'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

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 haemophiliac 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 obliterator 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

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-
tension, which the authors believe to be due to 'long continued strain.' As proof of the value of hypnosis in this condition one brief case history is given, and of this patient it is recorded that 'At the end of the course (of hypnosis) his doctor was able to report a definite fall of blood pressure by some 20 points.' The systolic blood pressure had previously been 240 (sic). Anyone with any knowledge of the natural history of essential hypertension will appreciate the uselessness of such an observation. Claims for the treatment of other conditions by hypnosis, ranging from anxiety neurosis, hysteria, migraine and alcoholism to frigidity and impotence, and even sterility, are based on equally flimsy evidence.

That hypnosis has a legitimate place in psychiatric practice is unquestionable and if these claims were addressed to the medical profession alone they would not do much harm. The really pernicious thing about this book is that it is written largely for the lay public by three members of the medical profession. Many of its readers will be found sufficiently gullible to believe these claims, claims for a book with the subtitle 'New Hope for Mankind, only to be further disappointed by the failure of yet another form of treatment.

MEDICINE

Vol. I: The Patient and His Disease


Dr. Clark-Kennedy has revised the first volume of the textbook which he first published in 1947. It has made a place for itself by reason of its approach to the problem of disease. The introductory volume contains a number of thoughtful, even philosophical, discussions on the nature of symptoms, the reactions of body and mind, and on heredity and environment, and provides a welcome attempt to break away from the examination set-pieces and the listing of details, which many students are led to believe is all that their teachers require of them. A great deal of what is in this book should be imparted during the day-to-day bedside teaching which is in the English tradition. Nevertheless, the student who takes the trouble to read this thoughtful volume through for himself will find it richly rewarding.

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF MENSTRUAL DISORDERS AND STERILITY


This new edition of a now well-established American work has only recently become available in this country.

It has been completely rewritten and much new material incorporated. The authors themselves draw attention to the inclusion of the new international classification of carcinoma of the cervix, a discussion on intraepithelial carcinoma (carcinoma in situ) and a clinical evaluation of the Papanicolaou vaginal smear technique. It is, however, to the clear and comprehensive discussion of both the normal and abnormal menstrual cycles that this book owes its value.

In general, the section on sterility does not succeed in maintaining the high standard set by the earlier part of the work, but the chapter by Charles W. Charny on male sterility will well repay close study.

Like many another American textbook, it does not prove easy reading, but much of the text will be of considerable interest to British gynaecologists. Its production is of the very highest order, and the detailed references at the end of each chapter are a great help.

G.B.-L.

THE DISPOSAL OF THE DEAD


Civilisation and the large increase in mankind have brought many problems; one which is not often considered forms the subject of this interesting and thoughtful book. The authors have brought to us, from the Department of Forensic Medicine in Leeds, something which we have long needed—a full and scholarly treatise on a matter which, either as doctors or in our private lives, makes urgent and unexpected calls for tactful and efficient handling of the situation which has arisen. As a work of reference the book should become a standard authority for all whose official duties involve funeral arrangements. Full information is presented on most of the legal and technical considerations which will arise.

It deals with all countries and with methods of transport in and between them. Burial, funeral rites, the rising incidence of cremation are also described and an exhaustive account of embalming methods is presented.

This is an excellent book and can be strongly recommended either for its general or technical interest to all members of the medical and undertaking professions.

H.H.G.E.

The Journal of the American Geriatrics Society

In the notice of the first number of the above journal, which appeared on page 271 of our May 1953 issue, the price of this journal was incorrectly given as £2. This should have been £4 2s. od., and intending subscribers are requested to make a note of the correct price.