

crowded field. It is well produced, free from typographical errors, has a good index, and the matt paper contributes to the ease of reading. It must surely be the only book of its kind ever produced which does not contain a detailed anatomical drawing of the eye.

General practitioners issue forms O.S.C.1 every day and it behoves them to know what the patient needs and how much can be achieved by the use of spectacles. This book provides that information, and in doing so, emphasises the need which many experienced general practitioners have felt, for refractions to be done by medically qualified experts.

**Reversible Renal Insufficiency.** D. H. ATLAS, M.D., PH.D., F.A.C.P. and P. GABERMAN, M.D. 1st edition. Bailliere, Tindall & Cox Ltd, London, 1958. Price 56/-.

In their preface the American authors point out that the flood of published material is ever rising, and, like the Sorcerer's Apprentice, they think they will shortly be submerged. Before building an ark, they offer their version of the subject to enable the clinician to differentiate between reversible and irreversible renal failure. The result is a 204 page review of "as much material as possible" and a list of 414 references.

The main market for the book must be among hospital physicians and urologists, and few general practitioners will derive any practical help from it. Much theory is discussed, and much disagreement among the experts is brought out. The chapter on management of renal insufficiency argues the error of attempting to get a diuresis by increasing water intake, and the whole book shows a sound physiological approach. It is evident that "renal shutdown" is not always a case for abandoning hope.

**Shakespeare and Medicine.** R. R. SIMPSON, M.B., CH.B., F.R.C.S.(Ed.). Edinburgh and London; E. & S. Livingstone Ltd, 1959, pp. viii—267. Price 25s.

In the study of any period in history, the art and literature of the time provide one of the best means of gaining an insight into social behaviour. The most illuminating and reliable information is not necessarily gained from the greatest artists and writers, and sometimes the minor dramatists, novelists and poets yield material of greater value than their more famous contemporaries; in sociology and medicine Crabb and Mrs Gaskell are examples. Part of the Shakespeare Wonder, as Mr Ivor Brown conceives it, is the multitude of books for ever pouring off the presses on all aspects of his work; and many of these contrive to show that in each trade

and profession he had almost a supernatural knowledge. Mr Simpson's contribution to this Wonder will be welcomed by all those who wish to find out what Shakespeare knew and wrote about medicine.

Shakespeare's knowledge of the orthodox medicine of his time was accurate, but not greater than that of any other well educated gentleman. Mercifully, Mr Simpson has not allowed his enthusiasm to make any special claim that the Bard's acquaintance with the "congregated college" was any more than that of an accurate observer. One of his most interesting chapters deals with Shakespeare's relationship with his son-in-law Dr Hall and the influence that this association might have produced on the plays: there is, as Mr Simpson shows, very little evidence of any influence.

There is no book on the medical aspects of Shakespeare's writing in print, and this work, therefore, fills a gap in Shakesperiana; but those interested should, if possible, consult J. Buckhill's *Shakespeare's Medical Knowledge* (1860) and the general practitioner J. Moyes' *Medicine and Kindred Arts in the Plays of Shakespeare*, which was published in 1896 and not 1906 as stated by Mr Simpson. The work under review, in spite of the author's assertion, does not contain a complete list of all Shakespeare's references to things medical. Amongst other omissions is one which shows his acute observation of symptoms.

*Beat.* How tartly that gentleman looks! I never can see him but I am heart-burned an hour after.

—*Much Ado About Nothing*. ii, 1, 3.

There, neatly described, is the heartburn which comes on, not immediately after the acid meal but an hour later, and this observation was not derived from any current text-book, but must have been a result of original clinical observation!

Nevertheless, Mr Simpson has produced a most interesting volume. As he states in his preface, it is based upon lectures given to various medical societies, and, as such, is somewhat repetitive. More drastic editing would have eliminated this, but in a work which deals by chapters with Shakespeare's references to such subjects as children, old age, eye disease, and ear, nose and throat, some repetition is necessary to make each of these chapters complete in themselves.

**A Preliminary Manual of Child Care.** MISS B. R. KEENE, S.R.N., S.C.M., H.V.CERT., published by the St John Ambulance Association. Price 3/-, postage extra.

Clinics, health visitors, midwives, family doctors, paediatricians, and others, all spend much time in educating the young mother about her task in life. The St John Ambulance Association has