Kenyatta, of course, ultimately became president of Kenya, and is commemorated in, among other things, Kenyatta Avenue in Nairobi. In that street there is a bronze war memorial, with an inscription that reads:

This is to the memory of the
native African troops who
fought, to the Carriers who
were the feet and hands of
the army, and to all other
men who served and died.

If you fight for your country
even if you die, your sons
will remember your name.

Pestilence stricken multitudes

P G BENSON

For doctor and layman alike, smallpox held and still holds a special place in the rogues' gallery of disease. Until its eradication and the arrival of AIDS probably only the plague has been feared more. The drama of the discovery of vaccination, the controversies over variolation, and the debate on the virology have produced a considerable mass of medicohistorical publications. Most school-children know the story of Jenner. Yet despite this little has been written about the social effects of smallpox, and it is this that J R Smith has attempted to do in *The Speckled Monster*.

In a sense he is lucky with his disease for the classic signs, symptoms, and infectivity of smallpox seem rarely mistaken and had been long known and feared. This enables the author to quote confidently many primary records and accounts from Essex, where he works as senior archivist. Indeed, it was his discovery of so much interesting material that persuaded him to expand his book into a more general study taking 1670 as his starting point. After an introductory chapter he considers the development of variolation with special reference to Daniel Sutton, and then describes the transition to vaccination with its rise and fall, and finally gives an account of the location and use of Essex pest houses and smallpox hospitals.

Using this wealth of material Mr Smith has managed to negotiate relatively unscathed the minefield that awaits the non-medical author writing about medical matters. He has very sensibly avoided the arcane arguments about the exact nature of vaccines used at various times, the true nature of cowpox, etc. In fact if I have a general criticism of the book it is that the author has felt it necessary to graft on to his excellent material stark clinical facts that do not help his exposition and are sometimes dubious. The description of ten "types" of smallpox is redundant and medically arguable. The glossary of medical terms is so over simplified as to be misleading, and the layman could happily and profitably ignore the jargon, which up to the nineteenth century has to be interpreted carefully anyway. Medical cause and effect is always difficult, and to attribute Josiah Wedgwood's amputation for probable tuberculosis of the knee to an attack of smallpox some 30 years previously is highly questionable. Other minor cavils are that the influence of Daniel Sutton (albeit a son of Essex) is overstressed and I wish that the ugly word "inoculee" could have been avoided.

Though a large portion of the book details splendid accounts of the days of early variolation and vaccination, it is the section from 1840 onwards which is of most new interest and importance with records of later outbreaks and the development (particularly in Essex) of isolation and smallpox hospitals. The part played by a fanatical religious sect, for example, who aptly named themselves "The Peculiar People" and by refusing vaccination caused the spread of several distinct outbreaks, is particularly fascinating and instructive. And it is salutary to be reminded that though by the late 1940s it was being realised that mass vaccination was statistically

The words are by Kipling, and the carriers' story is one to which he could perhaps have done justice. Geoffrey Hodges is not exactly in the Kipling class (who is?) but his enterprising researches have produced something new and valuable—a record which ensures that, if the individual carriers' names are not well remembered, at least the part they played in East African—and European—history is not forgotten.

Contributions in Comparative Colonial Studies. No 18. "The Carrier Corps. Military Labor in the East African Campaign 1914-1918." G Hodges. (Pp 272; figs; £38.50.) New York: Greenwood Press, 1986. ISBN 0-313-24418-9.

Wellcome Institute Library, London.

The public vaccinator. Gouache by Lance Calkin.

more dangerous than the disease itself, the Ministry of Health continued to advocate it into the 1960s.

The Speckled Monster is well produced and printed and bristling with notes and references, and it has a useful, if very selective, bibliography. Let us hope that smallpox stays merely the subject of worthwhile historical books like this and that the pool of potentially mutagenic pox viruses in monkeys, camels, gerbils and the like stays there.

The Speckled Monster. Smallpox in England, 1670-1970, with Particular Reference to Essex. J R Smith. (Pp 220; £14.95.) Chelmsford: Essex Record Office, 1987. ISBN 0-900360-68-2.