

our view of the value of literature, drama, painting, music, history, philosophy, logic, and so on, to the practice of medical care is highly subjective and at present very much a minority one. If it has more general validity the important question must be what should be taught and when.

So long as the undergraduate curriculum is mainly concerned with serious organic disease and its specialist management, advanced chemistry and physics are essential prerequisites. However, I do believe we are seeing the tiny beginnings of a more sensible approach based on the frequency as well as the severity of disease (and illness, *pace* Marinker), an approach which takes into account the needs of society and which emphasises the impor-

tance of understanding how people think and feel about health.

As this new dawn develops then I am sure you are right to suggest that the arts should be given an educational place in the preparation of most medical students for their lifelong learning task.

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REFERENCE

Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners (1976). Editorial, **26**, 555-556.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Medical Risks of Life (1976). STEPHEN LOCK and TONY SMITH. Pp. 328. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd. Price: 95p.

At present Editor and Assistant Editor respectively of the *British Medical Journal*, Drs Lock and Smith have been writing and reporting on medical subjects for the general public over a number of years. In this book they range over a large number of topics of current interest and concern not only to the average intelligent layman, but also to the medically qualified. Much of their material derives from papers published over the past few years and among other subjects is included coronary artery disease, sports medicine, environmental pollution, food additives, alcohol, drugs and, inevitably, cigarette smoking. There is a detailed index, but with so many references to published papers it would have been helpful, at least for the medically qualified readers, had the authors provided a bibliography.

With the current emphasis on prevention the book is topical and it is also up to date—e.g. a reference to the influence of the hospital doctors' industrial action in 1975/76 on the incidence of para-suicide.

Although primarily written for the non-medically qualified, there is much to interest (and inform) every doctor.

D. G. GARVIE

Careers in Medicine (1976). Pp. 153. London: Council for Postgraduate Medical Education in England and Wales. Price: £2.00.

"Recently qualified doctors and final year medical students recognise that the training needed for different careers in medicine is being defined more closely. This means that they must carefully select their jobs after full registration if they are to avoid wasting time in appointments which will not count towards

accreditation." With this introduction, this paperback sets out to provide guidance on the training required for each branch of medicine.

The first 27 pages describe and summarise currently accepted principles concerning training programmes, posts approved for training, etc., and includes up-to-date information, e.g. definitions of "accreditation" and "attestation". The newly created Joint Committee on Postgraduate Training for General Practice gets a mention in a footnote on page 12.

The second part gives a fairly comprehensive account of each specialty in medicine, with particular reference to training requirements. The material draws heavily on the work of the B.M.A. Careers Service, to which due acknowledgement is made. The range is very wide, including information on aviation medicine, the medical missionary service, and voluntary service overseas.

The section on general practice, contributed by the Royal College of General Practitioners, clearly sets out a view of the characteristics of general practice as a service specialty with its training requirements. Because of rapid developments (such as the implementation of mandatory training within the next three years), it is likely that this section will require early revision. When that is undertaken, perhaps more attention could be given to aspects of general practice as an academic discipline. This might help to encourage other Colleges to adopt a much firmer approach to the vital contribution general practice will have to make to the training of future specialists in other disciplines. At the moment, if such a contribution is recognised at all (there is no apparent recognition, for example, in the section on community medicine that training in general practice is any more relevant than training in hospital), it is accorded the same sort of position as untutored service in one of the former (and more obscure) colonies.