WHAT IS OSTEOPATHY?

By CHARLES HILL, M.A., M.D., and H. A. CLEGG, M.A., M.B., M.R.C.P. (with preface by H. G. WELLS). J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1937. Price 7/6.

The professors and advocates of osteopathy have recently suffered in the open market the fall promised to a vaulting ambition. Not content with some degree of popular repute, and with grateful clients and a chorus, they must needs seek to persuade the House of Lords that they, and they alone, possess the true scientific basis for medical practice, and that legislative recognition is due to them and to their cult. They issued the challenge, selected the tribunal, presented their witnesses, and argued through Counsel learned in the law. Yet rarely can a chapter of boasted pretensions have suffered a more complete and ridiculous conclusion.

It is well that the story should be placed on record, and this task Dr. Charles Hill and Dr. H. A. Clegg have effectively undertaken. Not the least valuable part of their book is that which defines the attitude of the medical profession to the various forms of "unqualified" practice; the true position on this point is here admirably stated, and the arguments and explanations should be helpful as an instrument of public education.

The authors of the book have cultivated a judicial attitude with some necessary plain speaking, and they tell the tale with artistic skill and with a due recognition both of the humorous and the dramatic. The alleged capacity of X-rays to detect the supposed œdema of a minute "osteopathic lesion", while a pint of beer in the stomach escapes the picture, brings indeed a sense of theatre.

The book deserves a wide public and the support of the medical profession. To be very critical, while we recognise in its pages many pleasing references to our classical English poets, this seems to justify the remark that what Pope deprecated was not "a little knowledge" but "a little learning".

In a short preface Mr. H. G. Wells writes of osteopathy in severe terms, and adds, for the benefit of the medical profession, some counsels charged with benevolent intentions.

THE COMMON NEUROSES.

(2nd Edition.)

By T. A. ROSS, M.D., F.R.C.P. Edward Arnold & Co., 1937. Price 10/6.

Dr. Ross, in his preface to the very welcome second edition of this well-known book, reiterates his belief that the majority of patients suffering from neurosis could be treated by general practitioners; and that this is being increasingly and successfully done is in no small measure due to his own lucid and persuasive teaching. There is probably no other work which gives such very practical and detailed advice, or which will be found of greater help when dealing with many of these cases. It has been largely rewritten, but the general scheme remains the same. In a work which is not designed for specialists, a certain dogmatism is perhaps inevitable. It may, for example, be regretted that Dr. Ross continues to draw such a sharp and fundamental distinction between neuroses and psychoses, and to make prognostic statements about both groups which are, to say the least, open to criticism. But these defects of over-simplification, though they should be borne in mind, are more than outweighed by the positive merits. Here is a clear description of how many of these difficult cases can be sanely approached and successfully treated.

AIDS TO THE TREATMENT OF DISEASES OF CHILDREN.

(7th Edition.)

By F. M. B. ALLEN, M.D., M.R.C.P. Baillière, Tindall & Cox. 1937. Price 4/6.

This book is much more than its title would suggest for it is in reality a concise treatise of the diseases of children, their causes, their pathology, their symptomatology and their treatment. It is a book which should be of great value not only to the student in providing him with a handy pocket-book of reference during the course of his hospital work but also to the busy medical practitioner.

As Dr. Allen remarks in the preface, the book was originally compiled by Dr. McGaw and he has been responsible only for the last two editions. It may be because of this fact that certain out-of-date

ideas persist. For example, laryngismus stridulus is given a place apart from tetany and is described as of the nature of a neurosis, although mention is made of the condition in the section on rickets. We also note in a fairly full chapter on "Diseases of the Blood" that there is no mention of anæmia apart from von Jaksch's Anæmia, a condition by the way, which the majority of writers now-a-days do not consider a specific disease. It is curious, too, to find in an appendix detailing "Antipyretic Remedies" that a description of a "hot-pack" finds a place. These, are, however, only minor blemishes in a book which has so many excellent features and which, we are sure, will enhance the reputation of previous editions.

BROMPTON HOSPITAL REPORTS.

Vol. V. 1936. Gale and Polden, Ltd., Aldershot. Price 3/-.

This volume, like its predecessors, consists for the most part of reprints of articles by members of the Staff of Brompton Hospital which have already appeared in other journals. Among these the most comprehensive, and covering some 30 pages, is the report of Mr. Roberts' Lettsonian Lectures on "The Surgery of Pleural and Pulmonary Infections." Other interesting and important contributions are one on "The Capacity for Work in Pulmonary Tuberculosis" by Dr. Wingfield and another on "Immunity and Latency in Pulmonary Tuberculosis" by Dr. Maurice Davidson. There is also an interesting historical article on "The Lambeth Degree," although one might wonder why such a subject finds a place in the pages of a volume of Hospital Reports.

As has been the custom of the Editors of this annual there is included the "Annual Report" of the Hospital, in this particular volume that for the year 1935.

VADE MECUM OF MEDICAL TREATMENT.

By W. GORDON SEARS, M.D. Lond., M.R.C.P. Edward Arnold & Co., 1937. Price 10s. 6d.

Dr. Sears' book has been written with a view to giving to the general practitioner a

comprehensive handbook of medical treatment. It fulfills the purpose for which it is intended. It is impossible in a book of this size to give great detail; it does, however, give information as to the essentials of treatment and includes recent methods. The management of all kinds of emergencies is dealt with. The number of proprietary preparations which the general practitioner is invited nowadays to make use of is very great. The author has only selected those which have been universally recognized, and which he and his colleagues have considered worthy of recommendation.

The book contains a series of tables giving information which is constantly required by the practitioner. The material is suitably arranged and well indexed and this "Vade Mecum" is, therefore, a useful volume for the general practitioner to have at hand for ready reference.

THE MORPHINE HABIT AND ITS PAINLESS TREATMENT.

(SECOND EDITION).

By G. LAUGHTON SCOTT, M.R.C.S., B.A. (Oxon.) H. K. Lewis & Co. Ltd. 1937. Price 5s. net.

In the preface to the second edition of this book Dr. G. Laughton Scott introduces his main theme, the importance of retaining, during the withdrawal of morphine, the vagal preponderance acquired by the addict in the long-continued use of the drug.

The earlier chapters include an excellent account of the symptoms of morphinism, and notes on its etiology and physiology. Then follows a detailed description of the method employed, which consists in the utilization of the vagotonic effect of small but increasing doses of belladonna or atropine to replace that of the morphine which is being rapidly reduced. At the same time adequate doses of luminal are given to prevent sympathetic over-action.

A slowed pulse is regarded as a sign that a satisfactory vago-sympathetic balance is being maintained, and it is claimed that by this means the withdrawal of morphine can be effected so painlessly and comfortably that the patient may be unaware of what is happening.

A useful chapter on convalescence emphasizes the importance of fatigue as the most potent cause of early relapse.