

detailed description of serum proteins, hormones, enzymes and the mechanism of blood clotting. The sections on immunology and serology and the diagnosis of liver and renal disease are of considerable interest. The chapter on enzymes includes readable summaries of lactic acid dehydrogenase and serum transaminase tests and of their value when diagnosing myocardial infarction; the section on serology includes the application of serological immunological techniques over a wide range of common clinical conditions from virus diseases, through antibody reactions following specific drug therapy, to their application in the diagnosis of rheumatic fever and rheumatoid arthritis.

Arterial Hypertension and Ischaemic Heart Disease—Comparison in Epidemiological Studies. A. M. BURGESS, Jr., M.D., ZDENEK FEJFAR, M.D., D.SC., and AUBREY KAGAN, M.B., M.R.C.P., D.P.H. Geneva. World Health Organization. London. H.M. Stationery Office. 1963. Pp. i + 36.

The purpose of this, implicit in the title, is to enable research workers all over the world to conduct their research in arterial hypertension and ischaemic heart disease in such a way that their results will be comparable. It is emphasized that much valuable research has been and is being done, but that a great part of it is valueless from the epidemiological standpoint because investigators use different standards and it is difficult or impossible to correlate the results.

The recorded incidence of these diseases is increasing; how much of this increase is real and how much is due to a heightened awareness on the part of doctors? One step in the solution of this problem is a general acceptance of a definition of ischaemic heart disease, and one is given. Techniques must be standardized; what level of blood pressure indicates hypertension? When cuff-pressure is released, which of the sounds indicates the level of diastolic pressure? At what speed should cuff-pressure be released? Should blood pressures be recorded to the nearest 5 or 2 mm. Hg.? These and many similar details which tend to be taken for granted are discussed and the importance of agreed standards stressed. Electrocardiography and its interpretation are similarly critically discussed.

Arterial hypertension and ischaemic heart disease are attractive subjects for general-practitioner research and anyone so engaged would do well to give close attention to the standards laid down in this publication.

Occlusion of the Superior Mesenteric Artery. BENJAMIN B. JACKSON, M.D., F.R.C.S. Springfield, Illinois, U.S.A. Charles C. Thomas. 1963. Pp. xiv + 141. Price \$7.50.

During the last fifteen years, as surgeons have become increasingly skilled in the technique of vascular surgery, it is not surprising that they have been tackling with growing success the challenge to their courage

and skill which is afforded by obstructive lesions of the superior mesenteric artery.

This book describes the anatomy of the superior mesenteric artery, the physiology and pathology of acute and chronic mesenteric arterial occlusion and the diagnosis and treatment of these conditions. It ends with accounts of a number of illustrative cases.

The operative details of embolectomy, endarterectomy and by-pass operations will mainly interest the specialist in vascular surgery. For the general practitioner and for most general surgeons the value of the book lies in the description of the diagnosis and the differential diagnosis from other causes of the "acute abdomen".

Given a high index of suspicion, the author claims that it should be possible to diagnose mesenteric arterial occlusion in three cases out of four, on the basis of clinical history and physical examination.

He also stresses the importance of early laparotomy in such patients, notwithstanding the fact that in the nature of things they nearly all come into the category of poor operative risks. Procrastination, however, is an even greater danger. The mortality of mesenteric ischaemia in non-treated cases is about 94 per cent, and little time should be wasted before resort to surgery.

The book is well produced and the style and illustrations are clear. We recommend it to any doctor who is anxious to increase his knowledge of an uncommon, and usually lethal, variety of abdominal emergency.

Wheeler and Jack's Handbook of Medicine. Revised by ROBERT COOPE M.D., B.Sc., F.R.C.P. and C. A. Clarke M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P. Twelfth edition. London and Edinburgh. E. & S Livingstone Ltd. 1963 Pp. xix + 722. Price 22s. 6d.

This is the twelfth edition of the handbook, the first having been published about seventy years ago. Dr Coope has had the assistance of Dr C. A. Clarke in revising this edition which retains the general layout of the previous one, but like most present day textbooks revision has meant an increase in size, in this case of 72 pages.

Many advances have taken place in all branches of medicine since the previous edition and many conditions at one time common in Great Britain, have now almost disappeared. The authors point out however that this is not true of all countries and so care must be taken as to what 'old material' may be omitted when a book is revised. This of course is especially true when we have many overseas students in our medical schools who will later practice in their own countries. Much new material has been included and the handbook has been thoroughly revised and brought up to date.

As before, the handbook is intended primarily for the medical student as an adjunct to his clerical work, it will also be useful for quick reference, and 'handy' for the general practitioner to have on his surgery book-case.

This remains a most excellent handbook, clearly written and easily