

Book Reviews

Depressive disorders in the community. C. A. H. WATTS, M.D., B.S.,
M.C.G.P., D.OBST.R.C.O.G. Bristol. John Wright and Sons Ltd.
Pp. vii + 174. Price 35s.

This is a book of the highest quality. We can all take pride that it has been produced from a general practice. It is the culmination of a series of papers by Dr Watts on psychiatry which together form the most notable contribution yet made to this subject by any general practitioner in this country. It contains new material.

No one has done more to promote the ideas that depression is common, occurs in mild forms, is frequently disguised and can be successfully treated. This is the main theme of this book. The writing is lucid and the book short, but there is evidence of wide reading. Above all it is based on direct personal experience of patients through 1,000 episodes of depression. Sixty case histories are quoted but most of them are admirably short. When we remember that Watts started to collect his series eight years before the treatments that we now have come into use, we realize how worthwhile this study is.

This is a book for every general practitioner since it is about a fairly common disorder. Much of what it says will be new to psychiatrists. Since depression can present with symptoms in any system of the body one hopes that it may find its way to other specialists too.

The Stomach. First edition. STEWART WOLF, M.D. New York and London. Oxford University Press. 1965. Pp. 321. Price 56s. 0d.

In June 1822 a nineteen-year-old French Canadian, Alexis St Martin was accidentally shot in the stomach while standing in the store of an American Army fort in the Great Lakes of Northern America. Within minutes he was seen by a young army surgeon, William Beaumont, whose care helped in his recovery from what might well have been a fatal wound. Beaumont's subsequent study of St Martin and his gastric fistula, *Experiments and observations on the gastric juice and the physiology of digestion* (1833), is a medical classic. In the hot summer of 1895, a nine-year-old New York child called Tom mistook a beer pail of scalding hot, clam chowder for a cool draught of beer, and swallowed a large mouthful. The oesophagus was severely burnt and the ensuing fibrotic obstruction resulted in a permanent gastrostomy. Some 40 years later he was seen by a young gastro-enterologist, Stewart Wolf, who was proposing to investigate visceral pain mechanisms. Wolf's interest in psychosomatic medicine led to an extremely close relationship with Tom which lasted