

Book Reviews

A Guide to Cardiology. J. C. LEONARD, M.D., M.R.C.P. and E. G. GALEA, M.B., M.R.C.P., M.R.A.C.P. Edin. and Lond. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1961. Pp. xii + 267. Price 27s. 6d.

The authors state that this book was written primarily for the undergraduate student, house physician, and general practitioner. Within that limitation it is quite excellent. It contains far more than its size would suggest and this has been achieved by lucid style and economy of words. The material is presented somewhat dogmatically, without discussion, and tends to be a little staccato, though that is no disadvantage in a book of this sort. It is well balanced, with emphasis on the commoner conditions and stress on bedside diagnosis which is now so important for the general practitioner; special investigations are given shorter descriptions though there is enough to assist in the interpretation of hospital reports.

It is difficult to decide whether any kind of working knowledge can be gained from the condensation of electrocardiography into 17 pages, and it is a little disappointing to see that almost all the examples of electrocardiograms are made with old machines and have broad "noisy" base lines; the only modern one is the illustration of paroxysmal nodal tachycardia and the difference is striking.

The sections on treatment are very good and contain much wisdom. It is impossible to keep pace with the flow of new hypotensive agents and it is no criticism of the book to say that much of the therapeutics of hypertension is already dated.

The work of the publishers is also good. The book is a convenient size, well produced and reasonably priced; the reproductions of x rays are unusually clear.

The advances in medical and surgical treatment of cardiovascular diseases have placed new emphasis on the importance of bedside diagnosis and have increased the responsibilities of the general practitioner. For this reason it is an important book.

Facing Retirement. A COUNTRY DOCTOR, M.A., M.D., with Foreword by J. W. ROBERTSON SCOTT, C.H.M.A. Lond. George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1960. Pp. 9 + 127. Price 12s. 6d.

It came on me suddenly whilst travelling on an Inner Circle Tube train. She was like any other London office girl, pale and tired, but young and nicely dressed. I hardly noticed her until she half rose to offer me her seat. That was several years ago now, but ever

since there has been a little nagging thought that some day I shall have to sit back and let others stand in my place. Consequently, when asked to review this book it provoked further qualms. Was this not another horrible hint? "Oh! yes, he'll do it. Just the kind of book he will like". Prejudiced I turned the pages; strangely enough I did like it.

Based on lectures delivered to members of Women's Institutes, it is primarily directed to the lay reader. The chapters are short; the print clear and large enough for those with failing eyesight to read with ease; the style is lucid. Much of the advice given in the 20 chapters is not to be found collected inside the covers of any other book of a comparable size. The dust cover states it to be "an ideal gift for anyone in the 50's or 60's" and this assuredly it is. Though there may be occasions when to give such a present would show a lack of tact, this is a book which should be read before retirement. The difficulty in adjusting to a new life on the brink of old age, at a time of life when it is becoming increasingly difficult to absorb new habits and ideas, is well known. Here is preventive medicine of the best sort. I am glad that the author has chosen to remain anonymous, as "a country doctor" his wisdom spreads its mantle over all his colleagues.

A Short Manual of Venereal Diseases and Treponematosi. R. C. L. BATCHELOR, M.A., M.B., CH.B., D.P.H., F.R.C.S.E., F.R.C.P.E. and MARJORIE MURRELL, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S.E. 2nd Edition. Edin. and Lond. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1961. Pp. i + 316. Price 25s.

A most appropriate publication which will be welcomed by all general practitioners. The recent editorials in most medical journals have highlighted this recurring and increasing problem of the larger venereal disease group patients. Those of us who may have forgotten about this during the past 15 years, when we did not see any or very few exceptional cases, and those of us who have entered practice since the war, will value this book from this now famous team at the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh.

The illustrations, particularly coloured plates of skin lesions are quite strikingly helpful. The discussion of the laboratory tests and their evaluation is sanely balanced and informative to the family doctor who cannot enter into the finesse of whether to ask for a Kahn or Wasserman. The chapter on the use of penicillin has wise advice: . . . "When in doubt, don't give penicillin. . ." but otherwise it may disappoint family doctors who must be handling