

and social incompatibility as likely signposts to blood disease.

The text is illuminated by case reports, diagrams and blood pictures reproduced in black and white and colour with the customary care of this publisher.

For those particularly interested in blood diseases, or in the scientifically humane care of the elderly, this book will be of considerable interest.

The clinical apprentice. Fourth edition. JOHN M. NAISH, M.D., F.R.C.P., and ALAN E. A. READ, M.D., F.R.C.P. Bristol. John Wright & Sons Ltd. 1971. Pp. v+244. Price £1.50. 96 illus. Paper-covers.

This is a useful handbook for the medical undergraduate to use at the bedside. It is an introduction to clinical methods and supplements well teaching demonstration by the consultant. It is wisely divided into two sections, the first dealing with the examination of the chronic patient—that is in a situation when systematic enquiry can be done at leisure. The second section of the book is useful and deals with examination of the acute patient and how the clinician proceeds more quickly directing his attention, questioning, and examination method towards the most likely probabilities.

If one had to criticize this book it would be that a short account of anatomy and surface anatomy together with a brief note on physiology as an introduction to each system would enhance the value of each chapter. This omission is underlined by the fact that in the one instance where they have included physiology—the physiological background of respiratory disease—they have been successful in producing a brief, simple and useful summary. The authors have also included helpful information on blood, water and salt balance, the examination of the unconscious patient, and the examination of the acute emergency. The written material is supported by good diagrams and there are two good tables at the end of the section on the acute abdomen.

In summary, this is a practical book for the medical undergraduate, and acceptable as the fact of a fourth edition proves, but of less interest to the general practitioner.

Asthma and other allergies. ERNEST PHILIPP, M.D., M.R.C.G.P. New Zealand. A. H. & A. W. Reed. 1970. Pp. 9+77. Price \$1.00 N.Z.

Health education has become an important feature of the medical scene. The popular media put out features and articles aimed at the general public who seem to have an insatiable appetite for more information about disease and doctors.

When done well, health education is valuable not only to patients but to their doctors, as they will come closer to talking the same language to

the benefit of both parties. Unfortunately, considerable skill and experience are needed if the professional is to speak to the non-professional in terms that are clear, concise, logical and interesting. It is necessary to be able to say what is widely accepted as fact, and what remains in the realms of hypothesis. An optimistic tone is useful, if truth permits, and unnecessary pessimism is to be avoided.

Having come to the end of the book, the patient should be able to say "How interesting! Now I understand better what my doctor is trying to do for me, and I know how I can help him if our common aim in overcoming or controlling my illness".

This slim pocket book must be judged by these criteria. In a short space it attempts to touch on many aspects of asthma and allergy, and it is not always easy to judge from the text what is widely accepted by allergists, and what remains hypothetical.

In the chapter 'General Explanation' the author has tried to explain allergy in simple terms, with the result that sentences appear like: 'If the irritation becomes intolerable to the tissues, the body's defence-mechanism goes out of gear'. It should have been possible to state briefly that allergy consists of certain types of cell reaction to certain classes of foreign body, and that these reactions can cause different types of symptoms in those susceptible. This chapter contains too many 'woolly' statements to be of much value to the intelligent asthmatic.

There follows a brief discussion of different classes of allergies and their sources. There are some controversial ideas in the section on food allergy in relation to infant feeding. The story of a patient allergic to onion, collapsing on eating tinned tomatoes containing only a trace of onion, might make the non-professional reader believe this to be common, whereas it would be rare enough to make interesting medical gossip among doctors, or to get written up as a case report for a medical journal.

In the section on treatment, ephedrine is given its proper place, but a little later it is mentioned under 'Stimulants' where ephedrine compounds are bracketed with methedrine compounds, both to be condemned. Disodium cromoglycate is not mentioned at all.

The psychological background to allergy is discussed under several headings. Asthma can be a severe handicap. The constricting of the chest, gasping for breath, and sense of imminent peril, are feared and dreaded experiences. The disabled's sense of being 'different from others, and restricted in work or play', are all part of the asthmatic's burden which is often triumphantly overcome by individuals who achieve success in life despite adversity. They need the support of relations, friends, and society in general, and where this is lacking, it is hardly surprising that they