

BOOK REVIEWS

Diabetes and its management (1973). OAKLEY, W. G., PYKE, A. and TAYLOR, K. W. Pp. 183. London: Blackwell. Price: £2.25.

The authors claim, with every justification, that their book has been written as a practical guide for clinicians. Their information and statistics are drawn from experience gained by caring for about 3,500 diabetics at Kings College Hospital diabetic clinic. The opinions resulting from such a study in both depth and breadth provide a valuable contribution to the already voluminous literature on diabetes.

The book has been carefully balanced. The theoretical aspect of the subject is discussed concisely under the headings of Biochemical Basis, Insulin, Aetiology and Pathology and is completely up to date. The reader is left with the impression that we are still very far from understanding the nature of this disease despite the Nobel Prizes that have been won by research workers.

Those sections of the book, as one would expect from its title, dealing with clinical matters are expanded very adequately. Maturity onset as a type has been poorly defined by some authors and furthermore they have not all been in agreement. Oakley and his colleagues have been more precise and demonstrated how obesity, with or without diabetes, creates an increased insulin response to the stimulus of a glucose load.

The Basic Diet Card, an expansion of the Laurence Line Ration Diet, is convenient, easy to understand and comprehensive. Drug therapy is concise and clear. Probably the most valuable contribution the book provides for a general practitioner is contained in the chapters dealing with complications and prognosis. There is little added to the already existing view that complications seem to occur independently of diabetes, good or bad. Timely emphasis is given to the real incidence of eye, cardiovascular, neuropathic and renal complications with their rate of progress towards noticeable disability. Hearteningly, the picture is shown to be less gloomy than many of us believed.

General practice provides a fertile opportunity for good field work in a disease such as diabetes, as each general practitioner has an average of 25 such patients. He could not do better than be guided by the contents of this book and if he wishes to probe more deeply still, there is a comprehensive section at the end dealing with further reading.

C. H. STEWART-HESS

Babies and young children (1972). ILLINGWORTH, RONALD and SYLVIA. Pp. 328. Edinburgh and London: Churchill Livingstone. Price: £2.50.

Part of the family doctor's satisfaction in medicine springs not least from his task of cultivating understanding and independence in his patients. (Indeed, one index of his professional success over the years is the degree to which he works himself

out of his job.) But this process is time consuming: and he is often in need of material, written in simple and straightforward English which he can give, lend, or recommend to his parents—particularly with young parents rearing, or about to rear, their family.

This book has proved its worth in this field—witness its five editions in 18 years. It is full of practical guidance, the distillation of long experience; is written in simple, unequivocal English; and is enlivened by a lot of delightful sketches and some equally delightful photographs. But don't wait till the child is born—give it to the mother to read during her pregnancy.

"It is not" said the preface to the first edition "intended for doctors". Why not? They cannot, for one thing, recommend it with the enthusiasm it deserves if they have not read it: and it provides an excellent talking point for co-ordinating the views of health visitor, practice nurse and practitioner.

Two minor criticisms: first, it should be possible by now to list (in order of frequency) the foreign materials—from boot polish to "Windowlene"—that children swallow, distinguishing those that really need swift action from those that don't. Second, books must be bought before they can be read, and £2.50, even these days, will limit the audience. Could not the opportunity have been taken to issue the book cheaply as a paperback? It deserves it.

H. J. WRIGHT

Outline of Fractures (1972). ADAMS, JOHN CRAWFORD. 6th Edition. Pp. 312. Edinburgh and London: Churchill Livingstone. Price: £2.25.

That this book has now had its sixth edition published is good evidence of its popularity, a popularity which is well justified by its clarity and orderly presentation. It is recommended to those who do not aspire to specialist standards but have occasionally to deal with fractures in their day-to-day work.

The well-illustrated text does not assume any considerable previous knowledge, and this makes it suitable for medical students, young hospital doctors, and general practitioners whose absence from casualty departments for many years makes them feel that their knowledge of fractures is getting rusty. For those who wish to go more deeply into any part of the text an excellent bibliography is provided.

J. F. BURDON

The Complete Plain Words (1954). Reprinted 1972. GOWERS, SIR ERNEST. Pp. 265. London: Penguin. Price: 40p.

Most books provide information: few change attitudes. *The Complete Plain Words*, however, does both.

Sir Ernest Gowers was commissioned by the Treasury about 1948 to write a book to counteract the low standard of English in many official