

BOOK REVIEWS : BOEKBESPREKINGS

RADIOLOGY.

The Year Book of Radiology. (1961-1962 Year Book Series) Ed. by J. F. Holt, M.D., W. M. Whitehouse, M.D., H. W. Jacox, M.D. and M. M. Kligerman, M.D. Pp. 433. Illustrated. Chicago: Year Book Medical Publishers. 1962.

To sift through, sort out, select, summarize, and illustrate the best articles in world radiology literature is a very formidable task, but this is what the editors of this year book manage to achieve year after year. In addition they often add small-print commentaries of their own summaries. Usually their comments are shrewd and pithy; occasionally they fall below standard.

All radiologists, hospital and private, aim to keep abreast of the latest ploys in radiological one-up-manship, and to them the possession of this work is a must, for sandwiched between the covers of this well-found book are the choicest cuts available from the radiological carcass. Though some may need chewing, all are nutritious and fresh as well. W.J.L.

KLINIESE KARDIOLOGIE

Handbook of Clinical Cardiology. By H. W. Salmon, M.D., M.R.C.P. Pp. viii + 178. Illustrated. R2.50. London: Harvey & Blythe Ltd. 1962.

Die skrywer poog om 'n handleiding vir die kliniese kardiologie op te stel wat dit maklik sou maak vir studente om 'n goeie begrip te kry van die verskillende harttoestande asook hulle diagnose en behandeling. Hy het besonder goed geslaag hierin. Die inligting vervat in die boek hou tred met die moderne opvattinge op hierdie gebied. Dit word op 'n leesbare wyse aangebied en daar is min wat nie behandel word nie.

'n Mens kan hierdie boek baie sterk aanbeveel vir voorgraadse geneeskundige studente en dit kan ook met nut gelees word deur algemene praktisyns en selfs deur nagraadse studente. A.J.B.

KARDIOGRAFIE

Elementary Cardiology. An introduction to Scientific approaches in cardiology. By E. N. Chamberlain, M.D., M.Sc., F.R.C.P., N. Coulshed, M.D., M.R.C.P. and E. L. Rubin, M.D., F.F.R., D.M.R.E. Pp. vii + 141. Illustrated. R2.75. Bristol: John Wright & Sons. 1962.

Soos die naam van die boek aandui, is dit 'n baie vereenvoudigde uiteensetting van die grafiese metodes wat gebruik word by die diagnose van hartsiektes. Die boekie word ingedeel in vier dele wat handel oor:

(1) Elektrokardiografie, (2) fonokardiografie, (3) kardiaal radiologie, en (4) kardiaal kateterisasie.

Die inligting is baie duidelik uiteengesit en die grafieke asook die röntgenfoto's is van goeie gehalte. Hierdie boek is alleen van waarde vir voorgraadse geneeskundige studente. Daar kan min twyfel wees dat studente tog 'n sekere mate van kennis behoort te besit oor hierdie verskillende tegnieke; ook moet hulle 'n oppervlakkige begrip hê van die interpretasie van die bevindings. Die skrywers het nie meer as dit beoog nie en die boek voldoen aan hierdie behoefte. A.J.B.

MEDICAL HISTORICAL ESSAYS

Some Famous General Practitioners and other Medical Historical Essays. By Zachary Cope, Kt. Pp. xii + 276. Illustrated. R4.00. London: Pitman Medical Publishers. 1961.

Sir Zachary Cope is perhaps best known for his contributions to surgery: he has added considerably to the knowledge of the actinomycoses and his book on *The Early Diagnosis of the Acute Abdomen* has enjoyed the status of a medical classic since its first appearance in 1921. In his lighter moments, Sir

Zachary has come to be regarded as the 'Poet Laureate' of English surgery and, in recent years, he has earned further laurels as a prolific writer on medical history.

His new book—*Some Famous General Practitioners*—takes its title from the first of the series of essays which it contains. These essays cover a wide range of subjects, from 'Medical students through the last four centuries' to 'The economic aspects of tobacco addiction'. None of the essays contains significant additions to the bare facts of medical history; mostly they are derived from secondary sources and they are predominantly anecdotal in form. However, the author has shown a fine historical sense in his selection and assessment of the available data and he has presented his material with that charming simplicity and clarity of style which makes for most pleasant reading.

I found the title-essay the most interesting. Although the achievements of the great English GPs have often been described, it is just as well to be reminded of them again and again. The recently established Colleges of General Practitioners in Great Britain and in South Africa include among their functions the fostering of research by their members in general practice; they will derive much inspiration from a study of the history of their predecessors—Edward Jenner, James Parkinson, John Snow, Hugh Owen Thomas, Patrick Manson, James Mackenzie—all of whose greatest achievements were made while busily engaged in general practice. Those GPs who feel that their usefulness is generally underrated may be heartened by this comment in the *London Medical, Surgical and Pharmaceutical Repository* of January 1814:

'A general practitioner is indubitably of infinite importance to the commonwealth: as society is constituted he cannot be dispensed with; and therefore ought to be encouraged and protected.'

This quotation contains the first recorded use of the term 'general practitioner' and despite attempts to ridicule it and to displace it, it has survived and will probably continue to do so. Perhaps some future historian will take the matter further and trace the evolution of the various specialized forms of general practitioner: the family doctor, the clinic doctor, the district surgeon, etc.

The essay on 'The economic aspects of tobacco addiction' is of particular topical interest. Many will disagree with the author's use of the term 'addiction' in this connection and they will continue to regard smoking merely as a filthy habit. Like syphilis, smoking was one of the less happy consequences of the European discovery of the New World. Sir Zachary relates how Queen Elizabeth I put an import duty of twopence a pound on tobacco; in 1960, the subjects of Queen Elizabeth II paid an import duty of £3 4s. 6d. a pound. In that year, the British Treasury received almost £800,000,000 from the duty of tobacco; this more than adequately provided the £700,000,000 required to run the National Health Service. One is tempted to ask, however, if there were no smoking of tobacco, would there be any need for a National Health Service? H.G.

ELECTROENCEPHALOGRAPHY

Clinical Electroencephalography. By L. G. Kiloh, M.D., B.Sc., M.R.C.P., D.P.M. and J. W. Osselton, B.Sc. Pp. ix + 135. Illustrated. R5.20. Durban: Butterworth. 1961.

There are now appearing a number of books which offer elementary information about electroencephalography, a necessary prerequisite for those who wish to make intelligent use of this method of investigation. The authors give a short account of the recording techniques and the commoner activating procedures which enable additional information to be obtained. A description of the normal EEG is followed by a survey of the conditions in which the record is likely to be abnormal, and the nature of such abnormalities; while a final chapter considers its value and limitations. On the whole a satisfactory introduction to the subject. S.B.

EPILEPSY AFTER HEAD INJURY

Epilepsy after Blunt Head Injuries. By W. B. Jennett, M.D., F.R.C.S. Pp. x + 150. R2.10. London: William Heinemann Medical Books Ltd. 1962.

The scope of this book is probably best summarized in its author's own words, 'How often does epilepsy occur in the acute stage of a head injury, and what is its significance ...? What is the incidence of late epilepsy and what is its nature and course? Are there features of the acute stage of a head injury which enable some prediction to be made of the likelihood of fits developing later?' These questions may be of the greatest forensic importance; yet there is little written in any discussion of large series of head injuries which help towards categorical answers.

Mr. Jennett has given statistical analyses of over 500 head injuries in a small 150-page book which, despite its compression, remains clear and readable and in which almost every conceivable aspect of traumatic epilepsy, with the exception of treatment, is labelled and indexed. J.M.MacG.

LABORATORY FORMULAE

Handbook of Medical Laboratory Formulae. By R. E. Silvertown, A.I.M.L.T., F.R.M.S. and M. J. Anderson, F.I.M.L.T. Pp. xii + 676. R9.30. Durban: Butterworth. 1961.

This book usefully collects into one volume a very comprehensive range of formulae for reagents, media and stains used in bacteriology, histopathology, haematology and biochemistry laboratories. The selection and classification of a large amount of information have been very well done, and the instructions are clear, concise and practical. The authors' insistence on detail testifies to their familiarity with the difficulties encountered by less experienced staff in working from notes which omit apparently obvious steps.

The final test for this book will be its usefulness on the laboratory bench, and the indications are that it will pass—in the case of less specialized laboratories, probably with distinction. C.E.W.