

soon becomes apparent in general practice and skills have to be learnt to meet a continuing need expressed by patients.

Although Masters and Johnson's classic book is always quoted as the standard source, and although it represented historically a considerable advance in this subject, it is not, in fact, easy to read.

In my opinion Dr Helen Kaplan has written the two most useful books for general practitioners, partly because she writes simply and clearly and partly because the emphasis in her books is on those conditions most commonly seen in general practice.

The New Sex Therapy was first published in the USA in 1974 and it reached Great Britain in 1975. The advantage of this Penguin edition is its price; at £3.95 it is within reach of all general practitioners and vocational trainees.

Sexual counselling does not require elaborate equipment or a tremendously complicated training but it does require considerable knowledge of the range of normal, conditions of privacy and trust, and counsellors who are comfortable in dealing with two clients at once; it is an essential part of modern general practice. Among the books on the subject that I have found useful, this one is the best.

D. J. PEREIRA GRAY

THE LIGHT IN THE WEST

Noel H. Moynihan

Bachman and Turner
London (1978)

186 pages. Price £5.75

More than once since the Second World War the new Russian Empire has shown its claws, and used them, to maintain its tyranny, but nowhere more brutally or cynically than in its ruthless suppression of the Hungarian uprising in the autumn of 1956. The occupying troops having taken a beating from the Hungarian Freedom Fighters, the Russians retired and then struck again. Something like 150,000 seasoned and ruthless troops, supported by 5,000 tanks, embarked on a blitzkrieg of horrifying thoroughness. The shackles were on again. Refugees in their thousands sought to gain sanctuary in the West, and Austria was their nearest escape route.

Dr Moynihan read of this in *The Times* correspondence columns and in spite of his entrenchment in a young and budding practice, decided that he had to help. He gathered a small coterie of like-

minded friends, acquired a truck, and the operation began.

The author describes their struggles and their work for the pitiable stream of refugees filtering into Austria and Yugoslavia through the dreadful winter of 1956/57. He speaks harshly of some of the senior relief charities, whose attitudes ranged from a kinetic indifference to total obstruction, due both to their ignorance of the true state of affairs and their apparent disinclination to find out; they considered that everything was under control and resources adequate.

This is a refreshing account of altruistic amateur endeavour, but criticism may be made that too much space is given to the comings and goings of this little band of helpers, whose names read rather like a page from Debrett, and not enough to the actual plight of the unfortunates whom they were helping. But perhaps this criticism would be made only by a medical reader, and this book is intended for a more catholic circulation.

The title is perhaps unintentionally cynical. For the Hungarians the Light in the West, which they had been encouraged to hope would blaze like a beacon, was a mere will-o'-the-wisp. The West was busy with its own affairs and, as so frequently happens, the Freedom Fighters found themselves alone.

As a study of man's inhumanity to man this book is a depressing warning of the steepness of the slope on which we are all sliding, but the reader will be enlightened by its illustration that there are always people who will fight tyranny, and sometimes some who will care for its victims.

JOHN MILES

MANUAL OF MEDICAL THERAPEUTICS 22ND EDITION

Nicholas V. Costrini
and William M. Thomson

Little, Brown and Co.
Boston, USA (1977)

433 pages. Price £5.50

"Mild hypothyroidism. Treatment with 1 to 2 grains daily of thyroid USP or its equivalent may be started at once." This would not be out of place in an early edition of *Price's Textbook* but it certainly looked strange in the latest edition of an American book on therapeutics.

This book is written primarily for American medical students and interns. It is small enough to fit in a white coat

pocket, neatly presented, bound with a wide spiral metal binding, and well indexed. It covers most aspects of general medicine, each subject being divided into diagnosis and treatment.

While it is a useful book for medical students and perhaps housemen in this country, I cannot recommend it for general practitioners. Many drugs have similar names in the USA and England but some are quite different; salbutamol is not mentioned in the section on asthma; laboratory results are expressed in mg/100ml; and are we the only country using SI units?

On the occasions that I want to refer to a textbook, I want one which is comprehensible and detailed, especially on adverse drug therapy, which is dealt with inadequately here.

ROGER PEPIATT

NEONATAL MEDICINE

Malcolm L. Chiswick

Update Publications Ltd
London (1978)

101 pages. Price £3.95

Many doctors will be familiar with this book through advertisements that have appeared in *Update* and *Hospital Update*. It contains revised versions of articles which originally appeared in *Update*. The style and presentation of the book makes it enjoyable to read as the text contains many tables, diagrams, and photographs (most of them in colour). The subject is covered systematically with chapters on the unborn baby, resuscitation, examination of the newborn, low birth weight, nutrition, infection, jaundice, respiratory, neurological, genito-urinary, and gastro-intestinal problems.

The author makes some definitive statements about the indications for certain investigations and treatments with which other paediatricians may not agree. For instance, many would not investigate a full-term healthy infant with a bilirubin of 12 mg/100 ml at four days. Similarly an aggressive approach to the management of ideopathic respiratory distress syndrome (IRDS) is advocated; the importance of minimal handling in these babies is not mentioned; nasogastric nutrition is unfairly dismissed; and intravenous nutrition is advised in (apparently) all babies with IRDS. On the other hand the author adopts the conservative but safe approach which many neonatal problems merit when considering some topics.

This book will be of most interest to the senior house officer working in a neonatal unit, and general practitioner

trainees will find it useful when studying for the Diploma of Child Health. Its low price and readability means that general practitioners may find it worth buying simply for the chapters relevant to their work. I am sure that the publishers' expectations of large sales will be fulfilled.

CLIVE STUBBINGS

BUTTERWORTHS MEDICAL DICTIONARY. 2ND EDITION

Macdonald Critchley
(Editor-in-Chief)

Butterworths
Sevenoaks (1978)

1,942 pages. Price £45

This large and expensive book appears to have been compiled without reference to the largest branch of the profession. It contains virtually none of the specific terms of our discipline and none of its 51 contributors are in general practice, although one is a nurse tutor. This book will therefore not help medical students or vocational trainees seeking the meaning of words they meet in the literature of general practice, and is therefore not recommended.

D. J. PEREIRA GRAY

1978 YEAR BOOK OF PEDIATRICS

Sidney S. Gellis (ed.)

Year Book Medical Publishers
Chicago and London (1978)

394 pages. Price £18

If you are an American paediatrician, then you will feel at home with the 1978 *Year Book of Pediatrics*. However, from the point of view of the British general practitioner with a special interest in paediatrics the scattered pieces of relevant and interesting information that are hidden in this book will not justify spending £18.

The *Year Book of Pediatrics* can be best described as a comprehensive review of the literature on the research into all aspects of paediatric care. Each research paper is first summarized, giving the author's conclusions, following which either the editor or a named colleague gives a personal view of the value of the research in the context of other work in that particular field.

In reviewing this book, I looked up the ten most common conditions seen in children in general practice and found many interesting and informative papers. For instance, there is a good comparative trial of various antibiotics for otitis media, several useful reports on control trials of cromoglycate and beclomethasone in asthma, and a series of papers which give a good general picture of the present position of a child with febrile convulsions. The editorial comments on these sections are to the point and the criticisms of papers on the grounds of faulty statistics fair. Sometimes, however, the reader is left with a critical editorial opinion with little to back it up; he must therefore be careful not to accept each editorial comment too readily. All in all, this is a useful book for the paediatrician but not a must for the general practitioner's bookshelf.

G. D. STARTE

ESSENTIAL INTENSIVE CARE

E. Sherwood Jones

MTP Press Limited
Lancaster (1978)

503 pages. Price £9.95

This is a splendid but very specialized work and is not relevant to most general practitioners. It might be of use for senior house officers in vocational training while working in hospital but the hospital library would probably have it anyway.

KENNETH EASTON

INFORMATION KIT FOR AGENCIES

National Women's Aid Federation

Available from NAWAF, 51 Chalcot Road, London NW1

The 'kit' of the title consists of four leaflets entitled: "Battered Women and Refuges", "Unhelpful Myths and Stereotypes about Battered Women", "Battered Women Demand Control over their Lives", and "National Women's Aid Federation—How We Work". They seek to inform all members of the caring professions about wife battering and what can be done about it and there is an additional sheet addressed especially to doctors.

Although the existence of refuges and organizations such as NAWAF are in principle a good thing, when a crisis actually arises so much depends upon the personalities and capabilities of the

individual helpers that I would rather refer a patient to a helper I know personally, whom I *know* to be endowed with the right qualities to deal with this intensely emotive problem, than to one I do not. I seriously suggest, therefore, that NAWAF and like organizations try to direct their publicity campaign on a more personal level—which should not be impossible—so that those of us who may want to seek their help may judge more directly for ourselves. Well meant though they undoubtedly are, regrettably these leaflets will put off many of those whom they are intended to persuade because of their aggressive flavour.

TIM PAINE

HAS YOUR CHILD BEEN IN HOSPITAL?

Joan Woodward

National Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital,
Roebuck Press
Mitcham (1978)

24 pages. Price 30p

Writing with clarity, and the sensitivity which stems from considerable experience, Joan Woodward conveys a wealth of information in this small booklet. So much of it is so basic and yet so much of it is at present unappreciated both by parents and by those who work with children.

The title suggests that the book is directed mainly at parents, and certainly the author fulfils admirably her aim of setting out in everyday language some ideas on how parents can help themselves and their children to deal with the sometimes distressing results of a period of separation from a child who has been in hospital. However, as Dr Dermot MacCarthy points out in his foreword, it should be read first and foremost by nurses, doctors, and other professionals in hospital, and it is in my opinion just as valuable to the general practitioner and vocational trainee as to the hospital doctor, since children nowadays largely reach hospital by referral from general practice.

Many paediatric wards now produce their own hand-out for parents, but those who do not would be well advised to buy the booklet and distribute it free of charge to all the parents of children who come to their hospital. At 30p a copy a bulk purchase would look miniscule on the balance sheet, compared with some of the expensive fittings and equipment to be seen in hospital today.

COLIN WAINE