

Haematology in diagnosis and treatment. M. MAIZELS, M.D., F.R.C.P., F.R.S., T. A. J. PRANKERD, M.D., F.R.C.P. and J. D. M. RICHARDS, M.A., M.D., M.R.C.P., M.C.Path. London. Baillière, Tindall and Cassell. 1968. Pp. vii + 319. Price £3 10s. 0d.

Forty years ago the science of haematology was easily understood. There were the main types of primary and secondary anaemia, the three varieties of leukaemia and a few not well understood haemolytic and splenic diseases. Though we did not understand the cause of most of these diseases we had a very clear idea how we should place them in our diagnostic register. Since then our knowledge of diseases of the blood-forming organs has increased many hundredfold but our understanding of these diseases still lags behind. It is, therefore, most welcome that a new and lucid account of haematology should be published. Nosology is still a problem. The authors are constrained to classify anaemia under three heads, aetiological, morphological and physiological, and in their description they have adopted the aetiological classification which, after all, is the most sensible. In their writing they have achieved remarkable clarity of exposition and the book is a pleasure to read. Anaemia is one of the commonest symptoms met with in general practice. A perusal of this short work will help the practising doctor considerably in the investigation and management of his patients.

Disorders of sexual potency in the male. J. JOHNSON, M.D., M.R.C.P.E., D.P.M. Oxford, London, Edinburgh. Pergamon Press. 1968. Pp. xi+116. Price £2 15s.

This is a comprehensive review of a subject long bedevilled by superstition, folk-lore and social taboos. In the small compass of this book the author categorizes the several conditions and their causes, clearly distinguishing, for instance, between true impotence and the two disorders of ejaculation, and displays the subject in a logical and orderly manner. He analyses a five-year survey undertaken at the Maudsley Hospital investigating the aetiology, treatment and progress of 76 cases. It is disappointing to record that the results of therapy—of whatever sort—are not particularly encouraging, but some good results were achieved by 'learning-techniques' in cases of late onset.

This short book is of interest to general practitioners and valuable in indicating the type of approach to be made, and the kind of counsel to be given, when faced with this problem in the consulting-room. There is, however, one drawback. For the general reader the book is rather overloaded with references, there being no fewer than 258 scattered about the text (the fact that this work first saw the light as a M.D. thesis is probably responsible for this), and its free flow is somewhat impeded by these interpolations. None the less the book can be read in an afternoon, and the exercise is rewarding.

Pathology annual (vol. 3). Edited by SHELDON C. SOMERS, M.D. London. Butterworths. 1968. Pp. 466. Price £6 18s.

This beautifully produced book is written by pathologists for pathologists. There is, however, much in it of interest to the general practitioner. It is an American work, and the first essay is on malaria in Vietnam. This gives an account of the experiences of a pathologist in Saigon, and soon makes the reader realize only too clearly that—"The answer to malaria has not yet been found".

Dr Kiel tells us of the early impact of this killing disease on the history of this troubled country. In 258 B.C., the Emperor Tan of China sent an army to conquer northern Vietnam, but that army was exhausted by the "toxic, disease-giving climate of Vietnam". In 1285 A.D., Kublai Khan ruled the Mongolian empire. In an effort to secure his trade routes to India and Persia, he sent his son Togan with an army of 500,000 to conquer the Vietnam state in the Red River Valley. We are told of the failure of the health of these soldiers and of many others. "The people believed that by digging in the soil, 'bad spirits' had been awakened".

In recent years the French, and then the Americans have faced the perils of malarial infestation. Now, as Professor Maegraith told a college symposium at Cardiff in May 1968, every patient should be asked to give a geographical history, as air travel may bring people to any part of our own country, who are incubating imported disease. The general practitioner may be called upon to treat malaria in its early, and therefore curable stages, and must think not only of influenza, but of malaria and smallpox, as well as looking for "the luxurious, flamboyant syphilis so easily acquired in Eastern parts". Upon early diagnosis will depend the life of the patient described thousands of years ago as having "pallor of the face with a slatelike tint". Falciparum malaria still needs to be in our minds as we do our rounds in the English country villages or in our hospital wards.

This book contains many erudite essays and it will receive high praise from those working in many fields of pathology. Dr Thurbeck writes on chronic obstructive lung disease, and fully discusses various pathological techniques suitable for research into common diseases of the respiratory tract. Dr MacMahon contributes an essay: Malignant nephrosclerosis—a reappraisal, in which is a materly summing up of the historical aspects of a mysterious, but all too common illness.

The quality of the illustrations showing the morbid histology is excellent and the whole work is of the highest possible standard, both in content and in presentation.