

REVIEW

TOWARD A HISTORY OF GEOLOGY, edited by Cecil J. Schneer; the proceedings of the New Hampshire Inter-Disciplinary Conference on the History of Geology, September 7-12, 1967. Published by The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England, 1970, vi + 469 pp., \$22.50

The participants in the New Hampshire Conference are leading scholars in various fields of the history of the geological sciences. In his introduction, Professor Schneer states: "It is the purpose of this Conference and this volume to reconstruct the intellectual climate within which our science evolved—to recreate the world view that was available to young Charles Darwin, out of which the theory of evolution was to emerge." The 26 papers presented and published here reveal and illustrate quite well the breadth and scope of the present knowledge of this intellectual climate as it existed in the early nineteenth century. Among the papers are studies of American and Russian geology as well as English and continental geology. Also, summary articles on certain aspects of geologic thought during the eighteenth century and on major scientific figures such as Alexander von Humboldt, Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, and Benoit de Maillet are included. All of the papers are significant contributions to the literature of the history of science and many

contain valuable reassessments of the role of certain individuals in the development of geologic thought in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Some deal with little known contributions, previously generally overlooked by historians. Among these, some surprises await the reader such as extensive discussion of de Maillet's ideas on marine processes and his emphasis on the action of the sea in an era when the field of oceanography was unknown or nonexistent, and his belief that "diminution of the sea" and, thus, earth history has an antiquity in the order of two billion years!

Minor criticisms felt by this reviewer are that some authors focus their attention a bit too strongly and overstate the significance of the contributions of certain individuals and that there is a tendency to overcompensate for the frailty of the "Great Man" approach to historical analysis. It is suggested that the "game" of searching out who was actually first to state a concept is secondary in importance to the determination of who made the statement that actually was read and comprehended by his contemporaries and how much real influence that statement exerted on the progress of geologic thought.

H.C.S.

RECENT BOOKS RECEIVED

THE THEORY OF GROUND-WATER MOTION AND RELATED PAPERS, by M. King Hubbert. Published by Hafner Publishing Company, New York and London, 1969, 311 pp., illus., \$12.50

DICTIONARY OF FUEL TECHNOLOGY, by Alan Gilpin. Published by Philosophical Library Inc., New York, 1969, xii + 275 pp., \$20.00

QUARRYING, OPENCAST AND ALLUVIAL MINING, by John Sinclair. Published by Elsevier Publishing Company, Ltd., Amsterdam, London and New York, 1969, vii + 375 pp., illus., \$21.50

RUTLEY'S ELEMENTS OF MINERALOGY, the twenty-sixth edition, by H. H. Read. Published by Thomas Murby & Co., London, 1970, xii + 560 pp., illus.