

Book Reviews

of the main contributions to the subject by the symposium, even though it was generally accepted that the topic is not capable of final resolution.

MARY P. WEIDEMAN (editor), *Microcirculation*, Stroudsburg, Penn., Dowden, Hutchinson & Ross, 1974, 4to, pp. xi, 429, illus., £13.90.

The third volume in this useful series "Benchmark Papers in Human Physiology" of anthologies of classical contributions to human physiology, this book is arranged like its predecessors with facsimile reprints of extracts from books and articles, grouped in chronological sequence. The theme here is blood flow through vessels at the capillary level. Also like its forerunners, the earlier periods are less well handled and represented, and dating is obscure. Thus, if Harvey's postulation of peripheral arterial and venous linkage is included, why not deal briefly with that of Galen and Erasistratus? After all it was as essential to their primitive theory of cardiovascular function as it was to that of Harvey, and their system survived for a millennium and a half.

As it is, the selections range from Harvey (1628) to Wiederhielm (1968); the author has taken it upon herself to include one from her own writings. Again there is an inordinate bias towards American contributors, which, of course, relieves the compiler of language problems; apart from two (Harvey and Malpighi) all the work cited was published in English. Another defect of this series is also displayed here: the editor's comments are much too brief and there is little or no biographical material. Basically the idea of making readily available to students outstanding advancements in physiological thought is an excellent one, but the editors responsible for the volumes so far produced have not all been able to select their material adequately, nor provide the historical background essential for its presentation.

JAMES V. WARREN (editor), *Cardiovascular physiology*, Stroudsburg, Penn., Dowden, Hutchinson & Ross, 1975, 8vo, pp. xviii, 441, illus., £17.45.

"Benchmark Papers in Human Physiology" is an ongoing series of anthologies of original papers reproduced in facsimile. Nine volumes are planned. In this, the fourth, there are forty-nine selections, only nine being from languages other than English, which seems to indicate a somewhat biased choice. Likewise all but nine are from the literature of the twentieth century. Although others might have chosen more widely in space and time, the contributions selected are without doubt classical. They are arranged in the following six groups: the heart and central circulation; pressure flow and electrical activity in the heart and central circulation; the blood vessels; organ blood flow; non-invasive methods of study; molecular physiology of the heart and circulation. Each section has an editorial introduction, which, although quite brief, are helpful. This, however, cannot be said of the general introduction to the book. It is naïve, full of errors, including the predictable mention of "Claudius" Galen on p. 2, and should be avoided.

Nevertheless as a collection of classical primary sources on the physiology of the cardiovascular system this book can be recommended, providing the reader is aware of the foregoing criticisms. It is unfortunate that the student, who should be encouraged to refer to it and browse in it, will not be able to own his personal copy on account of the price.