

**Essentials of cardiology.** Second edition. S. G. OWEN, M.D., F.R.C.P., T. B. STRETTON, M.B., Ch.B., M.R.C.P. and J. VALLANCE-OWEN, M.D., F.R.C.P. London. Lloyd-Luke (Medical Books) Ltd. 1968. Pp. vi + 226. Price 30s. 0d.

Several small books on cardiology have been produced in recent years as the subject has acquired a new importance due to the many advances in diagnostic techniques and in medical and surgical treatment. This one differs from the others in the manner of presentation and to a lesser extent in the actual content. It is divided into four parts: physical examination and description of the signs of heart disease; special investigations; general syndromes and treatment; and finally the varieties of heart disease. The first part is very valuable; a sound and practical understanding of this would remove most of the difficulties of bedside cardiology. The third part, which contains descriptions of general syndromes—cardiac decompensation, major symptoms of heart disease, heart failure, treatment, cardiac drugs, and disorders of rate and rhythm—is also excellent. The separation of these general features avoids much needless repetition in the descriptions of varieties of heart disease in the fourth part. The second part, special investigations, contains 32 pages on electrocardiography. This is quite good, but your reviewer has considered for many years that this common practice of including a section on electrocardiography in books on cardiology is a waste of effort and space as it is a subject which cannot be dismissed in a few pages.

The book is up to date, well produced, convenient in size, and has a good index. It has a tone of authority and seems to reflect the teaching of the late Paul Wood. It is strongly recommended.

**A handbook of medical hypnosis.** Third edition. GORDON AMBROSE, L.M.S.S.A., and GEORGE NEWBOLD, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.S., M.M.S.A., D.R.C.O.G., D.C.H. London. Baillière, Tindall & Cassell. 1968. Pp. xiv + 312. Price £2 5s.

Since antiquity hypnosis has been shrouded in mysticism, cloaked in ignorance and not infrequently daubed with eroticism. It is allegedly time-consuming and its reliability as certain as weather forecasting. The pioneers of hypnosis have rarely received recognition as have pioneers in other fields of medicine. Even today, hypnosis still creates controversy, within, as well as outside, the ranks of its practitioners. One may truly ask "Whither hypnosis?" This book does not fully answer that question, but then the authors wisely call it a handbook (i.e. a small guide book rather than a textbook). The form of the book is that of a large number of selected case histories weaved together by a web of discussion. Only successful cases are quoted, leaving the reviewer uncertain whether all cases are successful or what percentage of cases have not received help. The authors clearly state that hypnosis is not always a primary treatment but rather an adjunct to standard treatment. But whether doctors are prepared to devote perhaps between 5 and 30 half-hour sessions to a patient is a matter of speculation.

Following an excellent historical introduction, the authors sensibly devote a chapter to hypnosis and law because of the special relationship of doctors and hypnosis to the law. The authors discuss at length that hypnosis cannot really be used as an inducement to crime. The reviewer feels that alcohol has a much greater potential here. Then the authors devote their attention to the hypnotic state and its phenomena and various theories are discussed, but as one is still no wiser as to what hypnosis is, this section is sensibly kept short. There follow chapters on induction techniques, hypnosis in general medicine, and hypnosis in the neuroses and here the authors show how important is the taking of a psychiatric history. Again the time involved in this type of hypnotherapy can be of such length that the medical hypnotist may have the same experience