they in the end make the comparison of one culture with another more exactly reliable? Will an excavator in one area be able to look at the graphs from another area and say this is or is not the same culture as mine? Perhaps he might be helped to make up his mind, but it is very doubtful whether any wise archaeologist would be prepared to pass judgment without examining the tools themselves.

In his foreword, Professor Grahame Clark salutes Dr McBurney as a pioneer of method whose terrible labours will reduce those of his successors. He adds, "... it seems reasonable to hope that once new analytical procedures have been worked out the inexorable drift towards posthumous publication may be halted". Perhaps this may prove to be true, and one can agree that it is worth trying. Yet the very idea of a state of affairs in which archaeologists may expect to die before they can publish shows that elaboration can become over-elaboration and bring its own penalties. That an excavator can answer for his report among his peers must be more significant than a thousand graphs.

The thing to insist on is that all this apparatus is of absolutely no value in itself. One might as well make a statistical analysis of the nearest dustbin. It can only justify its cost in time and money if it contributes to the reconstruction of history. Dr McBurney has not been narrow—he has done a remarkable job in linking his great sequence of cultures with those of other areas. But he has not gone on from there to distil his findings into history written in a humanistic way. The final summary (which starts, incidentally, with a factual mistake) is written in an even more dehumanized and technical manner than the introduction. The great issues of our history are implicit but never drawn into the intellectual light. It is this, even more than the extravagant use of statistics, that makes one feel that here is an ambitious play to make archaeology appear in the guise of a natural science. It cannot be one because both its data and its purposes are different. Many people are afraid that we are dehumanizing the present; it will be sad indeed if archaeology is set on a course that must dehumanize our understanding of the past.

JACQUETTA HAWKES

WOMB TO TOMB

The Body

By Anthony Smith. Pp. 552. (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd, 1968.) 50*s*.

DOES a good physiology book have to be dull? Evidently not, nor coy either. Mr Smith, a zoologist and a scientific journalist, has turned out what one would have thought impossible: a comprehensive and detailed study of the human body that should interest both the scientist and the ordinary reader. He discusses the body and its workings in the context of evolution and of changing social customs and habits. Neither the intricacies of the latest researches into chromosomes or the large protein molecules nor the anecdotes of history are left out. The reader who knows genetics backwards and forwards still might be interested to learn the pattern of haemophilia in Queen Victoria's family.

The best, and the bulk, of this book is devoted to human reproduction. There are also discussions of old age, death, suicide, sleep, weight and respiration. Apart from a chapter on the effects of radiation on the body, there is little viewing with alarm, no tedious moralizing about the evils of organ transplants and such which mar almost every other attempt to discuss the body's apparatus even in this year of enlightenment. The horrors of the past, especially childbed fever and infant mortality, are conveyed well by the author's dispassionate and lucid prose.

For the collector of odd bits of information, this book is a goldmine. Einstein did not speak until he was four, primitive pessaries were made of pomegranate skin, elephant's dung and whitewash (to name but a few) and six out of 1,000 British marriages are between first cousins. Although no advice is given in this book, it might be considered the adult's Dr Spock; even the index makes absorbing reading. Those rare medical experts who know all about the body, from acne to webbed toes, should recommend it to their wives and force it on their children.

BRENDA MADDOX

OPENING OF PANDORA'S BOX

Diseases in Antiquity

A Survey of the Diseases, Injuries and Surgery of Early Populations. (Compiled and edited by Don Brothwell and A. T. Sandison.) Pp. xix+766. Springfield, Ill.: Charles Thomas, Publisher, 1967.) $39.75.

THIS is an expensive, comprehensive and important book; important, because it represents the first attempt to survey in English the whole field of disease in antiquity throughout the world. The study is not restricted to man; it includes, albeit sketchily, references to disease in many extinct vertebrates. The work consists of separate essays (largely independent of one another) by well known authorities. A few are reprints of classical papers which are comparatively inaccessible. It is convenient to have these available in one volume.

The papers are grouped into, first, an introductory section, where the most outstanding contributions are those of Calvin Wells, who discusses in salutary fashion the way in which post-mortem factors may produce changes closely resembling the action of ante-mortem pathogens, and of Don Brothwell, who handles in a masterly way the bio-cultural background of disease. Section 2 contains contributions to parasitology. Here there is perhaps a tendency to discuss rather what might have been the case than to present the evidence concerning what was the case in antiquity. Section 3 consists of a number of geographic studies of which those by Kinnier Wilson on the organic diseases of Ancient Mesopotamia and by Sussman on diseases in the Bible and Talmud are outstanding. The paper by J. Needham and Lu Gwei-Djen on disease in Ancient China is interesting, but it is overweighted with philological material comprehensible only to the expert sinologist. The following section, on individual somatic diseases, is the largest, and contains much of great importance. Human tuberculosis, it is claimed, is a mutant form appearing in the Neolithic period and reaching the Americas only in post-Columban times. The divergence of views about the origin of epidemic syphilis persists, although an increasing measure of agreement is evident. The paper by Calvin Wells attempting to make a quantitative estimate of the incidence of disease in ancient times by the study of the occurrence of Harris's lines is a refreshing breakaway from the pure cataloguing of identifiable diseases. The essay by Møller-Christensen on the evidence of leprosy in earlier peoples is one of the best in the book. He demonstrates conclusively that the disease was unknown in Africa, Europe or the Middle East before the early part of the Christian era.

The fifth section dealing with the regional distribution of somatic disease inevitably leans heavily on Egyptian material, but Sandison and Wells have tapped an unusual source of information about endocrine disorders by turning to the Sagas. Information about the pathology of the jaws and teeth is exceptionally abundant, and Brabant and Alexandersen do full justice to it.

It is difficult to see the justification for the inclusion of a section on accidental trauma and surgical intervention in a