single experimental model like toddlers hugging their security blankets. The fascination of this book does not, however, lie in the scientific data that it contains; this is the first rather than the last word on pancreatic function.

The book is a graphic demonstration of the way in which the frenetic scramble to publish in the competition for grants, jobs, and prestige has debased the style and standard of scientific writing. It covers, so we are told, about eight years of personal research work, and was written some years after most of the work was done. The style is lucid, considered and personal. Bernard was not afflicted by diffidence: 'I have had the opportunity of repeating my experiments in front of many French and foreign scientists, who were all struck by the clarity of the results and the inevitability of my conclusions'. The text is not only replete with experimental details but also critical consideration of the work of eminent contemporaries; the latter, needless to say, do not emerge with great credit from the confrontation.

There is much that is of scientific interest. Bernard realised the importance of studying animals with permanent pancreatic fistulae, but although: 'I have invented several special cannulae with this in mind . . . I have never been completely successful.' He foreshadowed the study of trophic effects on the bowel: 'The most remarkable aspect of the experiments involving artificial openings in the intestine is the conspicuous atrophy that occurs in the intestine below the opening . . .'. But he concluded, erroneously, that: 'During fasting there is no pancreatic secretion'; it was 50 years before this was disproved by the work of Boldyreff, whose classic but neglected thesis, written in French, might be a candidate for future publication in this series.

An important feature of the original monograph was the remarkable illustrations of pancreatic anatomy; the publishers of this translation deserve great credit for the beautiful reproductions, as well as for the high standards of typography and layout. Above all, John Henderson, a modest individual, has clearly relished the task of recreating the presence of a very different kind of scientist, and in addition to an elegant translation, has provided a short scholarly and witty introduction. This is a book to keep rather than return to the library shelf; it is a pity that the price will deter prospective purchasers. It should be commended to wealthy and indulgent relatives who can never think what to give you for your birthday.

DAVID WINGATE

Current therapy in internal medicine Edited by T M Bayless, M C Brain, and R M Chermiack. (Pp. 1476; illustrated; £66.50.) St Louis: C V Mosby, 1985.

This is a multiple author text containing the opinions of over 300 US physicians about the treatment of a variety of general medical problems. The sections are generally short and straightforward but are unreferenced and unfortunately for the UK reader difficulty inevitably stems from the need to cope with unfamiliar drug names. To write a simple review seemed unlikely to be helpful and therefore as an alternative the book was left on the open shelves of our department with an attached comment sheet.

Inter alia the following were noted, in the gastrointestinal section the information about peptic ulcer was anecdotal, incomplete and not impartial (as the author himself admits). The section on drug induced hepatic injury was by contrast far better written. The general medical sections were difficult to apply in practical terms and it was noteworthy that department members generally did not often consult the book. For the postgraduate an unreferenced text like this is of limited value and for undergraduates this book falls uncomfortably between clinical pharmacology and internal medicine. We think it unlikely that it will have much of a market in this country.

M J S LANGMAN AND R P WALT

News

International Association for the Study of the Liver (IASL)

This meeting will be held in Caracas, Venezuela from 14–17 September 1986. Further details from Dr Simon Beker, Centro Commercial Mata de Coco, Piso 3 Av. Blandin, La Castellana, Caracas 1060, Venezuela.

West African Society of Gastroenterology (WASOG)

A major international conference will be held in Nigeria on 26–28 March 1986 at the University of Port Harcourt to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Society. Further details from Dr J O Ibu, College of Health Sciences, University of Port Harcourt, PMB 5323, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.