

posium arranged by CIBA-GEIGY enabled clinical trials of the efficiency of a new drug, amantadine hydrochloride (Symmetrel) to be evaluated. It was held at the Royal Garden Hotel in London in June 1971. Its chairman was Dr Maurice Parsonage, consultant neurologist and senior lecturer in neurology in the University of Leeds.

The symposium included five sessions on the following aspects of the problem: Effectiveness of Symmetrel in different forms of Parkinsonism; Dosage; Combination with other therapy; Side-effects and mode of action, with finally a discussion on The early case.

Dr Parsonage gave a short historical review of this disease first described by James Parkinson in 1817. The first cases of post-encephalitic Parkinsonism were recorded in 1920, and by 1929 attention had been drawn by Macdonald Critchley to the arteriosclerotic cases of Parkinsonism. Stereotactic modern surgery developed from Cooper's discovery in 1952 that improvement in Parkinsonian tremor and rigidity followed occlusion of the choroidal artery. This paved the way for the surgical interruption of the pallidofugal fibres forming the ansa and the fascicularis lenticularis.

The drug therapy of Parkinsonism by amantadine hydrochloride (Symmetrel) was developed from the original observations made by Robert Schwab, and various international trials reported during this symposium appraised the action of L.Dopa and of Symmetrel both in their individual action and also in combination.

Symmetrel is a quick-acting stable, water-soluble substance that is excreted largely unchanged in the urine. In most cases, given in a dose range of 200 to 300 mgs daily, it is well tolerated and few side effects are serious. The clinician must be on his guard in patients who show cerebral arteriosclerosis and renal insufficiency, and there was some disagreement as to the possibility of the drug losing its holding effect with the passage of time.

These careful clinical trials, carried out by experts in many countries, show that Symmetrel is frequently an effective remedy in Parkinsonism, and that it has a wide margin of safety. In the view of Dr Parsonage: "... a first-line choice of drug".

Any general practitioner who is using this new treatment will be wise to buy and read this little book. The editors are to be congratulated on the speed with which it has been placed in the hands of the clinician, and the publishers are owed a debt for its excellent production in a hard cover at a very moderate price.

Surgeon in Nepal. PETER PITT. London. John Murray. 1970. Pp. 3+225. Price £2.50.

This is the story of the experiences of an army surgeon during his two years tour of duty in eastern Nepal. It is for the most part a clinical

record into which a great deal of information on the ways of life and the folk lore of the people is woven. The result is a very readable book which is written for the lay reader. Mr Pitt is blessed with the power to describe on paper in vivid terms what he has to say and not only lay readers will be grateful for his account of his stay with the indomitable Ghurkas in the foothills of the Himalayas.

Autistic psychotic and brain injured adolescents. A report of a conference held at the King's Fund Hospital Centre, 24 November, 1970. PPWAPPA. 1971. Pp. 1+155. Price £1.05.

It is unlikely that any one general practitioner will have much experience of coping with the autistic or brain injured adolescent. Indeed, as made abundantly clear in the report of this conference, few people seem to have much experience of the problem. This report is worth reading, if only to remind oneself of the difficulties faced by the families of these patients, as well as the families of other handicapped patients. Any profit from the sale of the report will go towards supporting the work of the National Society for Autistic Children.

Diseases of the urinary tract. Articles published in the *British Medical Journal*. London. 1971. Pp. 122. Price: £1.00.

This is a collection of articles on urology published recently as a series in the *British Medical Journal*, and now revised and put out in book form. The authors are all eminent in their specialty, and write of practical medicine in terms easy for those outside the ivory castle to comprehend. The section on the management of chronic renal failure is particularly helpful to the practising doctor faced with the problem of uraemia in elderly patients. Other sections cover renal disease at all ages including infection, cancer, haemodialysis, incontinence and enuresis. It is a useful book for the general practitioner's bedside table.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Parkinson's disease and the Parkinsonian syndrome. Produced by Roche Products Ltd. London. 1970. Pp. 11+60.

Management of mental illness in general practice. R. R. TILLEARD-COLE, M.A., B.M., B.Ch., D.P.M., JOHN MARKS, M.A., M.D., M.R.C.P., F.R.C.Path., N. H. MOYNIHAN, M.A., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. London. Roche Products Limited. 1971. Pp. v+91.

Directory of British Health Centres. A working paper compiled by M. P. CURWEN, M.A., Department of General Practice Guy's Hospital and B. BROOKES, A.R.I.B.A., Assistant Director, The Hospital Centre. London. King's Fund Hospital Centre. Pp. 1 + 94.