

and burnt by the Scandinavian invaders, or much more would be known about Anglo-Saxon medicine. There was a partial revival of medical manuscripts under King Alfred. They are not numerous and are in the British Museum and at Oxford and Cambridge. "Touching for the King's Evil" and the use of magic, amulets and charms in Anglo-Saxon medicine are discussed.

A chapter on Arab medicine, which was based on Galen's works, and reference to the writings of Rhazes, Averroes and other Arabians follow. The third and fourth chapters describe the Universities of Salerno and Montpellier. Talbot shows that generalizations about the influence of Salerno on English medicine are not valid, for they do not take into account considerable differences which separate the earlier from the later productions of this school. In fact, the earliest use of a Salernitan text in England seems to have been in the twelfth century. He also finds no evidence for the phrase, adopted by many modern writers on historic medicine, *Ecclesia abhorret a sanguine*, as a reason for the separation of surgery from medicine. It does not appear in the Council of Tours, A.D. 1163, or any Decretal of the Popes. It dates from Quesnay of Paris in 1774. Montpellier, it may be noted, had a fully developed medical faculty by A.D. 1137.

The chief features of medieval medicine occupy the rest of the book. Medical education, preceded by the acquirement of a degree in arts, is the subject of the fifth chapter with special reference to the lengthy course at Oxford. In the next chapter an account is given of the work of Gilbertus Anglicus, one of the first English writers on medicine, and others. Reference is made to Roger Bacon's attack on the physicians of his time. The seventh chapter gives much information on medieval surgery. The rest of the book is devoted to chapters on John Gaddesden, on anatomy and its exponents, the ordinary medieval practitioners, medical ethics and etiquette as then practised, hygiene, epidemics, hospitals, and vernacular texts; the book closes with a chapter entitled "The Final Phase".

This summarized account indicates the wide range and depth of the book and the important contributions which it makes to medical history of the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods. In a brief preface Talbot states that his book is addressed to the general reader, not to specialists. This is, however, the work of a scholar embodying his researches, and will also appeal to general and medical historians. The bibliography is meagre, and references are omitted purposely, although their inclusion would have been welcome to students of the periods. But Talbot has given us so much that it is perhaps ungracious to ask for more.

ARTHUR MACNULTY

FUEL AND FOOD

The Limits of Man

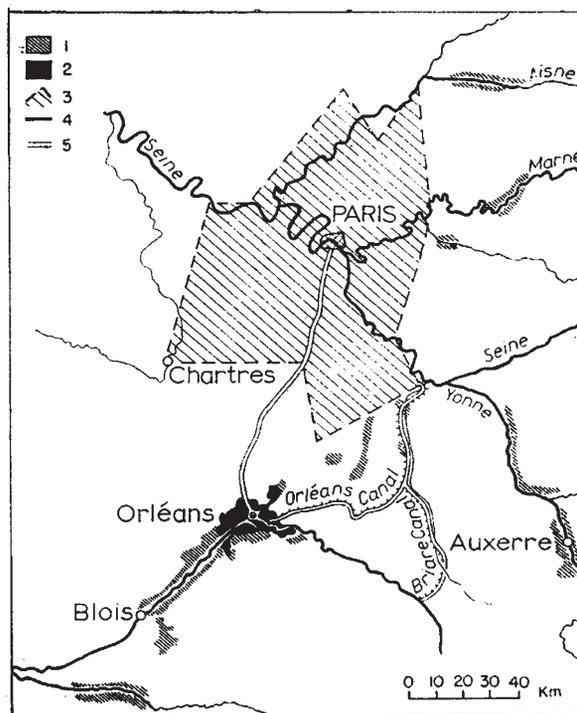
An Enquiry into the Scientific Bases of Human Population. By Hugh Nicol. Pp. 283. (London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1967.) 35s. net.

If there are any people who believe that either in business or agriculture you can get something for nothing, they will probably be disillusioned by the time they have read Professor Nicol's repetitive refutation. Similarly, anyone who thinks that plants contain nothing but C, H and O will have the error thoroughly thumped out of him. These illusions may be widespread, but not, let us hope, in quarters where agricultural policy is established. Yet much of the book seems to be directed towards, or at, people in these places; it is a continuous editorial castigation of their misdirection of national and world agricultural policy with some bits of popular science and scientific history scattered through it.

The principal theme is that present agricultural policy relies too heavily on fossil fuels for the production of machinery and fertilizers, that ultimately these fuels will be exhausted, and that other methods of farming, for example, the use of clovers and other nitrogen-fixing legumes, deserve more attention. These are valid points, and it is good that people should comment on the way in which we are now squandering unrenewable resources, but agriculture is responsible for such a small part of the total waste that it seems hard that it should be singled out for special condemnation. No doubt, however, it is the duty of biologists to try to set engineers and physicists a good example.

The book is enlivened by many quotations—some pertinent and some comic. The most relevant is from R. G. Ingersoll: "In Nature there are neither rewards nor punishments—there are consequences". N. W. PRIFE

WINE FOR PARIS



Provisioning of Paris with cheap wine in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (after Dion). 1, Vineyards producing cheap wine. 2, Parishes in the Orléans district indicated in 1769 as being "all in vineyards". 3, Area around Paris in which wine production for sale to merchants and innkeepers had been prohibited in 1577. 4, Rivers used for navigation. 5, Paris-Orléans road. From *An Historical Geography of Western Europe before 1800*, by C. T. Smith. (Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd.; 65s.)

GREAT BIRD ARTIST

Thorburn's Birds

Edited with an introduction and new text by James Fisher. Pp. 184 (82 plates). (London: Ebury Press, and Michael Joseph, Ltd., 1967.) 50s.

ARCHIBALD THORBURN (1860-1935) is described in the introduction as having been "the first great bird artist of the twentieth century as well as the last of the nineteenth". In technical terms of book illustration, his work provides a bridge between the hand-coloured lithography of the earlier period and the methods of reproduction