Book Reviews

A Clinical Introduction to Heart Disease. CRIGHTON BRAMWELL, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P. Emeritus Professor of Cardiology, University of Manchester. Lond: Oxford University Press, 1959, pp. viii + 229. Price 21s. 0d.

There have been several classic discriptions of heart disease. No sooner did Sir James Mackenzie's great work begin to date than his disciple Sir Thomas Lewis, wrote a beautifully clear and concise introduction in which, with forbearance unusual in the clinical scientist, the technical and laboratory sides to diagnosis were relegated to their secondary and proper place. Now follows Crighton Bramwell. His "Clinical Introduction" is a brilliant book. No final year student will be able to ignore it, and no general practitioner or specialist will fail to find his knowledge broadened in reading it. Here, in limped prose, the wisdom of a lifetime is expounded.

An unusual feature in the book is the historical approach to the signs and symptoms described. The names of the great cardiologists of the past, with short biographical notes, are interspersed in the text in such a manner as to make them part of the story which is unfolded. The text is also enlivened by thirty-six cases drawn from the personal experience of the author to illustrate many of the points he makes.

The publishers have risen to a great occasion with taste and dignity. This book will become a classic.

Essentials of Human Reproduction. Edited by J. T. VELARDO, PH.D. of Yale University Medical School, New York, Oxford University Press. pp. 270. 110/-.

This is another of those American textbooks, which is cheap at £5 10s. 0d. It is a beautiful piece of medical literature. The title more than adequately describes the contents which contain far more than essentials, indeed this book with 1,200 references, provides a home university course in human reproduction. It is needless to comment on binding, paper or the mass of illustrations, for this has been produced by the same editor, illustrator and publisher as its sister volume *The Endocrinology of Reproduction*, reviewed in our last issue. The reviewer's comment in this respect is quite adequate.

One is left wondering how many of the numerous references are really necessary. For instance, no fewer than 24 references are used to confirm Weber's finding in 1832 of the existence in the placenta of inter-villous space with separate maternal and foetal circulations —a fact every medical student accepts. The American advances

are well portrayed, but no conclusions drawn. The diagrams are both easily understood and memorised.

Whereas *The Endocrinology of Reproduction* deals entirely with endocrinology and therefore is of greater value to the endocrinologist and physiologist, this volume contains sufficient endocrinology to ensure that the practitioner appreciates the place of endocrinology in obstetrics and the rationale of hormone therapy as well as covering the normal and abnormal aspects of reproduction. Features which will be generally welcome are the chapters on clinical concepts of infertility and the endocrine pathology of the male reproductive system. These are subjects rarely included in obstetric literature.

As a gift, *Essentials of Human Reproduction* would receive a place of honour on every general practitioner's bookshelf, but whether the knowledge the reader will acquire from this volume will compensate for the financial outlay is a decision that must be left to the individual.

A Pocket Review of Proprietary Drugs. Compiled by ALISTAIR G. CRUIKSHANK, F.R.C.P.E. and CORNELIUS STEWART, L.R.C.P. & S.E., M.P.S. Edin: and Lond: E. & S. Livingstone Ltd., 1959, pp. 236. Price 10s. 6d. Interleaved copy, 14s. 0d.

This is an alphabetical list of some fifteen hundred preparations offered by one hundred and four pharmaceutical firms for prescription by the medical profession. None of them are advertised to the public. Each product is described, and where relevant given its official name and its indications, dosage and packing are stated. The book is small and capable of packing in the bag or pigeonholing in the desk and should make a most useful addition to the B.N.F.

The Art of Clinical Refraction: T. H. WHITTINGTON, M.D., M.R.C.P., D.O.M.S. First Edition. Oxford University Press, London, 1958. p.p. 286. Price 30s.

The author's constant consideration of the whole patient and his exclusion of mathematics have contributed to make this book intelligible, interesting and instructive to the general medical reader, and it bears many of the hall-marks of the experienced teacher, especially notable being the lucid style, good sequence and clear subsection headings. It is the first edition of a book which deserves to live but which may have a struggle for survival in a somewhat