

Books received

Immunology of Gastrointestinal and Liver Disease. By RALPH WRIGHT (*Current Topics in Immunology Series*). Pp. 132, soft cover, illustrated. 1977. £4.75.

Intimations of Quality. Ante-Mortem and Post-Mortem Diagnoses. By H. A. WALDRON and LORNA VICKERSTAFF.

Pp. 59, soft cover, illustrated. London: Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust, 1977. £1.50.

An Introduction to Cell Population Kinetics. By W. A. AHERNE, R. S. CAMPLEJOHN and N. A. WRIGHT. Pp. 88, soft back, illustrated. London: Edward Arnold, 1977, £2.95.

Book reviews

Amnesia. Clinical, Psychological and Medicolegal Aspects

(2nd edition)

Edited by C. W. M. WHITTY and O. L. ZANGWILL. Pp. 306, hard cover, illustrated. London, Boston, Sydney, Wellington, Durban and Toronto: Butterworths, 1977. £9.50.

The second edition of this important book brings our knowledge of this complex subject up to date. It deals with experimental aspects (Piercy, Susan Iversen), clinical problems (Whitty, Stores, Lishman, Zangwill, Moyra Williams, Pratt), neuropathology (Brierley), a psychoanalytic view point (Brierley) and medico-legal implications (Gibbens and Hall Williams). It will be essential reading for all neurologists, psychiatrists and psychologists with an interest in this field.

Anaerobic Bacteriology. Clinical and Laboratory Practice

(3rd edition)

By A. TREVOR WILLIS. Pp. x + 300, hard cover. Sevenoaks: The Butterworth Group, 1977. £10.00.

The new edition of this book appears thirteen years after the previous one. In the interim there has been a very widespread resurgence of interest in infection associated with anaerobic organisms, particularly the non-sporing anaerobes. There have been numerous technical advances in laboratory diagnosis. Clinicians have become more aware of the pathogenic significance of these organisms. New drugs active against anaerobes have been introduced.

If we have had to wait a long time for a new edition of Dr Willis's book, it must be said at once that it has been worth the wait. The new edition is a very erudite guide to the subject. It includes detailed practical guidance as to methods of isolation of anaerobes, the preparation of culture media, and the use and testing of equipment for growing anaerobic organisms. Most valuably, the author draws on his enormous personal experience in this field to express opinions which will be of great assistance to those microbiologists with less expertise who wish to improve their ability to isolate anaerobic bacteria.

A learned review of the biology and properties of anaerobic bacteria follows, and finally there is a section on the clinical and public health importance of these organisms. Numerous carefully chosen references are given to the enormous literature on the subject.

The book is written in a lucid, easy-to-read style. The layout is clear and the type easy on the eye. Dr Willis is to be congratulated on having written an excellent introduction to anaerobic bacteriology. This is a volume which will become required reading for medical microbiologists and infectious disease specialists. At the reasonable price of £10 it is to be hoped that clinical microbiology laboratories will all acquire a copy.

Basic Medical Education in the British Isles

Vol. 1. *General Section & School Profiles*

Vol. 2. *The Disciplines & Specialities.*

The Report of the General Medical Council Survey. Pp. xvi + 876, hard cover. London: The Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust, 2 Vols. £14. 1977.

The GMC survey team based on the Centre for Medical Education at the University of Dundee obtained the basic information for this report from the 38 medical schools in the British Isles by means of questionnaire and interview up to 1975. The result is a detailed account of pre-clinical and clinical undergraduate training in the British Isles. Pre-medical teaching and the pre-registration year which is part of the basic medical education as defined by the GMC were not specifically investigated. The general section of the first volume reviews selection procedures, many aspects of the curricula, methods of assessment, and developments. This is followed by detailed profiles of the individual school, under these headings, together with accounts of their specific problems.

The second volume is largely concerned with presenting reports summarizing the information received about the individual disciplines and specialities. The headings under which these are covered include teaching time and organization, place in the curriculum, aims and objects, teaching methods and means of assessment.

The 1967 Recommendations of the GMC as to Basic Medical Education are given as an appendix. It is apparent that the changing curricula have gone some way to meet these recommendations with, for example, formal and attachment training in general practice likely to be available at every medical school by 1978. The report does highlight a shortage of medically-trained teachers in some specialities and the conflict between service and teaching commitments of NHS staff. The need for extra resources is very obvious.

This report has much that is thought-provoking, and all those involved in undergraduate medical education should have a copy available, not least to see what the trends are in their own fields in other medical schools.

Clinical Management of the Osteoporoses

By GILBERT S. GORDON and CYNTHIA VAUGHAN. Pp. ix + 207, hard cover, illustrated. Aylesbury: HM + M Publishers, 1976. £12.50.

In the preface the authors state clearly why they thought it necessary to write a book on the osteoporoses: there is a need for re-appraisal of past knowledge on the subject and for a critical review of the most recent advances in bone disease and calcium metabolism. Right at the start, the important message is there: at last there is ample experimental and

clinical evidence of the key role played by sex hormones in general and the oestrogens in particular in the aetiology of postmenopausal and senile osteoporoses. The chapter dealing authoritatively with this subject is one of the more interesting sections of the book meant, no doubt, to be read by doctors of various disciplines. The book contains no less than three chapters consecrated to basic information on normal and pathological bone structures, calcium metabolism and classification of bone diseases. When discussing the diagnosis, special emphasis is laid on the evaluation of the various diagnostic methods, laboratory investigations, new radiological techniques and a glimpse is allowed into the field of the more sophisticated quantitative measurements.

Not unexpectedly, no new therapeutic discovery is reported. As mentioned already, the authors are enthusiastic about the value of oestrogens which they believe to be the proved remedy for both prevention and treatment of established osteoporosis in the postmenopausal and older women. Their discourse on the benefits, complications and contraindications of long-term oestrogen administration is based on detailed study of published work and vast personal clinical practice spanning over a period of more than twenty-five years. No one would quarrel with their criticism of doctors who still prescribe so many unproved remedies.

The section on rehabilitation and nursing outlines the general principles for the prevention and care of those afflicted with invalidism resulting from all forms of osteoporosis. Whether in the rehabilitation unit or orthopaedic ward, the multidisciplinary approach is advocated. This is to ensure a co-ordinated effort by all members of the remedial team to deal with the needs of the whole patient and his family, be they physical, psychological or social.

All in all it is a well written book, compact, up to date; once started one feels almost compelled to finish reading it in one go. The book contains nearly nine hundred references, and a useful subject index.

The reviewer's only criticisms are: (i) Laboratory data are not given in SI units; (ii) there are too few illustrations; (iii) the quality of some of the X-ray reproductions is disappointing.

This book is highly recommended to general physicians and orthopaedic surgeons and, particularly, geriatricians, physical medicine specialists and rehabilitation therapists.

Epidemiology for Clinicians

By C. J. ROBERTS. Pp. 198, soft cover. Tunbridge Wells: Pitman Medical, 1977. £3.50.

It is good to see this sign of resistance to the threatened takeover of epidemiology by community medicine specialists. Epidemiology is also an integral part of mainstream clinical medicine, being essential to the study of natural history, prognosis and aetiology, which in turn are necessary to rational clinical decisions.

The book is written by a professional epidemiologist with a wide experience of working with clinicians. His aim is to help doctors and students to see how epidemiological information can help them in their care of patients. The first

section, based mainly on a series of examples, sets out to show the relation of epidemiology to diagnosis, prognosis, and the evaluation of treatment, prevention and screening. The second section outlines, again with examples, a few of the subject's basic methods. Unfortunately some techniques of particular clinical interest (for instance, case/control and natural history studies) get no mention. Finally, no fewer than seven appendices add some disconnected afterthoughts.

The style is clear and readable, albeit marred by misprints. The examples are often excellent, and they make the book well worth studying. However, the theoretical and methodological framework is too superficial for the book to serve either as a reference work for doctors or as a textbook for students.

Remembering Henry

Edited by STEPHEN LOCK and HEATHER WINDLE. Pp. 166, soft cover, illustrated. London: British Medical Association, 1977. £3.00.

In this book over thirty contributors – neurologists, physicians, administrators lay and medical, musicians, nurses, secretaries and former university students reminisce about a man who in the words of Lord Cohen was an institution and a legend in his own lifetime. All who knew him will find it difficult to put down this book – those of us who saw him only infrequently and then briefly, will be left to ponder on what it was which made this man, who was not always right in what he said and who sometimes changed his mind without acknowledgment, so great, which he undoubtedly was. The book also contains three of Miller's more general lectures – on accident neurosis, medical education and psychiatry. The BMA is to be congratulated for sponsoring this book, any profits from which will be donated to the Henry Miller Memorial Fund.

Textbook of Surgery

(4th edition)

Edited by D. A. MACFARLANE and L. P. THOMAS. Pp. 787, soft cover, illustrated. Edinburgh, London, New York: Churchill Livingstone, 1977. £8.50.

The fourth edition of this deservedly popular undergraduate surgical textbook appears in the now familiar economy soft cover, with the advantage of helping to fight inflation. The secret of its success has been a clearly written text supplemented by a very large number of excellent, simple and often ingenious diagrams. Considerable revisions have taken place in this new edition, especially in the endocrine and orthopaedic sections, the chapter on injury and repair, the section on Hodgkin's disease, Crohn's disease and renal transplantation. Recent advances in the use of fibre-optic instruments in endoscopy and cryosurgery have been incorporated. Two new authors join the team of contributors, which now numbers ten. This textbook can continue to be recommended to clinical students as a useful, concise and sound basis for surgical practice.