THE PAINFUL NECK AND BACK
James W. Fisk

R. J. GROVE-WHITE

Book Reviews

CHARLES C. THOMAS
Springfield, Illinois (1977)
209 pages. Price £10.25

Most general practitioners will have at some times felt inadequate in dealing with patients with backache or pain arising from the cervical spine. Many now realize that osteopathic techniques have something to offer, but there is still the problem of the 'quack' status of the unregistered practitioner and the difficulty of deciding which kind of patient is likely to be helped by manipulative treatment. It is therefore a great pleasure to find that a general practitioner and member of the College has written a book which not only deals with this subject from the practitioner's point of view but also indicates the scope of manipulation in the whole spectrum of orthopaedic and rehabilitation care.

DR. FISK is attached to the Department of Rheumatology and Rehabilitation at the Waikato Hospital in New Zealand and his book opens with a very complimentary foreword by Dr B. S. Rose, who is head of that department and a member of the WHO Expert Advisory Panel on Chronic Degenerative Disorders.

Dr Fisk starts with a general discussion on manipulation and lays down a series of absolute contraindications. Some might say that he is over-cautious, but no-one could reasonably claim that he advocates anything other than sound clinical practice. He discusses the aetiology of spinal pain and the anatomy of the spine with special reference to the facet joints. This part of the book is extremely well illustrated with clear diagrams. Then follow excellent chapters on history taking and examination, after which he deals with the manipulative techniques which he uses. This whole section is beautifully illustrated with photographs of a high standard, showing the stages of each technique in detail and also demonstrating the skeletal relationships of many of them.

He goes on to deal with exercise programmes for all parts of the spine, and here again the photography is excellent. He concludes with some sound advice on prevention. There is a helpful bibliography but the index is inadequate—which is the only real criticism I have of the book.

However, the book is extremely well written and fills a real need, not merely as a handbook on manipulative procedures for the general practitioner, but as a helpful introduction to the subject for the orthopaedic surgeon. It will prove a useful addition to any medical centre library.

JOHN MILES

BACTERIOLOGY, VIROLOGY AND IMMUNITY FOR STUDENTS OF MEDICINE 10TH EDITION
F. S. STEWART and T. S. L. BESWICK
Ballière Tindall
London (1977)
496 pages. Price £9.75

This is not a useful book for general practitioners. As far as microbiological textbooks are concerned, our needs are twofold. First, we need a quick-to-use reference text in the consulting room, in order to get help with diagnosis and management, and secondly, we need access to an authoritative tome, with comprehensive references for less hurried reading.

Stewart and Beswick answer neither requirement. The book is lacking in both diagrams and other aids to speedy fact-finding. Its clinical coverage is too scanty to be useful and its language somewhat antiquated ("acute rheumatism" for rheumatic fever). There are no proper references. (Are medical students discouraged from free-thinking these days?)

I showed the book to a final-year medical student and she was not impressed.

T. F. PAINE

AN ATLAS OF CARDIOLOGY, ELECTROCARDIOGRAMS AND CHEST X-RAYS
Neville Conway
Wolfe Medical Publications
London (1977)
250 pages. Price £12

This book is intended as "a clinical benchbook to assist undergraduates, family doctors, and physicians (both in training and established) at the bedside". The first section of the book deals with the ECG, and the second discusses the chest x-ray.

Emphasis has been placed on pattern recognition of the ECG, though the easily comprehended explanations accompanying each illustration often mention the theory underlying the interpretation. However, this is not a suitable book from which to learn without a basic knowledge of the ECG. There are 30 examples of the variability of the normal ECG and eight examples of recording faults! All the common and important ECG abnormalities are illustrated, as well as some rarer examples. The 453 ECGs shown are clearly reproduced and provide an ex-