Harvey's discovery of the circulation nor his frustration and dejection over his failure to find the secrets of generation. It should not be forgotten that the investigation of Nature was the one consuming passion of Harvey's life, for he was of the opinion that thereby "we might acquire not only the knowledge of the lesser secrets of Nature but some adumbration of the great Creator himself."

For a straightforward account of Harvey's life, which is by no means easy to reconstruct from random recollections,

English readers should look at the biography written by Sir Geoffrey Keynes. Those who want to know something of the man, should turn to John Aubrey's *Brief Lives* and to Harvey's own writings, particularly his less well known *Dissertation on the Generation of Animals*, for of all his published works this is the most personal and wide ranging.

Le Journal d'Harvey. Jean Hamburger. (Pp 339; £9.35.) Flammarion. 1983.

Cardiological salad bowl

DAVID DE BONO

Scientific Foundations of Cardiology has 94 contributors in addition to the two editors, and it is aimed at both cardiologists and general physicians. A series of self contained essays, the chapters are grouped so as to begin with cellular mechanisms and then to proceed through a discussion of "intrinsic" and "extrinsic" mechanisms of control to more clinical aspects of cardiology.

The "basic science" chapters are accurate and informative, with some variation in the level at which they are pitched. I would have appreciated better continuity between these and the more clinically oriented chapters later in the book, perhaps in the form of an editorial "comment." The extent to which lessons learnt from the animal experiments described could reasonably be applied to clinical problems is not always made clear. In the clinical chapters the range of subjects covered is rather eclectic. There is a superb 70 page section on hypertensive heart disease, as one would expect from the interests and reputation of the editors. Ischaemic heart disease is dealt with in 90 pages, some of them excellent, others a bit woolly. There is very little on tachyarrhythmias (though more on conduction defects and pacing), and valvular heart disease gets short shrift apart from a succinct chapter by Gunning on the choice of replacement heart valves. Paediatric cardiology is not amenable to compression into 30 pages, though the standard of illustration here is good. Cardiomyopathy, on the other hand, gets 40 pages and is dealt with authoritatively. The section on specialised investigation includes a good technical account of ambulatory electrocardiographic monitoring, a general discussion of nuclear cardiology, precordial exercise ECG mapping, and a very thorough discussion by Rajagopalan of measurement of cardiac output in man.

The editors state that they encouraged their contributors to be didactic, and different contributors have interpreted this in various ways, with reference lists ranging from zero to 20 or more references a chapter. I thought that the most successful chapters were those that based their argument on carefully selected, well presented, and well documented original data. Some contributors seemed confused whether "scientific" meant that which was studied in preclinical laboratories or that which resulted from the application of scientific methods.

Certainly this is no ordinary textbook, but I find it difficult to know how best to classify it. Sometimes I felt that I was reading two books at once—a kind of "recent advances" collection of cardiological essays on one hand, and a grown up physiology textbook on the other. I have enjoyed reading it and have learnt a lot from it, but I would not recommend it as a comprehensive reference or for guidance in the management of an actual clinical problem—it does not, for example, compete with Braunwald's *Heart Disease—a Textbook of Cardiovascular Medicine*, nor was it, I am sure, intended to. Perhaps it would be best to regard it as a kind of cardiological salad bowl—fun to dip into and good for your health—or more seriously as a set of postgraduate lectures from the best of which one may emerge with some concepts clarified, some preconceptions demolished, and lots of new questions to ask.

Scientific Foundations of Cardiology. Ed Peter Sleight and John Vann Jones. (Pp 540; £50.) William Heinemann Medical Books. 1983.

A stimulating disease

MICHAEL N MARSH

Celiac sprue disease has stimulated the minds of many physicians throughout this century. This book by Cooke and Holmes is a noteworthy addition to the existing publications on the subject and is a timely reminder of the considerable interest that still underlies the quest to unravel the pathogenesis of this intriguing disorder.

The 13 chapters cover all aspects of coeliac disease, from its historical beginnings, through mucosal abnormalities, clinical and metabolic features, and treatment to its varied complications and other associations, ending with a consideration of the related disorder dermatitis herpetiformis, and a final assault on immunology

and aetiology. Each chapter is well referenced and followed by a detailed bibliography; indeed, this is one of the major strengths of the book, for it provides extensive coverage of most that has been written since Gee's classic paper of 1888.

The introductory history certainly fulfils the authors' hope that much "early work containing so much truth will not be forgotten." This account will be read widely by many future thesis writers, for it contains extensive background material for the "statutory literature review."

The contributions on clinical presentation, metabolic dis-