

Need I ever retire. WILLIAM EVANS, M.D., D.Sc., F.R.C.P. London. The Chest and Heart Association. Pp. i+24. Price 5s.

William Evans is a cardiologist and successor to Sir John Parkinson and Sir James Mackenzie at the London Hospital. The expression of his spoken word and his accompanying chuckle can be heard as one reads this book. The 24 pages are full of simple wisdom and can be a useful supplement and reminder to a family doctor's advice to patients within sight of retirement from their main lifework.

The medical secretary's handbook. MICHAEL DRURY, M.B., CH.B., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. London. Baillière, Tindall & Cassell Ltd., 1965. Pp. xii + 340. Price 30s.

Dr Michael Drury has written a book which provides a stepping stone to better general practice. Doctors' secretary-receptionists have in the past learnt their job the hard way. If her employer was reasonably systematic and thoughtful, if he possessed the power of communication, over the years the secretary often attained a high measure of efficiency, often indeed becoming the lynch-pin around which a good general practice operated. But it has been a chancy business. It need be so no longer. The syllabus for the Diploma of the Association of Medical Secretaries has created a framework of basic knowledge and skills. Dr Drury has written the essential textbook.

The book is intended for medical secretaries both in the hospital and in general practice. This is an advantage, since each needs to know and appreciate something of the work of the other. Indeed, in the future, movement between these two aspects of the work ought to become increasingly common.

The medical secretary who practises what Dr Drury preaches will be a paragon. Not only will she know the routine work of recording, communicating, certifying and supplying; she will also remember her role in medical ethics and etiquette, in financial control of the practice (which is after all a business, to be conducted in a business-like way), and in arranging the doctor's working day to the greatest advantage. She will look after the doctor's equipment and bags, and be able to perform simple laboratory procedures.

Among the many admirable features of this book are the medical vocabulary, the glossary of abbreviations and the notes on medical terminology. The medical vocabulary compressed into 50 odd pages contains all the essentials needed by a secretary of a medical dictionary.

The only minor weakness is the omission of any mention of industrial medicine. Between 2,000 and 3,000 general practitioners play some part in medical care in the factory or other work places. The good medical secretary should be aware of this and of the problems which may arise when strings get crossed. Correspondence to and from industrial medical officers plays a part in the life of most general practitioners and this is often of real concern to the general practitioners' patients.