

### Book Reviews

skill at collecting and chronicling, and the hardships they were exposed to, even death on occasion, are told in graphic style in a beautifully produced and illustrated volume. But as well as surveying the flora and fauna of a new and exciting land, Mr. Kastner also depicts the exploration of the North American continent.

From the medical historian's point of view, a number of the pioneers described were physicians, and the contribution of new plant remedies to medicine is a fascinating story still not fully explored. The only criticism of Mr. Kastner's writing is that he has no documentation of his text, although a rich and useful appendix of 'Bibliographic notes' is included. But at the price asked this is a give-away!

**B. H. KEAN, KENNETH E. MOTT and ADAIR J. RUSSELL, *Tropical medicine and parasitology. Classic investigations*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1978, 2 vols., 4to, pp. xxiii, 677, illus., \$50.00.**

The editors have collected together about 200 pieces representing literary contributions made to the advancement of tropical medicine and medical parasitology selected from the world's literature. As these include parts of articles published in a variety of periodicals, some of them now rare, and, like the books chosen, in a wide variety of languages, the collection is exceedingly valuable. The book covers 300 years of medicine, and the material is arranged in thirty-seven chapters grouped in three sections: 'Scientific beginnings'; 'Protozoa – protozoal infections'; 'Helminths–helminthic infections'. Each selection is prefaced by a brief biographical note on the author, but there is no connecting or explanatory narrative, and only a four-page introduction. This means that the book is merely an organized anthology of classic passages, translated, where necessary, and elegantly printed and illustrated. One learns little from it of the evolution of tropical medicine or medical parasitology *per se*, and there is no attempt to relate the events selected to the history of medicine in general. There are no references in the text to the secondary literature, and the bibliography is limited to twenty-eight entries, all but one being in English. Moreover, for a book that will only be used for reference purposes, the index is pathetically inadequate.

**WALTER H. LEWIS and MEMORY P. F. ELVIN-LEWIS, *Medical botany. Plants affecting man's health*, New York and London, John Wiley, 1977, 4to, pp. xviii, 515, illus., £19.35.**

Books on plants affecting man are usually arranged according to their botanical characteristics, but in this one the grouping of material is based on their effects: "injurious", "remedial", or "psychoactive". Moreover, the book is clinically orientated, and where necessary anatomical and physiological explanations are given. It will, therefore, be of great value to several different groups of readers seeking information on the action of plants. For the historian of medicine and pharmacy there is a considerable amount of historical data, although references to it could have been more plentiful. The book has excellent illustrations, old and new; it is well written, and the documentation is full and accurate. The farther we go back in history the more botanical therapy becomes, so that a source-book of this quality is most welcome for reference purposes.