

Basic gastroenterology. Including disease of the liver. J. M. NAISH and A. E. A. READ. Bristol. John Wright & Sons Ltd. 1965. Pp. x+351. Price 55s.

It is evidence of the explosion of scientific knowledge that the 'basic' information relating to only one human bodily system requires over 350 pages for its exposition. This book is, however, basic only in its title for its contents take the reader to the further boundaries and into the darkest corners of alimentary disease.

The general practitioner is most familiar with the alimentary canal at its upper and lower ends, and the chapter on diseases of the mouth and saliva glands contains a description of lesions and conditions which he will meet from time to time, with the perhaps not unnatural omission of Koplick's spots. The description of the aphthous ulcer as a psychosomatic nuisance is particularly fitting, and throughout the book the authors show themselves well aware of the influence of the psyche on the structures and organs that they describe. At the opposite extreme anorectal disorders, benign, malignant and psychogenic, are dealt with fully, with the comforting conclusion that no known treatment is effective in relief of proctalgia fugax. Where illustrations usefully amplify the text they are clear and understandable, and the arrangement of the chapters in numbered sections makes for methodical reading, as by the candidate for a higher qualification. The same presentation, however, aids the reader who will use the book as a source of information since on reference he may well find that his point is covered clearly and concisely. A comprehensive index will help him find his subject.

Dilling's clinical pharmacology. Twenty-first edition. S. ALSTEAD, C.B.E., M.D., F.R.C.P., and J. G. MACARTHUR, M.C., M.B., F.R.C.P., M.R.C.P., *et al.* London. Baillière, Tindall and Cassell, 1965. Pp. xii+741. Price 35s.

This book is intended for medical students in their early clinical years and sets out pharmacology in an interesting and instructive fashion—the administration and absorption of drugs, their fate after absorption, clinical structure, pharmacological activity and so on. The drugs are divided up according to their actions on the different systems. A section of nomenclature and a bibliography are included.

Some idea of the book's scope may be gained from a quotation:

Potassium perchlorate, which acts by blocking the uptake of iodine by the thyroid cells, is a much less potent anti-thyroid substance than the thiouracils. Doses of 600 to 1200 mg. are required daily and the response obtained is slow. It has the advantage of being cheap, but although it was thought to be less toxic than the thiouracils it is known that it may produce blood dyscrasia, especially aplastic anaemia. It may be used when continuance of medical treatment is warranted for a patient who has experienced a serious toxic effect from a thiouracil type of drug. The administration of iodine to a patient having perchlorate treatment annuls the effect completely.

Some general practitioners may find this book a useful refresher course in pharmacology.