.

In the succeeding four chapters detailed attention is given to the effects of specific diseases including, among many others, malaria, trypanosomiasis, the dysenteries, hookworm, schistosomiasis, tuberculosis, leprosy, venereal diseases, and yaws. The final chapter deals with the demographic consequences and causes of the changing epidemiological situation. Subjects covered include the reliability of census and other statistics, the part played by medical measures and other factors in the huge growth of population, nutrition, malnutrition, and the availability of food, and the gradual growth in living standards. The author concludes: "Progress in Ghana must not be exaggerated. . . . Better food, clothing, housing, education, water, and sanitation were responsible for much of the progress made prior to 1955; poverty and ignorance remain greater barriers to good health than shortages of doctors or clinics."

Forty-one tables are provided at the end of the book but these should be read in conjunction with the text where their limitations and reliability are discussed.

Although there are more than 800 references, this is no mere review but a very readable and

## Book Reviews

interesting book, a valuable contribution to the author's field of study, and a useful work of reference. It should interest many in addition to those for whom the author wrote.

F. I. C. Apted  
Eskdale Green, Cumbria

LLOYD G. STEVENSON (editor), *A celebration of medical history*, Baltimore, Md., and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982, 8vo, pp. vi, 228, illus., £12.75.

The fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Institute and Library for the History of Medicine at the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, was appropriately marked by festivities, academic as well as gastronomic. Distinguished scholars were invited from Europe and the USA to lecture, and their offerings, together with the formal comments on them by Hopkins alumni, form the basis of this elegant and enjoyable volume. The range is wide, from the historiography of diseases and medical metaphors, to sixteenth-century England, Glisson and Wepfer, pre-revolutionary France, and nineteenth-century Italy. There is much here to admire, and indeed to stimulate thought. Friends of the Institute will be especially glad to have the varied assessments of the value and importance of its Library, not just in the context of other American medical schools and libraries, but internationally as one of the joint creators of the indispensable MEDLARS. The wittiest revelation of all is reserved until last: the birth of the Institute owed far more to W. H. Welch than he ever knew or suspected.

*Medical History* salutes the Institute on its golden jubilee, and expresses the confident hope that it will continue to meet and surpass the expectations of its founding fathers as a model worthy of worldwide emulation.

Vivian Nutton  
Wellcome Institute

SRBOLJUB ZIVANOVIC, *Ancient diseases. The elements of palaeopathology*, trans. by Lovett F. Edwards, London, Methuen, 1982, 8vo, pp. xxii, 285, illus., £17.50.

In recent years there has been a welcome and increasing interest by the medical world in palaeopathology – that is, the study of ancient disease. In this country the most readily available sources of data for palaeopathological study are the large number of skeletons from archaeological excavations. Most of the examination and assessment of skeletal material is carried out by archaeologists and anthropologists with no medical background. The publication of this book is therefore welcome, especially as its stated aim is to be a comprehensive text in palaeopathology from the medical standpoint for archaeologists and anthropologists. This is an aspect that should be encouraged, as far too many reports of disease in skeletal material have in the past been based on inaccurate diagnosis – probably due to lack of a medical background and confusion of terminology. Sadly then, although this book, as well as considering material and methods, covers a wide range of abnormalities and disease, it does not fulfil its promise.

There are not enough illustrations and some of those which are present do not show what they set out to. A striking example is Plate 13 – a full-page picture of a lady with apparent changes in the teeth characteristic of hyperfluorosis. The teeth are hardly visible, however. It is also disappointing to find Dr Zivanovic stating that a “Disease which is very common and quite easily diagnosed in Palaeopathological material is Rheumatoid Arthritis”. Most workers find that there are very few examples of this disease in skeletal material, possibly this is due to the difficulty of diagnosis or the poor archaeological recovery of diagnostically essential parts such as the small bones of hands and feet. Perhaps rheumatoid arthritis was commoner in Eastern Europe, from which many of the palaeopathological examples are drawn, but no details are given.

This book will provide an interesting background read in this fascinating subject but will not be so useful as a diagnostic aid.

Janet Rogers  
Department of Medicine  
Bristol Royal Infirmary