point being a short paper describing usually some very recent experimental observations made by the main speaker and followed by a discussion, often animated and always rewarding, bearing upon the topic under consideration. In this way the reader is presented with new information and with the reaction of others best qualified to judge its significance. Vol. V of this series of *Colloquia* is concerned with the bioassay of anterior pituitary and adrenocortical hormones. The first speaker, Albert Segaloff, has defined the requirements which must be met by the ideal assay. It should be: (1) Specific; (2) reproducible from laboratory to laboratory; (3) sensitive; (4) statistically sound; (5) simple; (6) rapid; (7) inexpensive. Of these the first four are essential. It is clear from considering the facts presented in the rest of the volume that few, if any, of the present bioassay methods meet these requirements in full, and many of them are deficient even in the essential ones. Segaloff also records that 'it is amazing how many physicians think that all endocrinological diagnoses can be made on a poorly collected, haphazardly refrigerated 24-hour urine specimen.' This criticism applies with equal force to other branches of biochemical investigation at the clinical level, and there is no doubt that many procedures begin and end with an inadequate urine collection. Although the material presented in this volume is primarily intended for the specialist and research worker, it would repay perusal by those concerned in the clinical management of patients, if only to indicate to them the complexities of the subject and the impossibility, at the present time, of providing them with precise information so urgently required in the diagnosis of frank endocrinological disorders, and for the understanding of the metabolic problem in conditions superficially distinct from them for example in cardiac, hepatic and renal failure, and in chronic ill health generally.

This book will be read eagerly by the specialist and by the physician who wishes to be critically informed about the methods upon which he must rely in deriving quantitative and semi-quantitative information of the hormone concentrations in the body fluid. The Ciba Foundation is making a valuable contribution to biological science by arranging these colloquia and in publishing the results with as little time delay as possible.

V.W.

AN APPROACH TO CLINICAL SURGERY

By G. H. C. OVENS, O.B.E., M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S.
Pp. vii + 309, with 118 illustrations. London:
J. & A. Churchill, Ltd. 1953. 22s. 6d.

Teachers of surgery agree that the first months of clinical teaching are both the most important and the most difficult. This book by Professor Ovens is intended to cover this period and it succeeds in its object. Any student entering the wards of a hospital for the first time will find it of great help. The first edition of a book often contains omissions or errors; one function of a reviewer is to point out those he notices so that they can be corrected in future editions.

There are two major omissions from this book. Carcinoma of the bronchus, which in Britain today is the commonest new growth and a common reason for attendance at surgical out-patients or admission to surgical wards, is not mentioned. The importance of this omission from a textbook of this type may be gauged from this recent statement by a senior clinician: 'When I was a young man if I saw a patient with a swelling and I did not know what it was I used to say that it was syphilitic and I was nearly always right. Today I say that it is a secondary from carcinoma of the bronchus.' The other omission is that the tests for the function of the peripheral nerves have not been included. Fig. 117 on page 301 illustrates an ulnar nerve lesion, but the book does not tell the student how to examine such a patient.

This textbook is recommended to all students who are commencing their hospital work and their teachers also will benefit from reading it. It should be successful and pass through many editions.

C.C.R.

KIELLAND'S FORCEPS

By E. PARRY JONES, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.O.G.
Pp. x + 212, illustrated. London: Butterworth
& Co., Ltd. 1952. 35s.

The 'pros and cons' of any type of forceps depend on so many factors that it is difficult to assess their real value. Parry Jones has analyzed these different factors, not the least of which is the skill of the operator. He tends to repeat some points, but perhaps this is for emphasis.

The historical summary at the beginning is stimulating, and Kielland's original paper at the end is interesting and repeats Kielland's advice which has been so often disregarded in the past:

'These forceps and their method of insertion are not to be recommended for those who are either unable or unwilling to take these precautions.'

The book provides a summary of the use and abuse of Kielland's forceps, and is a defence of them.

FUNCTIONAL ENDOCRINOLOGY

By N. B. TALBOT, M.D., E. H. SOBEL, M.D., J. W. McARTHUR, M.D., and J. D. CRAWFORD, M.D.
Pp. xxx + 638, illustrated. London: Geoffrey
Cumberlege. 1952. 63s.

Advances in endocrinology in recent years have been extremely rapid and there has been a widely felt need for a reliable and reasonably brief account of these advances. This book, which is published under the auspices of the Commonwealth Fund, fulfils this need remarkably well as far as endocrine disorders affect children and adolescents, and the paediatrician who is looking for a guide in this complex subject will find his needs well satisfied. The delays inevitable in the publication of a book of this size make it notoriously difficult to ensure that, when published, it is still reasonably up to date. In this respect the book is more successful than

most, although here and there passages strike the reader as already being in need of revision. As examples of this, von Euler's method for the assay of urinary pressor amines is not mentioned, and the attitude to the operative removal of phaeochromocytomata is surely far too pessimistic, as is also the very cautious way in which subtotal adrenalectomy is mentioned in considering the treatment of Cushing's syndrome due to adrenal cortical hyperplasia. Also, there is no indication of the steps that may be taken to control and maintain blood pressure during and after these operations. There is, however, a wealth of valuable and up-to-date information in this book, which is well produced and extremely readable. In fact, the only real criticism that can be levelled at it is that it stops at adolescence. To have extended it to cover endocrine disorders in adult life would not have made the book so very much longer and would enormously have increased its usefulness.

MEDICINE Vols. I and II

Edited by H. G. GARLAND, T.D., M.D., F.R.C.P., and W. PHILLIPS, M.D., B.Sc., F.R.C.P. Pp. xx and xi + 2146, illustrated. London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd. 1953. £6 the set.

The appearance of a new two-volume text book of medicine by British authors is an event of considerable importance and this book has been eagerly awaited for several years. Unhappily, it cannot honestly be said that it altogether justifies these high expectations. The most striking thing about it is the extraordinary inequality of the different chapters written by its 42 contributors.

It begins with a very long introductory section of nearly 150 pages, which is really a series of rather leisurely essays, but includes one short article on the genetic factor in disease by Dr. Fraser Roberts, which is a good example of the author's usual clarity of exposition. This is followed by a number of essays on diagnosis and treatment. These range in quality from the excellent and beautifully illustrated article by Drs. Kerley and Cochrane Shanks on the place of radiology in diagnosis to a dreary little section of nine pages on biochemical methods in diagnosis, which is largely a set of tables and includes such unqualified information as that the blood urea is increased in arteriosclerosis and advancing age. In the remainder of these two volumes there are excellent articles on the psychoneuroses and psychoses, and on diseases of the respiratory system. The sections on the locomotor system and the cardiovascular system are beautifully illustrated with numerous X-ray plates, but elsewhere there is much to criticise. In the section on haemophilia, for instance, the old and long disproved hypothesis of undue platelet stability is again brought up and anti-haemophilic globulin is not mentioned. Moreover, it is stated that the combination of genes required to produce a female haemophilic is probably a lethal one, completely ignoring the fact that three cases of what are almost certainly examples of

haemophilia occurring in the female have been reported since 1951.

Also, some of the clinical descriptions are not above reproach. The symptoms of myxoedema, for instance, are discussed in 36 words and it is doubtful whether anyone reading the account of obliterative arterial disease would gain from it any clear picture of intermittent claudication. In the account of Addison's disease no mention is made of the dangers of hypoglycaemia, or of the value of cortisone in treatment.

Finally, an exceedingly irritating point, there is no index to Vol. I, the combined index being in Vol. II. Surely the index could also have been included in Vol. I without significantly increasing the cost of this very expensive production?

In conclusion it can only be said that one leaves the book with a sense of disappointment. Some of it is very good, but some is frankly poor.

CORTISONE AND ACTH IN CLINICAL PRACTICE

Edited by W. S. C. COPEMAN, O.B.E., M.D., F.R.C.P. Pp. xi + 255, with 29 illustrations. London: Butterworth & Co., Ltd. 1953. 25s.

There are six chapters in this book: rheumatic and collagen diseases, diseases of the eye, endocrine disorders, respiratory and allergic diseases, skin diseases, and diseases of the haemopoietic system. In each an attempt is made to assess the place of cortisone and ACTH in case management, the assessments usually reflecting the personal experience of the authors. There is also a concise description of the physiological actions of the hormones and a résumé of their effects on specific tissues, the latter revealing clearly the great gaps which exist in knowledge of this field. The book is a useful practical guide for students and practitioners and adequate references provide sources for further reading.

MEDICAL HYPNOSIS

By Dr. S. J. VAN PELT, Dr. G. AMBROSE and Dr. G. NEWBOLD. Pp. 190. London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd. 1953. 13s. 6d.

When a major advance in the treatment of any illness is claimed it is usual to support such a claim with evidence, usually a statistical analysis of a large number of treated cases. This becomes all the more desirable when similar claims are made, not only for one, but for numerous ailments. No statistical evidence of any sort is provided in this book, the authors apparently preferring occasional case histories and their own clinical impressions in the assessment of the value of the treatment they recommend. Consequently the book resembles rather an advertisement for a patent medicine than a serious contribution to therapeutics. To give only one example, which, incidentally, includes one of the very few figures found in the whole book, hypnosis is recommended in the treatment of hyper-