

**Health and Hormones.** A. STUART MASON, M.D., M.R.C.P. London. Penguin Books Ltd. 1960. Pp. vii + 714. Price 4s.

This fascinating book will have a wide public. It is stimulating reading for the practitioner for this is the specialist at his best. The author, an eminent endocrinologist, presents a difficult scientific subject with authority and clarity. The literary style is easy and absorbing. The interesting historical notes reveal knowledge and enthusiasm. The diagrams are simple and effective. Best of all is the refreshing critical faculty with which the author presents his own specialized subject in its true perspective.

**Cancer in Childhood and Youth.** SIGISMUND PELLER, M.D., F.R.S.H. 1960. Bristol. John Wright & Sons Ltd. Pp. v—291. Price 42s.

This is a difficult book to read and to review. The author published in 1952 a volume called "Cancer in Man" where he suggested the combating of cancer by the induction of skin epitheliomata as a method of vaccination. According to his studies, skin epitheliomata prevent a large percentage of internal cancers and, if induced according to a plan, could prevent over 90 per cent of them.

In this companion volume, he has turned his attention to the problems of childhood cancer, and has come to the conclusion that childhood cancers are a reaction to carcinogens which enter the foetus and embryo via the placenta, are distributed by means of the foetal blood circulation, and are induced prenatally. He also postulates that the blood from the venae cavae does not mix in the right foetal atrium. He argues that the separation of the blood streams in the right atrium (*a*) definitely eliminates the possibility of a distribution by organ or system similar to that in postnatally induced cancers and (*b*) the difference in cancer distribution between the upper and lower part of the child's body is evidence for the prenatal carcinogenesis of childhood cancers.

The author postulates that the prevention of childhood cancer depends on the successful stoppage of actual and potential carcinogens through the placenta. This is to be done indirectly by immunizing the mother by the induction of easily curable skin epitheliomata in childhood and so also, perhaps, producing passive immunization in the children of the next generation.

The plan of the book is well and carefully designed. The hypotheses are amplified by embryological studies, by original experimental work and by analysis of statistical data. There are contained in its pages many facts about childhood cancer which may not all have been collected together previously. The theory expounded has exerted a strange fascination on this reviewer and in view of the rebirth of virology in cancer research it may be that, in the author's own words, "a considerable amount of progress can be achieved frequently in spite of basically wrong themes".