

### Book Reviews

Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. It is, therefore, appropriate that he should trace the history of their unwelcome symbiosis with man. He contends with justification that their importance to history is undoubted and extensive, because an awareness of their prevalence helps us to comprehend certain human social habits and manners. It is also useful knowledge when perusing the literature, non-scientific and scientific, of periods when infestations were universal.

His scholarly and well-written book is well organized, fully documented, and pleasantly written, although there are too many small errors and mis-spellings. It offers some support for the thesis that the best person to write on a scientific topic is he who is fully aware of modern knowledge and also a competent historian, although Professor Busvine does occasionally assess the past in the light of the present and levels unwarranted judgements.

The work deals with the scientific, the medical (transmission of plague and typhus in particular), literary, and historical aspects of man's ectoparasites, the most fascinating section being the one that deals with his reaction to them. The author's audience will, therefore, be a wide one, which his book richly deserves.

PAUL F. CRANFIELD, *Claude Bernard's revised edition of his Introduction à l'étude de la médecine expérimentale*, New York, Science History Publications, 1976, 8vo, pp. xii, 1-162 and 1\*-163\*, £21.00.

Bernard's classic work *Introduction*, appeared in 1865 and this is a revised edition of it, originally intended as an introduction to his *Principes de médecine expérimentale*, a book that was never published. The full text in French is given in facsimile on one side of the page and facing it are the author's corrections that have been incorporated, showing how it differs from the 1865 edition. It seems that only two copies survived.

On the whole the differences between the two editions are minor, but the editor claims that the subtle stylistic emendations are of significance. Passages dealing with vivisection, with the distinction between observation and experiment, with the *milieu interne*, with determination, statistics, and the role of hypothesis are also noteworthy although minor. They give some indication of Bernard's evolving thought, but none is of great significance and they do not warrant the high price asked for this volume.

DAVID WILSON, *Penicillin in perspective*, London, Faber & Faber, 1976, 8vo, pp. x, 298, viii, £4.95.

It has long been suspected that the accepted description of the discovery and therapeutic use of penicillin is not entirely accurate. Professor Ronald Hare's *The birth of penicillin* (London, 1970) and Professor Sir Ernst Chain's lecture of 1971 have helped to set the record straight and this book contributes further to the process. The author, who is a science writer and broadcaster, has collected together all the available data and presents what seems to be the most acceptable, detailed account so far available. He has carried out extensive research and presents his facts and conclusions in a lucid, undramatic style, with some documentation. The picture gradually clarifies but there are still problems the resolution of which will probably have to await the demise of all who were concerned with this remarkable venture.