

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

as the reviewer (who does hypnosis on the NHS)—the wife will soon put a stop to it! Next there is a short chapter on hypnoanalysis for the general practitioner with useful tips and a guide on the pit-falls for the novice. There follow sections on anaesthesia, the use of hypnosis in paediatrics, in gynaecology and obstetrics and a final chapter on hypnosis in dermatology.

The authors show, by careful selection of cases, how hypnosis might be used, for it is still somewhat an empirical skill. There is an excellent reference section at the end of each chapter. I suppose the reviewer ought to be annoyed when a paragraph in the book dealing with his two papers so misspells his name that he did not realize his work was quoted until later. This book should become one of the most popular handbooks on the subject.

Sex and its problems. Edited by WILLIAM A. R. THOMSON, M.D. Edinburgh and London. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1968. Pp. v + 90. Price 15s. 0d.

The cover of this book is misleading. Just another book on sex in the popular idiom? It is in fact a serious approach by professional writers. The articles appeared in *The Practitioner* in 1967 and are now published in book form. Impotence, frigidity, infertility, sexual adjustment to the climacteric, disorders of sex in the elderly are dealt with in a clear and helpful manner and for these articles alone this book will prove useful to the general practitioner. Sexual problems of the adolescent are given a refreshingly objective evaluation. Sexual abnormalities, homosexuality, perversion and artificial insemination are well covered. Although not common problems the general practitioner should be well informed and alerted to the dangers of delayed diagnosis, particularly in the field of sexual abnormalities.

Books received

Depression—a Christian's experience. Falcon Booklet. London. The Church Pastoral-Aid Society. 1968. Pp. 27. Price 1s. 6d.

Psychosocial nursing. Studies from the Cassell Hospital. Edited by ELIZABETH BARNES. London, New York, Sydney, Toronto, Wellington. 1968. Pp. xx + 316. Price 27s. 6d.

Intra-uterine devices: Physiological and clinical aspects. Technical Report Series No. 397. Geneva. World Health Organization. 1968. Pp. 32. Price 4s. 0d.

Medical radiation physics. Report of a joint IAEA/WHO expert committee. Technical Report Series No. 390. Geneva. World Health Organization. 1968. Pp. 19. Price 4s. 0d.

Streptococcal and staphylococcal infections. Technical Report Series No. 394. Geneva. World Health Organization. 1968. Pp. 56. Price 6s. 0d.
