

BOOK REVIEWS

Atlas and Manual of Dermatology and Venereology. 2nd Edition. Dr. W. BURCKHARDT and Edited by Dr. S. Epstein. London: Bailliere, Tindall & Cox. Ltd., 1963. Pp. xiv + 290. Illustrated, 132s.

An atlas seems to be the obvious form for a textbook, and Professor Burkhardt's example, intended for general practitioners and non-specialists, has run to five editions in its original form. The second English edition, translated by Stephan Epstein, has been enlarged textually, and, it is claimed, brought up to date in all respects. There are more plates, and new ones have been substituted for some of the originals.

Most of the colour plates are extremely good, so that one wonders why any black and white plates were included, especially of such essentially chromatic subjects as lentigo maligna (Fig. 134), vitiligo (Fig. 156), secondary syphilis (Fig. 171) and sarcoidosis (Figs. 19a and b).

A bigger quarrel is with the choice of illustrations, and this applies to most atlases. Especially in the sections on neoplasia the late and spectacular receives more emphasis than the early and unimpressive, giving a 19th century impression. Why show a fine colour plate of a late mycosis fungoides (Fig. 84) which anyone could recognise as serious, and only one indifferent black and white plate of the insidious, undramatic early stage of the disease (Fig. 82). Similarly, far advanced Paget's disease is shown (Fig. 132), and a page is wasted on an appalling late rodent ulcer (Fig. 137) when two or three early examples would have been much more valuable. The section on malignant melanoma is hardly adequate, or the single illustration (Fig. 144). Here again anyone would realise that something serious had happened, but what about the first signs of malignancy, and the problem of the flat junction naevus? One looks in vain for an illustration of keratoacanthoma, which can be such a difficult early diagnostic problem.

The text is of necessity condensed, and reflects its European origin. One wonders whether 44 lines devoted to systemic treatment of pyodermas, compared with four lines on topical treatment, gives the right emphasis, although there is some expansion later in the text. One does not expect vaccines to be recommended for furunculosis (p.61) or acne (p.212) in a modern textbook, especially as the discussion of skin disinfection is rather cursory, and includes such methods as potassium permanganate baths. However one has to admire the amount of information that is packed into the text, and remember that its origin is European.

The trouble with atlases is that certain pictures tend to fix themselves in the mind's eye, and the variations in clinical pictures cannot be adequately dealt with, especially if text and pictures have to compete for space. With these reservations, this book can be recommended as a compromise between an adequate atlas and a simple textbook.

D. GILL.

Biochemical Values in Clinical Medicine. 2nd Edition. R. D. EASTHAM. Bristol: John Wright & Sons Ltd., 1963. Pp. 160. 15s.

This small pocket book, the first edition of which was deservedly popular, has been completely revised and brought up to date. Certain sections have been removed and new sections dealing with the increasingly important Enzyme estimations have been added. Tests are arranged in alphabetical order and under each heading are given the normal range followed by physiological and pathological variations. A major up-to-date reference is given for each test mentioned.

In his original preface the author stated that he had tried to provide an accurate summary of the ways in which various conditions affect many biochemical tests. I believe he has accomplished this in a pocket book which will certainly be in the possession of very many clinical pathologists.

T. E. FIELD.

Guide to House Surgeons in the Surgical Unit. 3rd Edition. G. J. FRAENKEL and J. LUDBROOK. London: William Heinemann Medical Books Ltd., 1964. Pp. xi + 99. 12s. 6d.

That this little booklet should have run through three editions in three years is not in the least surprising, I can imagine no more useful vade mecum for the House Surgeon, or even dare it be said, the Registrar and the Consultant, for rapid reference on the ward or by the bedside. These notes originated in a loose leaf folder of notes provided for the use of House Surgeons of the Professorial Unit at the Dunedin Hospital and it is not surprising that the authors comment on the fact that "these notes frequently disappeared" since I cannot blame anyone who abstracted them for his further guidance through his surgical life. As Mr. Selwyn Taylor points out in the preface the instructions herein are not universally applicable, nevertheless they form a solid basis of information which if followed intently would avoid any embarrassing mistakes in the care or handling of patients. The book covers almost every facet of the house surgeon's duties from giving him a useful list of normal findings for comparison with laboratory results, down to the care of major emergencies. It is good to see tension pneumothorax described and it is stressed that this condition is so often overlooked, although the use of a flutter valve instead of an underwater seal drain is not described. The chapter on the investigation of arterial diseases of the lower limb with its systematic plan for examination is excellent but it is a pity that the tourniquet test for varicose veins is rather inadequately described and the significance of the various results is not given. The chapter on trauma is very short but nevertheless manages to cover the main points, but in discussing the general examination of head injuries merely states, "(a) Level of consciousness" without defining how these levels may best be recorded.

A final useful little chapter on medical conditions will keep the house surgeon aware of the surgical dangers associated with modern pharmacology.

In short one may echo the words of Mr. Selwyn Taylor in the Foreword when he says "one has wondered how he ever managed without it".
J. C. WATTS.

Antibiotics and Sulphonamides in Tropical Medicine. J. UNGAR and A. W. WOODRUFF. London: Oxford University Press, 1965. Pp. vii + 110. 14s.

Much useful information has been gathered from scattered sources and well arranged in this monograph. The principles underlying treatment, the correct use and dosage of each agent, are clearly indicated. It is pleasing to find a little book written with such care and providing excellent references. No mention however is made of ampicillin in the paragraph on enteric carriers and penicillin, mentioned as a cure for trachoma on page 22, is not indicated as clinically effective in Table 2.
J. P. BAIRD.

Clinical Phonocardiography. D. C. DEUCHAR. London: The English Universities Press Ltd., 1964. Pp. xiv + 144. Illustrated. 25s.

An account is given of heart sounds, their physiological basis in health and disease and their graphic representations with the phonocardiograph. The necessary equipment is carefully described and the ways whereby this method of investigation may prove helpful in clinical cardiology discussed. The text is amply supplemented with diagrams and elucidates points made. Although it does not pretend to be a comprehensive treatise, it is a book well worth the attention of both post and under graduates.

I. MICHIE.

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