

Book Reviews

ALFRED W. CROSBY, jr., *Epidemic and peace, 1918*, London, Greenwood Press, 1976, 8vo, pp. vi, 337, \$17.50.

There have been several books published recently on the 1918 to 1919 influenza epidemic, and this one deals with events in the United States. The author, a historian, has researched his topic with great thoroughness to produce the first detailed account of them. He relates the dramatic spread of the disease through cities, army camps, and communities, illustrating the effects with statistical data. At the same time he gives some of the history of virology as a background, and he also depicts the panic and alarm induced by the rapid dissemination of a disease that resulted in about 550,000 deaths in America alone. The effects elsewhere in the world, together with its possible military and political repercussions, are also discussed.

Crosby has recorded with scholarly precision and thoroughness the medical, scientific, and social aspects of a devastating pestilence and adds significantly to our knowledge of it.

JOHN R. MILLBURN, *Benjamin Martin. Author, instrument-maker, and 'country showman'*, Leyden, Noordhoff, 1976, 8vo, pp. xii, 244, illus., Dfl.63.00.

Benjamin Martin (1705–1782) was a remarkable man who has suffered unjust neglect by historians. However, Mr. Millburn's excellent and definitive biography adjusts this anomaly. It presents all the known information concerning his life and his professional activities as instrument-maker, teacher and demonstrator, popularizer of the new experimental philosophy of the eighteenth century, writer of modestly priced educational books, encourager of female education, lexicographer, and business and publicity man. He is probably most famous for the scientific instruments that he produced over a period of twenty-six years, and many general or specialized collections today have a Martin microscope, telescope, or other appliance originating from his London workshop.

The text of this book is well written and documented and there is also a bibliography of Martin's publications, a list of manuscripts relating to him, a list of his instruments, books, and prints (1762), and the present location of examples of his handiwork.

Mr. Millburn's book will be of great interest to historians of science, technology, and medicine, and it is a noteworthy contribution to Mr. Gerard Turner's new series *Science in history*.