R. J. MORRIS, *Cholera 1832. The social response to an epidemic,* London, Croom Helm, 1976, 8vo, pp. 228, illus., £7.50.

The first person in the British Isles to suffer from verified cholera was in Sunderland, and he died on 26 October 1831. Thereafter there was a country-wide epidemic lasting into 1832, and then three more, in 1848 to 1849, 1853 to 1854, and 1866. The medical aspects of these events are interesting enough, especially the gradual accumulation of evidence favouring a water-borne infection, but of equal importance and fascination is society's reaction to the onslaught of this disease, newly arrived in Britain.

Dr. Morris surveys this response to stress during the first outbreak of 1831 to 1832, and provides us with a graphic account, well written and with scholarly documentation. The part played by the administrative, commercial and working classes, and by the evangelicals is detailed.

The failure of the medical profession to cope with the disease is certainly true, but the author does not have sufficient background of early nineteenth-century medicine to account for this adequately. In earlier historical periods he is even less accurate and cannot have used the advice of a medical historian. Perhaps he should have left most of the medical or "internal" evidence to a person qualified to deal with it and confined his attention more to the "external" or social factors which he deals with expertly.

CHANDLER McG. BROOKS, KIYOMI KOIZUMI and JAMES O. PINKSTON (editors), *The life and contributions of Walter Bradford Cannon 1871–1945*, Albany, N. Y., State University of New York Press, 1975, 8vo, pp. xxii, 264, illus., $20.00.

A centennial symposium, 'The life and influence of Walter Bradford Cannon, 1871–1945: The development of physiology in this century', was held by the students, former colleagues, and the family of Professor Cannon, 25 to 26 May 1972. Ten papers presented there are here printed with an introduction, appendices on Cannon's staff, fellows and graduate students during his time at Harvard (1898–1942), details of the symposium, a bibliography of Cannon's published works, and a list of obituaries and biographical articles on him.

The papers are concerned first with the main areas of Cannon's physiological interest: the function of the digestive system, especially as revealed by roentgenology; the functions of the autonomic nervous system, his studies of which extended brilliantly the work of Loewi and Dale; the maintenance of homeostasis and reactions to stress; and the physiology of emotional expression. A fifth group deals with Cannon the man.

The plan of holding a commemoratory symposium for an outstanding individual is becoming increasingly common and has much to commend it. As is shown here a great deal of information concerning the man and his contribution to learning can be given by those who remember him and by those who can evaluate his work critically and in perspective. On the whole it is better than a biography, for not only is the book resulting from the meeting of intense interest to us now, it will also be a valuable source of information for future historians. As it happens, no biography of Cannon exists, but, thanks to the symposium participants, and to the editors, this volume will leave no doubt in the minds of present and future readers of his greatness.