BOOK REVIEWS

THOMAS JEFFERSON AND THE SCIENTIFIC TRENDS OF HIS TIME


A USEFUL evaluation of the scientific influence of such a figure as Thomas Jefferson could only be made by a man of broad scholarship in both history and science. Dr. Browne has these qualifications; and he has taken the pains to do a job that is both thorough and interesting.

The author has abstracted the essentials from a vast literature to give a clear picture of Jefferson’s concepts in the various fields of science, of his views regarding the social significance of science, and of the influence he had in the development of scientific research and thought. Despite the obvious marks of careful scholarship, the text is smoothly written and interesting. Many relevant quotations are given from Jefferson’s letters and papers, together with illustrations and maps from the books he wrote and from those he read.

Botany, chemistry, geology, geography—these and other sciences were all of great interest to Jefferson; but he gave special attention to their practical application in agriculture, industry, and the household arts. Yet the instructions that he gave to Lewis for conducting the famous Lewis and Clark Expedition show clearly enough his appreciation for the need of fundamental research as the basis for progress in the applied sciences.

The author draws easily on his wide knowledge of the history of science to give the reader a clear picture of Jefferson’s views in relation to those of the distinguished scientists and agriculturists of his time. In fact, he accomplishes the double task of evaluating the period as well as the rôle Jefferson played in it.

Any reader interested in science, in agriculture, in Jefferson, or in the formative period of the United States will certainly find this little book of great interest. (And it is also recommended for just good, quiet reading without any purpose at all.)—CHARLES E. KELLOGG.

INVESTIGACIONES AGRONÓMICAS


THE author is the distinguished Director of the no less distinguished Uruguayan Institute “La Estanzuela” located near Montevideo, where for years he has guided the scientific work in