

officer at the Tavistock Clinic. In these 300 pages an attempt is made to evaluate the factual and measurable evidence from 19 case histories, to assess their result in psychotherapy in retrospect, and attempt a measurable statistical analysis. Anybody uninitiated to this mystique practised at the Tavistock Clinic, will find himself bewildered by the terminology and the philosophical discussion. Yet this serious attempt to arrive at an appraisal at what must be a shortened form of psychoanalytical therapy, here termed, "Brief Psychotherapy", is of definite value. There is no doubt that the grouping and searching to find a suitable method for general practice is indeed of great importance. This book marks a further step and demands our attention and admiration for its learned way and industrious application, though whether it will lead to general acceptance of the author's conclusions will remain to be seen.

**Narcotic Addiction in Britain and America. The Impact of Public Policy.**

EDWIN M. SCHUR. London. Tavistock Publications. 1962. Pp. vii + 281. Price 35s.

This book is the result of two years' research in England by Dr Schur—a sociologist. Although narcotic (or sleep inducing) drugs are chiefly considered, stimulating drugs (e.g. amphetamines) are also included in the survey.

The different methods of approach to the problem in the U.S.A. and Britain are discussed at length and the paradoxical situation is shown that whereas in the U.S.A. numerous laws and enactments have failed to ameliorate conditions, in Britain, where the drug addict is treated not as a criminal but as a sick person, the problem is very small compared with the U.S.A. This is not accounted for by the difference in population as the ratio of addicts to population is also smaller in Britain.

No common factor in social class could be found. One factor common to both countries is that of keeping the addict off drugs once medical treatment has succeeded in 'curing' him—i.e. the relapse rate is very high indeed. This, it is suggested, is the basic problem and is due in both countries to an inadequate programme of after-care. One distressing feature is that in Britain the proportion of addicts in the professional classes (doctors, nurses, etc.) is extremely high compared to the proportion in the U.S.A. No treatment is discussed, but withdrawal symptoms are vividly described and numerous case histories are given.

The bibliography is full and complete. Although published in England the book is written with American spelling—e.g. "labor, colored, etc."; possibly one shortcoming is that a glossary of addict slang or argot could be included.

**Absorption and Distribution of Drugs.** Based on a symposium held by the Association of Medical Advisers in the Pharmaceutical Industry.

Edited by T. B. BINNS, M.R.C.P., D.C.H. Edinburgh and London. E. and S. Livingstone Ltd. 1964. Pp. xi + 270. Price 37s. 6d.

The Association of Medical Advisers in the Pharmaceutical Industry organized a symposium at the Royal Society of Medicine in 1963. The

various papers read there are the basis of this book. Nobody looking at this title would suspect that this is a book full of interest for the general practitioner. Much of it is so purely biochemical or physiological in its content, yet many contributions have acutely applicable paragraphs and chapters which begin to throw light on the apparent confusion of therapeutics. Now that therapeutics is becoming a science, based on measured effects, it is even more important for the practising doctor to be aware of the background information against which his therapeutic armamentarium is assessed, judged and developed.

The battle for the blood levels of antibiotics, the tolerance of various hypotensive drugs are only some of the items which have been bandied about freely by some of the advertising literature. Yet a study of this book gives a considerable insight into the various problems and the excessive caution required. One begins to understand the action of the so-called long-acting or delay release preparations, the claims for which are leading so many of us up the garden path by pseudo-scientific statements. The succinct chapter by Professor Girdwood on the absorption of haematinics, should be compulsory reading for all general practitioners who must be using iron preparations sufficient to build a battleship. The chapter on therapeutic implication by Dr Bernard Brodie from the National Institute of Health, Bethesda, Maryland, is a magnificent distillate of present day applied therapeutics. Whilst much is pure science in this book yet do not be discouraged by the title; take your postgraduate education a few leaps further and have a go at the book. The drug companies claims will no longer be "holy writ".

**A Synopsis of Gastro-enterology.** G. N. CHANDLER, M.A., D.M., M.R.C.P. Bristol. J. Wright and Sons Ltd. 1963. Pp. 200. Price 27s. 6d.

This book succeeds the section that was devoted to gastro-enterology in Sir Henry Letheby Tidy's *Synopsis of Medicine*. The author has kept the original style with multiple headings and lists. The staccato presentation makes sustained reading unlikely but the material is very up-to-date and comprehensive. The suggestions given for investigating patients are certainly valuable for those practitioners who are fortunate enough to have open access to pathology and radiology departments. A minor criticism is that the author has not been consistent in his use of proprietary names for the drugs he recommends. For rapid reference on the practitioner's desk this slim volume is wholeheartedly recommended.

**A Synopsis of Cardiology.** D. WEITZMAN, M.D., M.R.C.P. Bristol. J. Wright and Sons Ltd. 1964. Pp. i+200. Price 30s.

A good synopsis should be comprehensive and contain all essential facts with a minimum of verbiage, and the function is primarily that of a refresher. For details and discussion one would turn to a larger textbook. The remarkable advances in cardiology have created the need for a good synopsis, but it is questionable whether this one in its present form quite meets this need. A difficulty is created for the reviewer by the fact that the author does not state which group of doctors he had in mind