

### Book Notices

DIETRICH BRANDENBURG, *Medizinisches in tausendundeiner Nacht*, Stuttgart, J. Fink Verlag, 1973, 8vo., pp. 79, DM.10.00.

*The Arabian Nights* is an excellent repository of information concerning medieval Islamic medicine and it is here analysed in detail by an expert. After an introduction, in which the significance of the tales in Arabic literature is discussed, and texts and translations are detailed, the author deals systematically with various aspects of medicine, including folk and astrological medicine. Full documentation is provided so that the book provides a useful reference source. It is vastly superior to its equivalent in English (F. A. Mettler, 'Medical references in *The Arabian Nights*', *Bull. Med. Lib. Assoc.*, 1956, 44: 348–359) which is based on Burton's translation of 1885–1888.

W. HOWARD HUGHES, *Alexander Fleming and penicillin*, London, Priory Press, 1974, 4to., pp. 96, illus., £2.25.

It is not entirely clear why yet another book on Fleming and penicillin for the layman was thought to be necessary. Admittedly this one is elegantly and copiously illustrated, but it is the same old panegyric, as would be expected from a colleague of Fleming and a St. Mary's man.

We still await an accurate and balanced account of the discovery, taking into account Chain's recent disclosures. Koch also receives much less than his due in a very brief early history of bacteriology. However, the earlier part of Fleming's career is well described, and throughout the book there are valuable comments based on the author's personal contacts and experiences, which are not found in other biographies.

### BOOKS ALSO RECEIVED

(The inclusion of a title in this list does not preclude the possibility of subsequent review.)

*Bibliography of the history of medicine*, no. 8 (1972), Bethesda, MD., National Library of Medicine, 1975, pp. vi, 309, \$4.40.

IVAN ILLICH, *Medical Nemesis. The expropriation of health*, London, Calder & Boyars, 1975, pp. 184, £1.50 (paperback).

*Nordisk Medicinhistorisk Årsbok*, 1974, pp. 203, illus. [no price stated].

IAN SUTHERLAND, 'When was the Great Plague? Mortality in London, 1563 to 1665', reprinted from D. V. Glass and R. Revelle (editors), *Population and social change*, London, Edward Arnold, 1972, pp. 287–320.

*Y Gwyddonydd*, 1975, vol. 13. In a supplement to this issue, on pp. vii–ix, there is a list of medical books published in Wales, 1740 to 1942.