
Science in Retrospect

There appears to be an increasing realization among scientists that the history of scientific thought in relation to the social and economic background of the time is of value, both for its own sake and for the insight it offers into modern trends in scientific development. With this thought in mind a great university which itself has contributed much to scientific history has inaugurated a series of courses of lectures covering the development of science in specific historical periods. The first of these courses, covering in most of the lectures the period from 1895 to 1935, provides the subject matter of the volume under discussion. The presentations are well thought out and admirably condensed to lecture length. Most of the contributors have chosen to follow intensively specific parts of their fields rather than to attempt broad historical analyses. The lecturers and their subjects are as follows: Cornford on philosophy, Dampier on the period from Aristotle to Galileo, the late Lord Rutherford on physics, Bragg on crystal physics, Aston on atomic theory, Sir Arthur Eddington on astronomy, Ryle on physiology and pathology, the late G. H. F. Nuttall on parasitology and tropical medicine, Punnett on evolution, and Haldane on genetics. The various chapters are intensely interesting and are written with an enthusiasm and vigor which can not help captivating the reader.

—L. H. S.

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