BOOK REVIEWS


This is the first volume to be issued by Hart-Davis and McGibbon in a new series of "The British at War" under the general Editorship of Ludovic Kennedy.

As one would expect from so experienced a writer on military subjects as Mr. Furneaux this is a first class general account of the war from the British side. The Author brings out most clearly and effectively the primary roles of William Pitt and the Navy in waging this war so successfully. He also shows that it was primarily British efforts which gained success in N. America—a fact for long obscured by American successes and achievements in later wars.

The maps and illustrations on the whole are excellent as is the general production of this book which, with the first class text, is astonishing value at £2.65.

In future volumes it is hoped that closer supervision will be exercised over the map-makers as they have failed altogether to provide scales for the very important maps of N. America at the ends of the volume and of the map of the German Campaign facing page 160. As anyone who follows military campaigns knows maps without scales are valueless. It is further to be hoped that if the map-makers elect to decorate their maps with "Stands of Arms" they will take the elementary trouble to copy weapons which were contemporary with the campaigns dealt with e.g. on the end papers it is noted that the musket shown has a percussion lock (not introduced into the British Army until 1839) and that the ramrod is buried in the stock (all Brown Bess Flintlocks carried them in ramrod pipes below the stock) and that the musket sling is somehow fixed to the stock without the aid of sling swivels. If I appear to labour this point it is because the end papers are the first thing that the potential reader sees and these errors give a quite erroneous impression of the accuracy of the book as in fact the remaining maps are amongst the best I've seen for a very long time.

A. MACLENNAN


This little book gives the history of the 2/3rd City of London Field Ambulance from 1914-1919. The Author has used a contemporary diary kept by a member of the Unit—Private Ellis—as the main thread of his narrative and has amplified Private Ellis's account from the memories and notes of other members. The result is one of the best Unit Histories which I have read. When one reflects that this History has been put together well over 50 years after the events mentioned took place, this achievement is all the more commendable.

I find this first hand accounts which bring home to me so much the courage and devotion shown (as we have come to expect this) but the acute physical discomfort of the Western Front and the slow tempo of movements in the days before mechanisation, when armies relied on the physical exertions of man and horse for the transport of supplies, equipment and wounded, and the movement of troops.

Excellent illustrations are provided and it is therefore a pity to find no map on which to follow the path of the Field Ambulance on the Western Front.

This History is worthy of being known to a far wider circle than the Unit's Old Comrades Association, and I recommend it most strongly to our Corps readers.

A. MACLENNAN


Today the lymphocyte occupies a key position in the body's immune system but it is only comparatively recently, within the last two decades, that research has begun to characterise the functions of this fascinating cell first delineated by Ehrlich nearly two hundred years ago in 1879. Dr. Elves, in the second edition of this valuable monograph, attempts to consolidate and extend his review of earlier experimental work which describes the normal mammalian lymphocyte. The text has been revised with more emphasis placed on the co-operation of the different cell types involved in immune responses and the new evidence is presented for the essential role of the thymus gland and the existence of different forms of lymphocyte, one short-lived and one long-lived, the latter being the more important in both humoral (B-cell) and cellular (T-cell) types of immune response. This book deals with mainly experimental work and is therefore aimed at the cognoscenti of immunology. Readers who seek information on the more practical clinical aspects of humoral and cellular responses, immuno-deficiency syndromes and lymphoproliferative disorders will be disappointed. Such is the continuing explosion of new information about lymphocytoology that we can look forward to further editions of this book which should be on the shelves of all reference libraries.

J. B. STEWART


There must be some of us who, at least on occasion, wish they knew something, if not more, about E.M.; undoubtedly our numbers, for the reviewer includes himself in the company, will wax greater as the potentialities of the E.M. becomes realised and effective in whatever field of medicine we choose to practice our profession, clinical or laboratory medicine.

In my sphere of action the use of the E.M. in smallpox diagnosis has been a boon in community medicine; another example which springs to mind is its use in the diagnosis of the not-as-yet culturable Australia Antigen particle, not to mention that the use of the E.M. in Subacute sclerosing panencephalitis (S.S.P.E.) revealed for the first time the latent form of the measles virus!
The author of this book is a teacher, and like many others of that most noble of the professions, found out that in her subject there was no publication which catered for the beginner in electron-microscopy; nor for those postgraduate and honour degree students in biology and medicine (which is in essence a branch of biology) who needed the E.M. in their further studies and investigations. This handbook is the result of that deficiency, and for the R.A.M.C. officer and/or technician (and nowadays they can be that) of the future whose work might involve the needs and uses of the E.M., this handbook offers an easy introduction in the principles and practice of the science of electron-microscopy; the recommended literature at the end of each chapter has been most carefully and cleverly chosen to aid the student in the pursuance of this science and art.

For the categories of personnel mentioned above this beginner’s handbook has no equal.

E. E. VELLA


This is a relatively inexpensive paper back aimed at the Medical Student. It adopts a readable simple approach to the application of Physiological Principles to Clinical Medicine, though on occasions does assume rather a lot of the reader as when involving y and p chains of haemoglobin without prior introduction to the topic. Also it has a number of unfortunate misprints which could lead to misinterpretation as on page 81 where the blood clotting factor VIII (antithaemophilic) is printed as factor XIII.

The postgraduate student and practising doctor will find it light reading and for the postgraduate it has a useful collection of references for further reading. However it lacks the detail required for the higher examinations. It is more a book to borrow than possess.

C. M. FRENCH


Sir Zachary Cope has done it again. Indeed the whole perplexing roster
Discoursed on vomiting and pain<br>The rigid turn, the tender spot<br>The rectal finger without which not.<br>Appendicitis and perforation<br>Renal colic and misplaced gestation<br>Typhoid, tabs and herpes zoster
Of affliction of the guts
Including all the ifs and buts.<br>The price is small, the drawings good<br>(Expertly done by Collingwood)<br>The rhyme will surely help you gain<br>The facts you missed when studied plain.

W. C. MOFFAT


This small book reports the proceedings of a two-day round table conference arranged by the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS) under the joint auspices of the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNESCO, in 1970. Twenty-seven of the 130 delegates, drawn from 50 member countries, presented papers for discussion. Using the colloquialism of the present day, the work of such a gathering would best be described as a think-tank. The aims of this multi-national think-tank are admirably summed up in the preface where it is suggested that the health needs of society are met by the complementary efforts of those who practise with the use of existing knowledge and those who search (research) for the answers to unsolved problems and for new knowledge. The conference was concerned with the training of the latter (the researcher) and with discovering how far or how different from that of the practising clinician this training need be. The conference made no resolutions nor adopted any conclusions. In this perhaps lay its weakness. The reader is left with a mass of evidence, its conclusions are more disconnected and virtually precludes any serious discussion. The conference had covered such a vast field of research experience and opinion that a factual summing-up would have been almost as long as the discussions themselves. There is a great deal of interest in this book for authorities concerned with the training of medical researchers and especially for those who want to foster more research in public health, or in what is today called “community medicine”. Although not specifically stated, the conclusion is clear. Any forward-looking medical service needs an active research element to support and develop the practice of prevention, diagnosis and therapy.

J. P. CROWDY


This book presents an introduction to the statistical method, with particular reference to its use in the field of medicine. Topics dealt with are the description and presentation of data, ideas about reliability and significance tests and the conclusions which may be drawn. The material is given in the form of a programmed learning text. This is a style which I feel some will find rather unhelpful. Whilst it may serve to instill a number of basic facts, if only by constant repetition, the presentation is inevitably somewhat disconnected and virtually precludes any serious discussion.

The author intends the book “for those who want to make a start along statistical paths” and makes “no apologies to the purists for over-simplification of the numerical facts of life”. There are times, however, when ‘simplification’ comes perilously close to ‘distortion’.

Whilst much of the content is correct, there are many inaccuracies, ranging from the irritatingly trivial to the frankly misleading over-generalisation. I believe that this book adds little to the literature already available, detracting from the recognition of statistics as a serious discipline in the service of medical research rather than as an annoying but necessary evil.

R. R. SOWDEN

It is paradoxical that at a time when doctors are increasingly involved in new administrative regulations, medico-legal problems and litigation, less emphasis is being placed on forensic medicine in the undergraduate medical curriculum and the subject has been dropped from the qualifying examination of all except one university. The publication of this concise book on the practical aspects of legal medicine is therefore timely and should be of considerable assistance to young doctors in hospital and general practitioners to whom it is directed.

The disadvantage of the larger classical volumes on legal medicine, has been the emphasis on forensic pathology which, although of great importance to the specialist pathologist, has little relevance for the family doctor in his daily practice. Lack of information on legal aspects of consent, medical reports and medical ethics especially in relation to such procedures as organ transplants has been rectified by this publication.

The book gives a precise and factual account of the subject, but its value would be increased by the addition of a list of important references to enable the reader to follow-up specific topics in more detail. Although in general it is accurate and up-to-date, a few anachronisms have crept in. For example, in the diagnosis pregnancy, Ascheim-Zondek and Freidmann tests are included which are now of historical interest and have been replaced by inhibition-agglutination tests and radio-immunoeassay of hormones. A more serious criticism is the omission of a specialist ophthalmic examination in the investigation of a suspected battered baby syndrome. It is felt also that more guidance should be given of the doctors' responsibilities in a suspected case of battering and increased emphasis given to the role of the paediatrician in the management of these cases.

In spite of these relatively minor criticisms the book can be thoroughly recommended as essential reading for all senior students and young doctors about to embark in medical practice. N. W. J. ENGLAND


The author made the important observation that the text books were wrong in describing the pain pattern of calculous ureteric obstruction. This book is an account of his study of the phenomena as he actually found them to be, and of his subsequent studies to find an explanation. The earlier part of his work was done when serving in the R.A.M.C., as Consultant Radiologist, British Military Hospital, Singapore.

After a careful analysis of the clinical and radiological features of his cases, he gives an analysis of relevant anatomical, physiological, pathological and research literature. He evolves a hypothesis that the phenomena have more to do with pelvic pressure changes then ureteric "colic" on movements of calculi.

This book is of interest to all surgeons, particularly urologists. It most certainly should be studied in detail by anyone considering research into the kidney structure.

The general production of the book is excellent, with the exception of a few radiographs which hardly show the features intended. K. H. HARPER.