



## RECOLLECTIONS AND REFLECTIONS

*Douglas Black*

*British Medical Journal, London (1987)*

*132 pages. Price £14.95*

With characteristic modesty the author would have us believe that this slim volume is simply 'a collection of reminiscences'. It is that, of course, but much more as well. Distilled into a mere 130 pages are the experiences and opinions of one of British medicine's most distinguished practitioners. Past President of the Royal College of Physicians and the British Medical Association (and so on) he takes us with deceptive ease into the 'whirligig of time' and with the pawky humour of the Scot enlightens the reader in such obtruse matters as the workings of the Chief Scientists' Office, the intricacies of College protocol, the National Health Service and much else.

The final chapter discusses with disarming candour the author's philosophy of life, including his attitude to religion, and one is left with the impression of a man who, having lived life to the full, continues to have that vital spark.

This is a well written book and the reader, whether medical or lay, will enjoy the lightness of touch in the author's handling of weighty matters. Those who know him and his country of origin will have the added pleasure of recognizing some of the personalities mentioned and will relish many of the traits of the Scot at his best.

JAMES D.E. KNOX

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## LIVING WITH YOUR PAIN

**A self-help guide to managing pain**

*A. Broome and H. Jellicoe*

*Associated Book Publishers (UK), Andover (1987)*

*84 pages. Price £3.95*

Despite the establishment of pain clinics in a number of medical centres, these are continually overstretched providing facilities for hospital as well as primary care services, and the general practitioner is necessarily left with a considerable load in caring for the chronic pain sufferer. Having run through the array of possibilities available and checked carefully with the patient as to his or her response the general practitioner may care to introduce the concept of self-help as an adjunct. It is important that self-help should be introduced in a positive way with reference being made to aims such as extension of lifestyle and coping with the restrictions the pain creates, rather than implying that 'it is all in the mind'.

There are now a number of books which aim to help patients who have chronic pain but this one by Annabel Broome and Helen Jellicoe is particularly undaunting and attractively presented. Both authors are clinical psychologists with con-

siderable experience in advising and helping chronic pain sufferers. The book sets out a four week programme to be followed by the patient in recording pain and tension, then in bringing about change using the relaxation technique and planned increases in activity.

There are useful chapters covering topics related to communicating with doctors and other services, and to answering the more common types of queries raised by patients. These chapters are also useful preparation for doctors in orienting themselves towards better communication with their patients. Indeed such important chapters could well have been placed nearer the beginning of the book before the self-help programme is described.

This is an appealing, clearly written self-help book, which would be useful for the general practitioner to have at hand in his surgery to recommend to patients interested in helping themselves to cope with chronic pain.

FELICITY BUCKLEY

*Clinical Psychologist, Edinburgh*

## FOLLOW-UP MANAGEMENT OF THE HIGH RISK INFANT

*H.W. Taeusch and M.W. Yogman (Eds)*

*Little, Brown and Company, Boston (1987)*

*353 pages. Price £19.95*

At first glance this book may not appear to have much relevance to the general practitioner in the United Kingdom. It is edited by two Americans, a neonatologist and a child development specialist, and the various chapters produce a balanced account of how both child care professionals and parents cope with children who have required intensive care in the first few weeks and months of life. Although the average general practitioner will have few high risk infants, the current moves in the UK towards developmental surveillance based in general practice will mean that general practitioners will have to become more conversant with assessment procedures, screening for vision and hearing, neuromotor status and cognitive development. The chapters on home environment, emotional growth and parenting are particularly good. Some of the other chapters follow the American love of protocols which appear rather too structured for the average practitioner to follow in the hurly-burly of daily practice.

The book is aimed primarily at an American audience but in the absence of a similar publication in Britain, community paediatricians and general practitioners with a special interest in children will find it a useful reference source.

JOHN BAIN

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