

continues, involves more than 'hygiene'—which is the product of the present National Health Service—but also "education, participation, joy, acceptance, friendship . . ."

I found this book, which is short and easy to read (no long sociological words!) challenging and thought provoking. I thoroughly recommend it to any member of the primary health care team. Trainees in particular may find that it extends their perspectives of general practice.

ROGER PEPIATT

INTERPRETING THE ELECTROCARDIOGRAM

James S. Fleming

Update Publications Ltd
London (1979)

136 pages (A4 format). Price £6.75

The recently published report of the new charter working group (1979) suggests an extended range of item-of-service payments, including payment for electrocardiograms, and the British Medical Association has recommended financial aid for general practitioners wishing to buy ECG machines. This represents an added incentive for doctors to record their own ECGs, although the number of practices with their own machines is increasing anyway. There remains the problem of interpretation of the tracing—a skill which is not often learnt by potential general practitioners while they are housemen (apart from basic abnormalities). Vocational trainees may not necessarily gain extra experience either.

There is, therefore, a place for a book entitled *ECGs for Beginners*, but its appeal might be limited. Dr Fleming has set out to explain the ECG in detail, without confusing the reader. Basic principles are laid down, and each part of the ECG complex is described individually. There follows an explanation of changes in the ECG due to disease or drugs, and the text is well illustrated with clear diagrams.

At the end of each chapter is a summary of main points and a selection of ECG tracings for interpretation, which illustrate the points mentioned in the chapter.

The text is concise and factual, but sometimes leaves the reader wanting more explanation—in the chapter on axis deviation, for example. The chapters on arrhythmias, however, are excellent. The author appears to assume different levels of knowledge possessed by the reader at different times, but a practice looking for a basic text on

ECGs would find Dr Fleming's book extremely rewarding.

RUSSELL STEELE

FOETUS INTO MAN

J. M. Tanner

Open Books Publishing Ltd
London (1978)

250 pages. Price £4.50

The ability to reduce complicated processes to simple language is much to be admired, and with the modern tendency for large, multi-author textbooks, it is a pleasure (and also a relief!) to have an extensive subject described succinctly by a recognized expert.

Professor Tanner's enviable style provides the reader with clear explanations of the processes of physical growth from conception to maturity, and despite the fact that the 12 chapters amount to only 220 pages, the theme of accurate scientific measurement remains throughout. The scene is simply set, and by use of simple analogies, cellular function is reduced to a level that does not bemuse the reader. For the general practitioner the chapters on puberty and problems of early and late maturers are particularly useful and provide authoritative advice on how to assess children's growth and development. The endocrinology of growth and development of the brain are covered in a mere 30 pages, yet provide all the essential information on these complicated subjects. The concluding chapters deal with the use of growth charts and give valuable advice on predictions of eventual adult height.

Of particular importance to all doctors and nurses working with children is the simple description of accurate methods of measuring height and weight. Although the writer hints that weight has come to have a disproportionate importance to many people, he makes no suggestions about limiting the amount of ritual weighing performed in well baby clinics.

My only criticism was of the tendency to refer the reader to other parts of the book, but this is probably inevitable when discussing a subject where so many different parts and functions of the body are involved. I got bogged down in some of the intricacies of measurement of decimal age but this may have been a reflection of my own mathematical inadequacy.

Professor Tanner's book will interest all general practitioners who have a special interest in children. They will find it to be easily handled and readily shared with nursing colleagues.

D. J. G. BAIN

LONDON PRIDE—THE STORY OF A VOLUNTARY HOSPITAL

A. E. Clark-Kennedy

Hutchinson Bentham Ltd
London (1979)

254 pages. Price £3.50

If my arithmetic is right, there can be few doctors under the age of 50 who ever studied or worked in a voluntary hospital. To those of us who did, this elegant history of the London Hospital, from its foundation at the Feathers Tavern in Cheapside in 1740 to its takeover by the state in 1948, is a delightful trip into nostalgia. To our younger colleagues the journey will be so strange as to seem almost archaeological, but posterity demands that such a history should have been written so that we may judge what was gained—and what lost—on 5 July 1948.

The author naturally writes of his own hospital, of which he was Dean of the Medical School, but the pattern was the same for all the voluntary hospitals—only the lore, the legend, and the family traditions were different.

Dr Clark-Kennedy's biography of his *alma mater* is as unbiased as filial piety could permit. It is also detailed, meticulously researched, and contains many pictures and photographs of domestic historical interest, and for these reasons must obviously attract greater attention from 'old Londoners' than from those who owe allegiance elsewhere; but with this well written book we now have coverage of that long period from the dissolution of the monasteries to the 'appointed day' in 1948—a long and honourable stint in which medical *caritas* flowered as it is unlikely ever to flower again.

JOHN MILES

TODAY'S TREATMENT/3

British Medical Journal

British Medical Association
London (1979)

294 pages. Price £5.50

The third volume in the series *Today's Treatment* consists, like its predecessors, of articles originally published in the *British Medical Journal* covering diseases of the respiratory system, diseases of the urinary system, and the use of antibiotics.

The first section covers the main topics in respiratory disease but in an uneven manner. There is a great