clear view of the cervix since adopting this method.

E. R. SEILER.

Edinburgh.

The more the patient is turned over, the more easily is the cervix seen. James Marion Sims dealing with vesico-vaginal fistulae over a hundred years ago found that insertion of only a single-bladed speculum with the patient in the genupectoral position gave a remarkable view of the cervix and upper vagina. EDITOR.

Book Reviews

Medical aspects of fitness to drive vehicles. Edited by LESLIE G. NORMAN. London. Report by the Medical Commission on Accident Prevention. 1968. Pp. 52. Price 5s. 0d.

The Medical Commission on Accident Prevention was formed in 1964 with the main purpose of forming "a permanent medical commission" as a recognized authority for advice on medical matters in relation to the prevention of accidents. One of the purposes of the commission is to produce reports on various aspects of safety in relation to medicine. This short booklet is the first of such a series. General practitioners are constantly being asked advice on the fitness of patients to drive a motor vehicle and medical examination of the elderly before insurance cover is renewed is becoming more frequent. One is often presented with problems to which the answers are not easily found in the textbooks. This booklet fills this need extremely well and the reader would suggest that it should be on every general practitioner's desk as a ready handbook for reference. A distinguished panel of experts have contributed and the advice they give is uniformly practical without being dogmatic. The layout is excellent, with a discussion of the pathological conditions, system by system that may affect driving. There is a summary at the end of each chapter of suggestions for advice to patients. There are also excellent chapters on fatigue, boredom and ageing and an appendix on unwanted dangerous interactions between drugs. This is indeed a most valuable document and should be read by every general practitioner.

The basic fault. Therapeutic aspects of regression. MICHAEL BALINT, M.D., PH.D., M.SC. London. Tavistock Publications. 1968. Pp. vii + 205. Price 38s. 0d.

The name of Michael Balint is familiar to general practitioners as the author of *The doctor, his patient, and the illness*, a book which has given many a new understanding of their patients' emotional problems and of their own involvement in them. Family doctors must be warned that this is a book of a different nature, written by a practising psychoanalyst and addressed primarily to other analysts. It will not be easily comprehensible to the family doctor who is not familiar with the language of Freud, and terms such as Oedipus situation, regression, narcissism, transference, ego, id and superego.

In this book Dr Balint coins a new term, 'the basic fault,' for a primitive area

of the mind. Unlike the later oedipal relationship which involves three people' 'the basic fault' involves only two. Balint postulates, in place of Freud's primary narcissism, a condition of primary love, in which an infant is in 'a harmonious interpenetrating mix-up' with his environment. If this harmonious mix-up does not occur, or is interfered with, in the area of the basic fault, neuroses are liable to develop in later life, and Dr Balint discusses possible techniques, differing from classical analysis, for dealing with them.

This attempted simplification of thoughts both difficult and profound will indicate that the reader must work hard to understand the book, but if he does, his rewards may be considerable. Many fascinating subjects are touched on, including the child residing in the man (Wordsworth could have understood analysis), the nature of creativity, and the misunderstandings caused by the use of words to express feelings. This important book should be valuable to all analysts and to many who practise psychotherapy.

Clinical psychopharmacology. MICHAEL SHEPHERD, M.A., D.M., M.R.C.P., D.P.M., MALCOLM LADER, B.Sc., Ph.D., M.D., D.P.M., RICHARD RODNIGHT, B.Sc., Ph.D. London. English Universities Press 1968. Pp. xiv+306. Price £2 10s.

Psychopharmacology has a forbidding ring; one imagines a lot of chemical molecular structural formulae drawings, detailed discussion of enzyme actions and speculations on action of drugs discussed in the language of the pharmacologist. This book contains a great amount of interesting and challenging information. The teaming up of a psychiatrist of Professor Shepherd's wide-ranging interests, with a pharmacologist and a biochemist has made for a readable and interesting approach, which has a great attraction for a general practitioner in that they seem to come to a practical evaluation of each group of drugs discussed. Not only an evaluation, but also the likely mode and method of action, along with side effects, toxic effects or disappointing failures, are discussed.

This book makes a worthwhile contribution to the elucidation of what pharmacology is all about, 'Pharmakon'—the magic remedy. In this, primitive man showed great ingenuity in discovering in naturally occurring plants or animals, magical drugs affecting or exciting the mind. The present upsurge of interest, frequently represented as progress in the control of mental illness, is epitomized with the introduction of chlorpromazine and reserpine, and extended by the clinical observation that imipramine appeared to have an effect on depression though it could not be classed a central nervous stimulant.

The book discusses the evidence for all the various claims of psychotropic drugs which through most of its 300 pages manages to fascinate even those untrained in biochemistry and pharmacology. In the 1930s and 1940s the treatment of mental illness had fallen into an almost cynical attitude of lowered sight on achieving restraint and tranquility or isolation. The physical treatment method seemed crude and empirical. The dawn came with chlorpromazine which promised to bring light and understanding by pharmacotherapy, and thus the treatment of mental illness would follow the line of progress with the other branches of medicine where antibacterials, bacteriostatic drugs, and the analysis of action of drugs had laid the foundation of a scientific approach to therapy.

This volume however shows clearly that we are only at the beginning of understanding what the drug-conscious modern patient is so inevitably seeking, and de Quincey attributed to opium:

1. To tranquilize all irritations of the nervous system
2. To stimulate the capacities of enjoyment
3. Under any call for extraordinary exertion (such as all men meet at times)