ing light on corresponding developments in the past. Oral history, computers and other modern methods are included, but they are not really so interesting as the changing way in which the minds of medical historians are themselves working. New ways of looking at things are more significant than new technical tools; the whole book effloresces with original ways of looking at medical history.

There is one technical method about which a word must be said: the experimental method. It is often said—I have been guilty for one—that the scientist has the great advantage over the historian that he can not only observe but can experiment also, and here is Dr Clarke describing in a first class paper the way in which experiment can actually be applied to medical history, giving no less than thirty-five examples. Whatever the disabilities of ordinary historians, medical historians are more fortunately placed than some of them realize. The whole book is very encouraging. The discipline of medical history has come a long way in the past fifty years, but it is an exacting discipline. Its professionals are naturally sometimes exasperated by the efforts of amateurs, but this is the sort of book which will help to educate the "weekend" historians, and encourage the desirable union of amateur enthusiasm with professional carefulness.

CHARLES NEWMAN

Palaeopopulation

History of Human Life Span and Mortality. By Gy. Acsádi and J. Nemeskéri. Pp. 346. (Akademiai Kiado: Budapest, 1970.) £4.20.

PALAEODEMOGRAPHY, the study of the vital statistics of earlier populations, should have a long history. For well over a century, ancient human cemeteries in various parts of the world have been studied in detail by anthropologists and anatomists. All too often, however, information on age composition, life expectancy and so forth has been left out, with attention being given too much to craniometric detail. Because of this, it is no wonder that palaeodemography has taken so long to get off the ground.

Acsádi and Nemeskéri produce in their book a range of information which demonstrates beyond doubt that the demography of earlier man is now a well defined field of study with a substantial amount of data to refer to. The authors have actually produced the first textbook in palaeodemography, and in assessing its value I think it is important to remember the pioneering nature of the work. I think the authors were right to attempt this review now, even though data are accumulating quite fast and the picture promises to be far more complete in another decade. Not only is this a valuable source book for human biologists, especially demographers wishing to give a temporal perspective to their discipline, but it provides further proof for the archaeologist of the variety of information to be derived from skeletal series which is highly relevant to a full reconstruction of past population history.

The book consists of eight chapters and a very ample bibliography. In terms of chapter contents, the work is divisible into three major parts. First, there is a consideration of the theoretical, methodological and general human biological questions relating to mortality and life span. Following this, the special problems and limitations of palaeodemographic work are discussed in detail. This includes a useful review of the literature in this field. There is then a very valuable assessment of the various factors which are used in the determination of sex and age in skeletal finds. This will certainly be of reference value to the forensic scientist as well as the archaeologist and human biologist. This chapter is followed by four others which consider mortality through different periods, from Pleistocene and Mesolithic populations to mediaeval times.

Perhaps naturally, examples tend to be from eastern Europe, where the authors have most knowledge. It was satisfying to find a discussion of the merits of age-estimations on fossil man. Ages, based on maturation rates in modern populations, have been attempted by some even on early Pleistocene hominids. Such procedures could well distort the true biological facts considerably, and it is important to be critical of them. Finally, the remaining section of the book gives a series of palaeodemographic life tables of various series referred to in the text. Cemetery samples are never as large as one desires, but Acsádi and Nemeskéri have certainly squeezed the maximum amount of data from these early series.

The book is lavishly produced, and unfortunately this is reflected in the relatively high price.

DON BROTHWELL

No Room for *Mus*

The Haemostatic Mechanism in Man and Other Animals. Edited by R. G. Macfarlane. (Symposia of the Zoological Society of London, No. 27.) Pp. xiv+248. (Academic: London and New York, November 1970. Published for the Zoological Society of London.) £4.50; $13.50.

IN December 1969 the Zoological Society of London arranged a two day meeting at the Nuffield Institute of Comparative Medicine, to discuss the comparative physiology of haemostasis; this book, published within a year, offers 230 or so pages of its proceedings. The conference was a thoroughly successful innovation and is well worth repeating, because human physiologists cannot too frequently meet and debate with their zoological confrères.

The book starts, as did the meeting, with an urbane witty review by Professor R. G. Macfarlane, organizer of the conference, and ends with a general summary by Dr Christine Hawkey who, on her home ground in Regents Park, did so much to make the symposium successful.

For anyone—physiologist, pathologist or zoologist—this work succinctly reviews current knowledge of the haemostatic mechanisms in several species of vertebrates and invertebrates. Wherever feasible, changes are related to the parallel phenomena in man. Rosemary Biggs discusses human clotting mechanisms; A. E. Needham and C. Grégoire (Liège) cover respectively invertebrate lymphostasis and haemolymph coagulation; G. V. R. Born discusses platelet functional physiology; a team from Oxford—E. P. Adams, A. T. Nurden and John French, whose untimely death last year we lament—discuss platelet histochemistry, while D. C. B. Mills reviews platelet aggregation and nucleotide content in different species.

Haemostasis in the hamster (A. G. Sanders) and in fish, amphibia and other non-human vertebrates (R. K. Archer) takes the reader into a taxonomic maze from which he may be extricated by frequent reference to an abbreviated classification of the animal kingdom inserted into the front of the book. Christine Hawkey has admirably condensed her pioneer studies of fibrinolysis in a fascinating range of animals from the nose-horned viper to the skink, from the caiman to the cotton teal, and the cassowary and the argus pheasant to the vampire bat.

This is not a book into which one merely dips. Those even remotely interested in haematology should read it and assimilate K. W. E. Denson's review of abnormal clotting factors; B. Blombäck's (Sweden) and T. Cartwright's comments on evolutional trends in the structure of fibrinogen, and N. O. Solum's (Norway) description of coagulation in *Limulus*, the horseshoe crab.

No fewer than 185 different species receive textual reference. What a pleasure to review work where *Rattus*, *Lepus* and *Canis* do not take pride of place, and *Mus* is not even mentioned.

J. L. STAFFORD