

the abdomen does not concern the minor surgeon, whose activities are—like beauty—only skin deep”.

After an introduction devoted to general considerations, he deals with his subject, region by region. His advice and his methods are illustrated by photographs and by simple clear line-drawings: the result is a very valuable handbook for the casualty officer and for the recently-qualified man entering general practice with the opportunity and the equipment to do things himself. The only blemish is the jacket, which can be removed immediately, and the book can be recommended with every confidence.

**Breast feeding.** F. P. ROBERTS, M.B., Ch.B., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. Bristol. John Wright & Sons Ltd. 1968. Pp. 23. Price 4s. 0d.

This pamphlet gives a clear account of breast feeding, its indications and its contra-indications. In spite of all that has been said, breast feeding is still the ideal method of bringing up the infant in its early days, and this book should be recommended to parents, nurses and, indeed, general practitioners who may wish to be able to explain more clearly the issues at stake.

**Myasthenia gravis.** Edited by RAYMOND GREENE, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P. London. William Heinemann Medical Books Ltd. 1969. Pp. vi+162. Price 35s. 0d.

This, the first book on myasthenia gravis published in the United Kingdom, is one of a new series of monographs on specialized subjects. Specialists in a number of fields have combined to cover all aspects of this interesting condition—“one of the oddest and most unaccountable diseases that affect the human body.”

The interest of the average general practitioner in what is considered a somewhat rare and esoteric ailment, may be marginal, but anyone with a case or suspected case in his practice will find here all the facts he requires.

There are 1,100 known cases of myasthenia gravis in England and Wales, and there may be many more undiagnosed. Diagnosis is now well worth while as, apart from the symptomatic relief afforded by medical treatment, thymectomy with or without radiation can offer hope of a cure in a high proportion of cases. Knowledge of causation has not caught up with the advances in therapy but the present state of research in this field is reviewed in great detail.

**Textbook of the rheumatic diseases.** Fourth edition. Edited by W. S. C. COPEMAN, C.B.E., T.D., M.D., F.R.C.P. Edinburgh and London. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1968. Pp. 959. Price £10 10s. 0d.

‘Rheumatism’ is one of the commonest disease groups encountered by general practitioners, and

there must be few of us who are not dogged by a sense of frustration born out of lack of understanding of the disease processes—from the commonest ‘fibrositis’ to the rarest of the connective tissue disorders. It would be wrong to claim that this remarkably detailed book contains all the answers to our questions, but comparison with the first edition (published a mere 21 years ago) bears eloquent testimony to the rapid advances which have taken place in this field—especially in pathology, to which the second longest chapter is devoted.

The contributors, all recognized British authorities, view the rheumatic diseases from many different angles. It is a sign of the times that there are chapters on the *combined* medical and orthopaedic management, on clinical trials, and on the epidemiology of the rheumatic diseases. The value of the section on psychosomatic aspects is diminished for the general practitioner by its hospital-orientated attitudes. The clinical descriptions of the various diseases serve not only to delineate the recognized entities (and it is interesting to note additions such as ‘crystal synovitis’ to the expanding repertoire of the rheumatological diagnostician), but to emphasize some of the gaps in knowledge. The general practitioner may feel that non-articular rheumatism receives insufficient attention in the face of the more substantial clinical problems posed by the arthritides. He would also be helped in his rôle of doctor-of-first-contact by the inclusion in future editions—for such there are certain to be—of a chapter reporting the modes of presentation of this important range of diseases. These are minor criticisms of a volume which, with its remarkably extensive bibliography, can lay fair claim to being the standard British work on rheumatology.

**The child and his symptoms.** Second edition. JOHN APLEY, M.D., F.R.C.P. and RONALD MACKEITH, D.M., F.R.C.P. Oxford and Edinburgh. Blackwell Scientific Publications. Pp. xv+299. Price £2 2s. 0d.

When this book first appeared five years ago your reviewer wrote that “this is a book which ought to be read and absorbed by every general practitioner. It is one of the very few that will be memorable for its wisdom, and which will help the doctor in his work every day.” The first edition was subtitled “A psychosomatic approach” and in it the authors remarked that the word psychosomatic is not perfect, and differentiate between its use in a limited sense (certain psychosomatic disorders) and a wider sense (psychosomatic medicine). The restricted use of this word threatens to swamp altogether the ideas that inspire its wider use, and which are the mainspring of this book. In this second edition the authors have virtually abandoned the word and the subtitle now reads “A comprehensive approach”. By this they mean that the child has to be considered in four dimensions; somatic, intellectual, emotional, and social. “This