

Obstetrical Emergencies. DENIS CAVANAGH, M.B., CH.B., F.A.C.O.G.
Oxford, Blackwell Scientific Publications Ltd., Illinois, U.S.A.
Charles C. Thomas, 1961. Pp. xxii + 380. Price £5 0s. 0d.

This is an American book, one of a number in a lecture series on obstetrics and gynaecology. It is written by a British graduate who is now an assistant professor at a Southern State University. Like all American books it is very well produced on good quality paper, clearly spaced for easy reading, and amply illustrated with many diagrams and sketches.

The detail given to the contents, references, and index is unusually exhaustive which is an indication of the lengths the writer has gone to in order to cover his subject. In this he has succeeded, even to the extent of including conditions of such rarity that one might not see them even in a lifetime of hospital practice.

In this country we are at the cross roads as far as hospital versus home confinement is concerned. The "battle" is on between the specialist and general-practitioner obstetrician. In the United States this battle has been won and it is very obvious from Professor Cavanagh's remarks that he considers all mothers should be delivered in hospital.

The book is full of facts foreign to British obstetric eyes. To name just a few: the cytodiagnosis of ruptured membranes; the fact that in all women who survive the first episode of a pulmonary infarction the treatment of choice is bilateral infundibulo-pelvic ligament ligation with trans-peritoneal inferior vena caval ligation, and finally the taking of a Papanicolaou smear of the cervix at the first visit.

There are many other procedures and statements with which many of us would not agree. The use of 5 units of Pitocin in 1000ml. of 5 per cent dextrose in water; cervical incisions to effect delivery; the preference for midline episiotomy; umbilical cord traction and anticoagulants in all pregnant women with deep thrombo-phlebitis are but to name a few.

On the credit side the book is full of valuable information not the least of which is the detail given to frequently quoted drugs (even though many of them are American proprietary preparations not available here) and an appendix on instruments, materials, drugs, and linen for delivery.

A preventable maternal death is the greatest tragedy in medical practice. Obstetrical emergencies allow little time for thought and often only the prompt and appropriate intervention of an alert and competent practitioner averts catastrophe. It is therefore the duty of every general-practitioner obstetrician to be aware of the

many and diverse problems that may beset him when dealing with expectant mothers and their newly born children. This book certainly covers the problems, and if read with care and certain reservations is a most valuable addition to that select part of the medical bookshelf kept for quick ready reference.

Symptoms and Signs in Clinical Medicine. E. NOBLE CHAMBERLAIN, M.D., M.SC., F.R.C.P. Seventh edition. Bristol, J. Wright & Sons Ltd., 1961. Pp. x + 569. Price 45s.

The new edition of this well-known text-book maintains a high standard and is lavishly illustrated. Unlike therapeutics, symptoms and signs have shown little tendency to change since the days of the first edition (1936). Much of the text is substantially unchanged from that of earlier editions, while in the illustrations, one can recognize many old, if discarded, friends. The main advance in this edition is backwards!—an excellent introductory chapter on “The Foundations of our Art” which gives a rapid survey of medical history from Hippocrates to Koch. There have, in addition, been major alterations in the chapters on radiology and clinical pathology.

There is little to fault in the text. Only a fleeting and rather disparaging reference is made to the value of auscultation in examining the abdomen. No mention is made of rib resection in respiratory disease in children. In marked contrast to the rest of the book, there is a relative dearth of illustrations, which would be most helpful, in the chapter on “Medical operations and investigations”.

Although basically a text-book for students this work could be read, and re-read with considerable profit by general practitioners. Those, however, who possess earlier editions will scarcely find the expense of repurchase justifiable.

The Medical Annual. A Year-book of Treatment and Practitioners' Index. Bristol, John Wright & Sons Ltd., 1961. Pp. i + 610. Price 42s.

The seventy-ninth issue of the *Medical Annual* is in all respects worthy of its predecessors. The book covers the same wide range of subjects that has always made it so handy a reference book for all working doctors. The new arrangement of subjects under headings of the specialties which was introduced last year makes it easy for those who wish to find out “what's new” in any subject. The special articles again pick out those subjects in which major advances are being made: Human chromosome abnormalities by W. M. Court Brown, the management of paraplegia by L. Guttmann,