Microbes and Morals. The Strange Story of Venereal Disease. By THEODORE ROSEBURY. 1971 (First published in England, 1972). Pp. 361, 11 figs, bibl. Secker and Warburg, London (£3.10)

Although written primarily for the layman this book contains much of interest for the venereologist. About half of the book concerns the history of syphilis and gonorrhoea, with a detailed account of the origin of venereal syphilis. Dr. Rosebury believes that the evidence supports the views of Hackett and Hudson, and in fact he feels sufficiently strongly to head one of his chapters 'Exit Columbus'. Perhaps the most provocative section of the book concerns the definition of venereal disease—the author excludes many conditions, including trichomoniasis, non-gonococcal urethritis, genital warts, and pubic lice. It is not clear whether Dr. Rosebury really believes that these conditions are not usually sexually transmitted or that he prefers not to use the term venereal disease because of the associated stigma.

Much of the medical detail will be heavy going for the

layman, particularly that of serological diagnosis. There are also a number of inaccurate statements, such as that the Herxheimer reaction is 'rare if it ever happens' in early syphilis.

A surprising statement (attributed to Dr. Guthe) is that there are only three developed countries which have usable statistics on venereal disease, namely Denmark, Poland, and the United States. The United Kingdom does not even rate a mention here. Admittedly it is only in recent years that rates per 100,000 population have been available for parts of the United Kingdom, but I should have thought that our statistics were of some value, especially as we do not have to rely on the projections used by the United States. Nevertheless, Dr. Rosebury takes a global view of the subject and there are several interesting chapters on the factors affecting the control of the venereal diseases. The possibilities of developing vaccines are discussed, but it seems that China has managed to eliminate syphilis and gonorrhoea without their aid.

The book should certainly be read by all who have anything to do with or have any interest in the venereal diseases.

P. Rodin

Notes

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON GONORRHOEA

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, October 24 and 25, 1973

This symposium, sponsored by the Health Protection Branch of the Department of National Health and Welfare, Canada, will be held at the Skyline Hotel, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, on October 24 and 25, 1973, under the chairmanship of Dr. B. B. Diena, Head, Research Division, Biologics Control Laboratories, Laboratory Centre

for Disease Control.

Further information may be obtained from the Symposium Secretary, Mrs J. R. Renaud, Room 1-5, Food and Drug Building, Health Protection Branch, National Health and Welfare, Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0L2, Canada.

INTERNATIONAL HEALTH FOUNDATION AWARD, 1973

An award of 5,000 Swiss francs will be presented to the author of the best entry submitted to the International Health Foundation in Geneva on "The Control of Venereal Disease". An additional prize of 2,000 Swiss francs is available for the best entry by an author under 35 years of age.

The closing date for entries is *September 1, 1973.*

Further details regarding the panel of judges, technical requirements, etc., may be obtained from the International Health Foundation, 1 Place du Port, 1204 Geneva, Switzerland.

Professor Dr. D. de Wied, Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

P. A. van Keep, M.D., Director-General