

and one's only regret is that the *Punch* cartoon of Faraday giving his card to Father Thames does not appear. In short, this is the kind of work, firmly based on primary sources, which is always desirable, and particularly so in the field of the history of nineteenth-century science.

D. M. KNIGHT

A Short History of Biology. By Isaac Asimov. London and Edinburgh: Nelson, 1965. Pp. 180. 21s. net.

Since brief histories of biology do not become any better, it is perhaps as well that they become shorter. This is the shortest I have so far encountered, but it does contrive to escape being also the worst.

It is difficult to know exactly to what public the book is addressed: presumably not to historians of science, but it is not easy to see how so brief a presentation could be popular.

The author repeats the standard and, apparently, ineradicable errors: that Galen believed in a constant ebb and flow in the veins; that Lamarck's theory of evolution is *based upon* the idea of the inheritance of acquired characters. He also adds a few new mistakes, apparently of his own invention. It is hardly possible to conjecture even what he means by the statement that Herophilos had shown "that both arteries and veins carried blood"; and to say that "neurology began" with Haller is preposterous.

The author's judgment does not make up for his mistakes of fact; for he actually believes that Pavlov's work had a sound basis in neurology.

It is much to be regretted that Dr. Asimov did not choose to write for us a history of his own speciality during the last hundred years. Extended reviews of this kind are greatly needed; and could, if that is absolutely essential, be made reasonably popular.

J. S. WILKIE

OBITUARY

We regret to announce the death of:

Professor E. J. Dijksterhuis at Utrecht on 18 May 1965 and

Professor J. R. Partington on 9 October 1965.

Professor Partington was a founder member of the British Society for the History of Science and was its President from 1949 to 1951. He was professor of chemistry at Queen Mary College, London, from 1919 until his retirement in 1951. In 1965 he was awarded the Sarton Medal of the American History of Science Society.