health. The story is told in a scholarly and compelling fashion and I recommend the book with enthusiasm.

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Hallucinations and Their Impact on Art, E.M.R. Critchley. Pp. 185. Carnegie Press, Preston, Lancs, 1987. £10.

Medicine attempts to analyse and understand the mind by study of it malfunctioning; and by giving insight into it functioning with supernormal sensitivity. This book combines these two approaches. It displays an amazingly wide ranging erudition. There are references to history, mythology and hagiography for example, not to mention an encyclopaedic knowledge of biographical detail and the private quasi-philosophical world of neurology together with an enviable sense of aesthetic values. The book, indeed individual sentences, bursts with information, three hundred references are included; much of this is fascinating, some of it wearisome – to read the chapter on synaesthesia, for example, is an exhausting experience. Esoteric language is used extravagantly – the reader will need both a large general dictionary and an equally large medical dictionary and be prepared to consult them frequently. All in all a brilliant *tour-de-force* but a flawed one because it overwhelms.

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How to do it: 2, many various authors. Pp. x+208. British Medical Journal, London, 1987. £6.95.

This paperback covers 34 activities in 208 pages. It is aimed at the doctor who has just finished postgraduate training. Such short sections have encouraged the tendency to trite advice and to omit the much more interesting pitfalls – rather like life at second-hand from a series of social workers.

Overall the book fails whereas it had some success when published as a series of articles. If a doctor needs help he would do better turning to a friend or other professional for comprehensive and up-to-date advice. In many instances the doctor might do best to learn for himself: A chapter like 'Choose a better word' by B.J. Freeman is far too short and 'Write for money' by Michael O'Donnell far too long.

There are exceptions. In a perfect Baconian essay, David Morris discusses 'Admit you are wrong'. This should be read by all, from those who have insufficient confidence to admit they are wrong to those who are perhaps too abjectly humble forever professing guilt. Secondly 'Retire' by David Smithers is a beautiful and unselfish lesson. At last evidence that not all doctors are completely obsessed with themselves. Finally, a good

example of a really practical new look 'Work abroad' by Anne Savage and Iain Wilson.

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The Knee Joint. A Clinical Guide, Philip Evans. Pp. x+188, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1986. £5.95.

I enjoyed this unusual little book. Dr Evans has produced a well written and very readable account of the anatomy and function of the knee joint illustrated by excellent and singular line drawings. He conveys an infectious enthusiasm for the understanding of this most complex joint. His book is stimulating, instructive and entertaining, and a pleasure to read.

The volume should be bought and digested by everyone who may ever examine a knee, irrespective of their seniority. All will learn from it. It is an invaluable reference for guidance for the beginner, a source of reminder for the trainee and a concise summary of his knowledge for the pundit. There are small points of opinion which may provoke a quibble, but these are few. There is a useful bibliography and a glossary of terms used in the text.

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Listening to Gynaecological Patients' Problems, David Jenkins. Pp. vii+104, illustrated. Springer-Verlag, London, Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, Paris, Tokyo, 1986. £5.95.

This is an interesting approach to learning gynaecology and improving communication skills with patients. It emphasizes the art of listening to the patient and interpreting the history correctly. It does not intend to cover either clinical signs or investigations in any detail. The author has clearly understood the difficulties in taking a good history and the reticence of some patients to discuss symptoms which are embarrassing or of a confidential nature.

The chapters deal with symptoms, or groups of symptoms and each starts with a series of questions, an explanation or key to the question, a summary of the problem and a guide to management and often one or two references. Questions and their explanations are suitable and logical. The space devoted to the 'problem' varies and it is not always evident why. It is debatable as to whether this section might not have been omitted altogether – it is not included for every topic and in a small book such as this, it is difficult to adequately cover the subject without being too simplistic. The references are helpful but for postgraduate study they are too few and too many are