

separate index of electrocardiograms add to the practical usefulness of the book.

This book was originally designed for fourth year medical students but in its present edition is so comprehensive that it will satisfy the needs of general physicians and general practitioners, and a subject which can be bewildering is rendered pleasant to read and easy to understand.

Clemens von Pirquet—his life and work. RICHARD WAGNER, M.D. Baltimore. The Johns Hopkins Press. London. Oxford University Press. 1968. Pp. xx+214. Price £3 6s. 6d.

The name von Pirquet is well-known as the eponym of the skin test for tuberculosis. That he was the man who gave the name allergy to medicine and propounded the theory of immunity in a form which was accepted for many years is less well-known. Clemens von Pirquet was born in 1874 near Vienna of a patrician family. He studied philosophy and theology before he commenced his medical career at the universities of Vienna, Konigsburg and Graz. He then worked as an assistant to Escherich in the Kinderklinik at Vienna for eight years. It was during this period that his important work on immunity was done, and brought him an invitation to become the professor of paediatrics at Johns Hopkins—a post which he held for only one year. Returning to Europe he spent a year in Breslau, before succeeding Escherich in Vienna. In his later years he devoted much time to the study of nutrition and dietetics, but his system, which necessitated new terms, appeared complicated and was never generally adopted.

Dr Wagner was an assistant of von Pirquet in Vienna and has written a valuable life of his chief. The development of our understanding of the theories of immunity is well sketched and will repay study by those interested. This is a biography in which the life of the man and his clinical achievements are well balanced. From it one is able not only to learn the difficulties with which the early workers in bacteriology and immunology had to contend, but also the state of clinical medicine during the time in which von Pirquet lived, and the general atmosphere of the wards and research units. This is economically described and in very telling words.

Lecture notes on forensic medicine. D. J. GEE, M.B., B.S., M.C.Path., D.M.J. Oxford and Edinburgh. Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1968. Pp. 268. 25s.

There are some who like their textbooks in note form and for them this book is well presented. It is written mainly with the medical student in mind and goes into detail about many simple problems which are everyday bread and butter to a working general practitioner. It is not detailed enough for those who are involved in forensic work, for example as a police surgeon. Nor is it suitable as a book of reference for a general practitioner faced with a forensic problem.

Electrocardiograms. A systematic method of reading them. M. L. ARMSTRONG, M.B., B.S. Bristol. John Wright and Sons Ltd. 1968. Pp. 76. Price 21s. 0d.

This small book is written for the newly-qualified house physician and the author claims that by a logical step-by-step process one can examine an electrocardiogram and arrive at the diagnosis.

The successive elements of the PQRS complex are dealt with in turn and the common causes of abnormalities listed. The illustrations are adequate.

Therapeutics. J. G. LEWIS, M.D., M.R.C.P. London. The English Universities Press Limited. 1968. Pp. x+180. Price 20s. 0d.

This book is designed for beginners in therapeutics and should be of great assistance to them. It is well balanced, authoritative and sensible. General practitioners may find it convenient to use for revision.

Its soft back and economical production are appropriate for a book which must necessarily, because of the changing nature of its subject, rapidly become out of date.

Do something about that migraine. K. M. HAY, M.B.E., M.D., M.R.C.G.P. London. Tandem Medical Press. 1968. Pp. 127. Price 5s. 0d.

The 'Do something' series of paperbacks, a series now including five titles, is a courageous attempt to present information on certain long-standing or recurrent diseases in a manner in which they can be readily understood by the informed and interested layman. A primary assumption is made that the purchaser of the book will be a sufferer from the condition and that his level of understanding will be high.

The volume on migraine succeeds remarkably well in pitching discussion of the subject at a level appropriate to readers in this rather selected group. A tendency to talk down has been avoided, though at the opposite extreme the text is not altogether free from medical terminology requiring a professional level of understanding. Few laymen would recognize 'vaso-neuro-active substances' at sight.

The chapters range from an historical account of the disease and references to it, in which, curiously, the suggestion that the vision of St Paul on the Damascus road was a migraine attack failed to find a mention. Later chapters go into the aetiology and course of the disease, the psychological characteristics of those who experience it and describe various alternative forms of treatment including relaxation therapy.

Provided the practitioner is selective about those to whom he recommends this book he will find it a valuable adjunct to his own therapy.