'The Faith of Some Old Friend' the author touches very tenderly upon attitudes to death. A foreword and epilogue by the late J. W. Robertson Scott, so active-minded throughout his 96 years, add piquancy to the book.

The short chapters and clear wording express the very best that general practitioners can offer to their patients over 50 years of age. This reader knows of no other writer who expresses this completely.

Understanding Paraplegia. J. J. WALSH, M.D. London. Tavistock Publications. 1964. Pp. v+164. Price 21s.

There is no glossary in this book and yet the author succeeds in making clear to non-medical readers the results of damage to the spinal cord at various levels, the risks that the survivors run, and the management that will enable them to live actively after early treatment and training.

The writing is clear and free from needless technical phrases. The main principles of management that can make paraplegics, even tetraplegics, reasonably independent in their home and working lives are never obscured by the detail of instructions. The practical detail is there nevertheless. An account of the early treatment and rehabilitation both of body and mind is a record of magnificent work and the drive behind it which originated with Dr Guttman, director of the National Spinal Injuries Centre.

Chapters on the prevention of pressure sores, contractures and urinary infection must be of value to relatives, nurses and family doctors associated with paraplegics as well as to the men and women themselves who are contending so successfully with their disability. Many of these are young at the beginning of paraplegic life. Emphasis on activity in work and sport with the means of securing their independent mobility must excite all readers. This culminates today in international Stoke Mandeville games, now held every fourth year in the country chosen for the Olympic games.

An index is preceded by an appendix of spinal centres, limb and appliance centres and some useful photographs of appliances in use. This is a book for a general practitioner's desk. The increase in well-trained and adjusted survivors from spinal injury and disease means that they are widely scattered over the country. Their capacity for a happy active and satisfying life, up to damage at the level of 6th cervical vertebra is an impressive result of imaginative ingenuity allied to vigorous medicine. This book is a delight to any reader.

Understanding Duodenal Ulcers. ROBERT KEMP, *T.D.*, M.D., M.R.C.P. London. Tavistock Publications. 1964. Pp. v+143. Price 17s. 6d.

This book has grown out of a pamphlet published by Dr Kemp in 1956, under the title "How to Live with your Duodenal Ulcer". It has been completely re-written and is designed to teach the patient with a duodenal ulcer a way of life which will reduce his ulcer to nothing more than a minor irritation. The reader is told enough about gastric function and the nature of duodenal ulcer for him to appreciate the reasons for the advice he is given about the timing and nature of his meals, the avoidance

of cocktails, the need for relaxation and, if possible, work with regular hours. The value of alkalis is weighed in the balance and found wanting. For the benefit of the patient's wife there is a useful chapter at the end of the book on " Ulcer Cookery ".

Any doctor can confidently recommend a study of this book to supplement the advice he gives to his particular patient. The only criticism the reviewer would make of this book is the price. There will be many patients who will think twice about spending 17/6d. on a book. A cheaper, paper-backed, edition would surely reach a larger public.

A History of the Royal College of Physicians of London. SIR GEORGE CLARK, F.B.A. Oxford. Clarendon Press. 1964. Volume One. Pp. xxiii + 425. Price 55s.

Since 1687 the long history of the Royal College of Physicians of London has never been attempted in full; The Roll of the College by William Monk is certainly a biographical history, but as such, valuable as it is, lacks cohesion. The Royal College has not always been wise in its actions, but in inviting an historian not a member of its College to write its history it has shown true wisdom. Sir George Clark has been able to draw on his profound knowledge of both social and political history in his approach to his task.

The Royal College of Physicians of London was founded in 1518 by a charter of Henry VIII on the initiative of Thomas Linacre six years after the Act of 1511 which had entrusted the licensing of physicians and surgeons throughout the country to the bishops of the dioceses acting with assessors. The petitioners asked for the creation of a perpetual college of learned and weighty men who should practise medicine in the City of London and for seven miles around it. This was granted and the members of the College were charged to deter the ignorance and presumption of malicious persons—the quacks and mountebanks—by their own example, and to punish them by using the power of the act of 1511 and statutes to be enacted by the College itself. They might sue and be sued, hold meetings and make statutes and ordinances for the proper government, supervision and correction of the College and all men of the faculty in London and within seven miles. No one was to practise this faculty within these limits unless admitted by the president and College by letters sealed with the common seal on pain of paying five pounds for every unlicensed practice, half to go to the king and half to the president of the College. Every year they were to elect four of their number who were to exercise their power over the physicians of London and all those from outside who practised medicine within it and to supervise and examine the physicians' prescriptions for internal and external medicine. The punishments were to be by fines, amercements, imprisonment or other reasonable and fitting ways. Sir George shows that this new College was something new in the establishment, differing in many respects from the city corporations and guilds. It more closely resembled but was in few points identical with the College of Heralds and Doctors' Commons. Its power over those who practised medicine was immense and in the early days it never hesitated to fine or cast into prison those who practised without its sanction. Its control over its own fellows, it