

Reviews.

ASTHMA. Second Edition. By Frank Coke, F.R.C.S., with the collaboration of Harry Coke, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. Bristol: John Wright and Sons Ltd. 1939. 20 illustrations. Pp. xii + 258. Price 15s.

The second edition of this book, published sixteen years after the first, has been completely revised in the light of the author's experience gained in this period, and of much important work into the factors involved in the causation of asthma and their mode of action. Following a preliminary description of allergy, anaphylaxis, and sensitization, the author gives in full detail the ætiological factors involved, and proceeds to describe the investigation of a case from the standpoints of heredity, history, sensitivity, bacteriology, and blood cytology and biochemistry. He distinguishes three main types of asthma—allergic, microbic, and a mixed type which includes the aspirin-sensitive group. The erythrocyte sedimentation rate and the differential sedimentation test, which is fully described, are used in the differentiation of the three types, and in prognosis and control of treatment. Finally, the treatment of the three types is discussed.

The book is attractively written and presents concisely, and with ample references to the literature, an interesting and instructive and comprehensive treatise on the present knowledge on the subject. T. M.

TEXTBOOK OF MEDICINE. By Various Authors. Edited by J. J. Conybeare, M.C., D.M.Oxon., F.R.C.P. Fourth Edition. Edinburgh: E. and S. Livingstone. 1939. Pp. xvii + 1112. Price 21s. net.

The fact that four editions and two reprints of "Conybeare" have appeared within the short space of ten years is sufficient evidence of its continued popularity.

The whole work has been brought thoroughly up to date, and a section dealing with psychological medicine, contributed by Dr. Desmond Curran and Dr. Eric Guttmann, introduced for the first time into this edition, enlarges the scope of what was already a comprehensive textbook. These two authors must be congratulated on having produced, within the hundred pages devoted to the section dealing with mental ill-health, a very readable and instructive account of a difficult and somewhat controversial subject. They have succeeded, as is so necessary in a textbook of this type, in steering a middle course between the extremist psychologist and materialistic schools, and have dispensed with most of the obscure words, phrases, and tautologies beloved of the "whole-hogger" psychologists. Their description of schizophrenia is admirable. The legal aspects of mental illness are also adequately dealt with.

The section on tropical infections contributed by Dr. Hugh Stott of Lucknow appears somewhat condensed, only 30 pages being allowed for this important section. In view of the ever-increasing importance of these

so-called tropical infections (few of them are, of course, limited to tropical or even subtropical climes); it is suggested that rather more space be devoted to their description in future editions.

Dr. Stott makes a small slip when he speaks of the human cycle of the malaria parasite as "sporogony," this term being usually confined to the extra-corporeal phase within the anopheles mosquito. He does not mention that the most important therapeutic action of plasmoquine lies in its effect on the relapse rate, especially of benign tertian malaria; nor that atebirin may be given, often advantageously, by intramuscular injection.

In the article on diabetes, contributed by the editor, the uses and abuses of the new insulin compounds have been fully described. As might be expected in a textbook emanating from the school where Sir Arthur Hurst is a presiding genius, the article dealing with the organic disorders of the stomach, although not from the pen of that great little man, is very complete and up-to-date. A description of the more liberal dietetic treatment advocated by Dr. Meulengracht of Copenhagen in the treatment of hæmatemesis, receives full notice.

In the otherwise excellent article on gonorrhœa, contributed by Mr. E. V. Lloyd, the revolutionary results obtained in the treatment of that disease with drugs of the sulphanilamide group are not, perhaps, sufficiently stressed. This omission will doubtless be made good in future editions when the therapeutic effects of these new preparations throughout the whole range of venereal infections have been more thoroughly elucidated.

Dr. Geoffrey Marshall and Dr. W. D. W. Brooks have contributed a specially comprehensive and helpful account of pulmonary and pleural tuberculosis, well illustrated by a series of excellent and clearly marked radiograms.

The reviewer read with much interest and no little profit the interesting section dealing with diseases of the nervous system, contributed by Dr. F. M. R. Walshe. It is sad to realize how greatly treatment lags behind diagnosis in this interesting but therapeutically disappointing branch of medical science.

Dr. Conybeare, in his account of the worm infections, still retains the old nomenclature, *Trichocephalus dispar* and *Oxyuris vermicularis* instead of the more modern *Trichuris trichiura* and *Enterobius vermicularis*, both of which have been in common usage for some years.

We can do no better in terminating this review of an excellent textbook than mention that it is dedicated to that great benefactor of medicine in all its branches, Lord Nuffield, a good augury for its continued success.

S. S.