BOOK REVIEWS

other sciences which deal with the different aspects of human and social biology and of human ecology.

With the development of social medicine in the universities, and with the expanding recognition in the community of the impossibility of dissociating merely for administrative reasons the medical services and the others which deal with housing, education, and all the rest which promote in one way or another the health of the people, it is probable that in the not too remote future this administrative distinction between the different departments of the central and local authority will gradually be broken down, and with the passing of time the practice of public health in the community will come to mirror the scope and aims of social medicine within the universities.

F. A. E. CREW.

Some British Pioneers of Social Medicine. By MAJOR
GREENWOOD. Geoffrey Cumberlege: Oxford University Press. 1948. Pp. 118. (Price 12s. 6d.)

Economists, with a suave genius for concealing unpalatable situations behind an innocuous pater, have made much in the past of the "rewards of abstinence." It is a subtle phrase, calculated to appeal to the puritan conscience. To question who abstains and who gets the rewards is as vulgarly irrelevant as it is politically dangerous. By communal abstention from gross indulgence in consumer goods during the first half of the nineteenth century the industrial revolution was pushed through to offer its rewards in vast aggregations of capital equipment. So, in over-simplified form, runs the theory. Fortunately, the events occurred in a community not wholly composed of economists.

The men who saw to it that some of the profits were ploughed back in, so that part at least of the new capital was used in clean water supplies, and streets and sewers and the promotion of health, were the pioneers whose brief working biographies form the subject of Professor Greenwood's Heath Clark lectures. Most of them were doctors. All of them were interested in finding out the facts of the society in which they lived by means of statistics; and it is mainly in this technical aspect of their thought that they are presented here.

The development of the life table, besides setting the costing of the life insurance industry on a rational basis, placed in the hands of the reformers an invaluable weapon. The shift of emphasis that turned from consideration of the expectation of life to the concept of preventable death was an obvious but vitally important one. It was by exploring the associations between conditions of life and greater or less expectation of survival that the pioneers achieved their most notable success in promoting reform. Their very ignorance of much of the content of modern medical science stood them in good stead; in the absence of knowledge of micro-organisms as maters morbi, or of genetics as limiting the range of individual viability, the intellectual climate was favourable to the pursuit of realistic studies into the influence of the conditions of everyday life on health. Professor Greenwood traces the development of this line of thought in a series of selected biographical sketches from the late eighteenth century, to its most operationally effective period in the heyday of Victorian reform. But if technique was important, it became so only because of the moral urge to employ it for human good.

The second phase of the Protestant revolution which grew up with the Wesleys during the second half of the eighteenth century was unique among ethical movements because the will to philanthropy was co-existent with techniques for organizing society to co-operate in philanthropic enterprise. St. Jerome, among the ruins of the Classical Empire, had cried: "Christ dies every day, naked and hungry, in the person of his poor," but it was a private sorrow, and public activity had concerned itself with organizing relationships between secular and spiritual government after the irrelevant prehistoric example of Saul and Samuel. The definition of social medicine offered by the present author as "those applications of medical and scientific knowledge to the prevention and relief of suffering and to the raising of the standard of living which could only be effected by social agencies, by co-operation" would have been alien to St. Jerome for all his compassion.

It is the great merit of these all too short essays that while concerned principally with the means, they are sympathetic towards and quietly illustrative of the ethical values that determined the ends. The first half of the book in particular, which deals with the eighteenth century, amply discloses the dissenting background of most of the now little-known reformers whose work is discussed. In the second half, which is mainly concerned with Chadwick, Farr, and Simon, we are in better mapped territory and able to avoid the anachronism which often offends in less generally discussed aspects of their work.

If one has any quarrel with the way the argument is presented it is perhaps in the extension of undue charity to the personality of Chadwick, who himself had little charity. His passion was for tidiness and not for the poor, a dangerous if not uncommon vice in philanthropists. Here we are shown Chadwick solely as the patient investigator of the nauseous evils of early Victorian urban life. He is gently exposed as an unsusble interpreter of vital statistics but the general tone is one of defence. No account is given of Chadwick's role as the administrator, the proponent of strong central authority and harsh institutional treatment. One of the great virtues of the statistical method is that, properly employed, it is a prophylactic against authoritarianism; and in medicine authoritarianism is all too easy. In its past it has necessarily had the teacher-pupil relationships of an art where initiation comes through observing and listening to the skilled practitioner, who often has neither the time nor the will to rationalize his techniques. Chadwick, though not a doctor, belongs to this past. He believed in authority and one would have liked to see this described.

In the main, however, the author's charity creates the book's great charm. Professor Greenwood writes most happily when praising the humanity of those he likes—one remembers the moving simplicity of an earlier essay on Bacot—and it is clear that he has a great liking for the "men who loved doing little sums."

It is unfortunate that the Oxford University Press should see fit to charge 12s. 6d. for a book that one would like to urge students to buy.

R. PADLEY.


The report of the first ten years of the Prophit Trust Survey from 1934 to 1944 gives the results obtained from examinations of over 10,000 young people. It includes material published in interim reports (Ridehalgh, 1942: Daniels, 1943, 1944). The survey was planned for the examination of groups of persons at the ages most at risk from tuberculosis, that is between 15 and 25