

Perspective of medicine. J. B. HARMAN. London. Pitman Medical Publishing Co. Ltd. 1964. Pp. 86. Price 7s. 6d.

I swear and vow. The Story of Medicine. E. J. TRIMMER. London. Blond Educational Ltd. 1966. Pp. 64. Price 6s. 6d.

The need to know on what our present practice and theory of medicine is founded can never have been more pressing than today, when changes in methods of diagnosis and treatment follow each other in so steady a stream. The first of these two paperbacks is intended to present to the student at the beginning of his clinical work a perspective of the perplexities which bedevilled medical theory in the past. Very ably has Dr Harman set about his task. He discusses his subject under various heads—diseases, morbid anatomy, experimental medicine, functional diagnosis, bacteriology, constitutional pathology and aetiology. In each chapter, having described past theories and those discoveries which have become landmarks, he brings the subject up to the present and sometimes he points to the future. This is surely the sensible way of teaching medical history. So often in the past it has been taught—if at all—as an antiquarian or a biographical discipline.

Dr Trimmer has produced a guide to the development of medicine for the secondary modern school child. It is an interesting, clear book with model questions, profusely illustrated. Whether it will serve the purpose of making more children wish to become doctors or whether it will put them off, is an enigma which time alone will solve.

Mass campaigns and general health services. (Public Health Papers No. 29). C. L. GONZALEZ. Geneva. World Health Organization. 1965. Pp. 86. 6s. 8d.

The family doctor in a developed country seldom finds himself involved in the conduct of mass campaigns of the kind described in this World Health Organization booklet, and yet as this is written another smallpox epidemic may be incubating in the person of a recently arrived traveller at London airport. It is because of the success of eradication campaigns on a world scale that this so seldom happens.

The author is concerned with the eradication of communicable diseases in underdeveloped countries and the simultaneous development of permanent local health services which will be responsible for surveillance of the population afterwards. In many countries existing general health services owe their existence to attempts by governments, with World Health Organization support and help, to eliminate one or other of the major scourges of mankind.

W.H.O. has now had considerable experience in this field and accounts of actual operations carried out in India, Taiwan, Thailand and Togo make satisfying and almost exciting reading. Our colleagues in many overseas countries will read here of the important part they can play in keeping carrier rates and case-rates of disease at safe levels after W.H.O.'s teams have moved on. This routine surveillance is a part of general practice and even if it is less glamorous, its proper conduct is as important as the mass campaign itself.