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

By A. E. CLARK-KENNEDY, M.D., F.R.C.P.


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 Papamicaou 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. 0d., and intending subscribers are requested to make a note of the correct price.
The Disposal of the Dead

Postgrad Med J 1953 29: 425
doi: 10.1136/pgmj.29.334.425-b

Updated information and services can be found at:
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