

Book Reviews

The Encyclopaedia of General Practice. Edited by G. F. ABERCROMBIE, *V.R.D., M.A., M.D.* and R. M. S. MCCONAGHEY, *M.D.* London. Butterworths. 1964. Volume 3 Pp. x + 620. Volume 4 Pp. ix + 596. Price £4 5s. per volume. (£29 15s. the set of 6 volumes with appendices and index.)

These two further volumes of the series of six on clinical matters conform to the first two in layout, titling, and clarity of type.

Authors are again almost equally divided between consultants and family doctors. Mature authorities on some subjects mingle to good effect with younger workers in special fields. Occasional joint authorship of family doctor and specialist is particularly effective on some subjects, for example Glandular Fever (A. E. de la T. Mallett and R. I. S. Bayliss) and Head Injuries (Joe Pennybacker and R. G. Eager).

This scheme of publication lends itself to the short authoritative paper on subjects like Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke (A. L. Craddock), Hypoglycaemia (G. Walker), Orchialgia (P. Jensen). Equally it suits the overall survey such as 19 pages on Hip Joint (G. Blundell Jones), 45 pages on Obstetrics (Eric B. Hickson)—in this last the six lines on indications for reference to a consultant provide a disappointingly inadequate discussion of the issues involved.

Menopause and Climacteric conveniently adjoins the chapter on Menstruation and its Disorders, both by Phillip Hopkins. They show a sensitive appreciation of subjective attitudes as well as organic changes. The interesting gap of 3–4 years between the menarche and the usual onset of primary dysmenorrhoea is not mentioned. Infertility (Margaret Jackson) is a stimulating survey of the width of this subject as it presents itself in general practice related to expert knowledge and practical experience. Infectious Hepatitis (E. V. Kuenssberg) is an example of perspective in discussion of the risks of a condition which we meet in such varying severity. Pharmacology, 90 pages (H. C. Stewart and W. H. Horner Andrews), seems out of place in an encyclopaedia in its present form: while full of interest, it is difficult to use for quick reference. In contrast, Physical Medicine (J. B. Stewart) is surprisingly easy to refer to for information under type of disability. One of the pleasures of using these volumes is the stimulus from several brief and vivid accounts of clinical entities, such as Myasthenia Gravis (Sir Geoffrey Keynes) and Diaphragmatic Hernia (R. J. F. H. Pinsent).

The organization and editing of this encyclopaedia must have involved enormous work. Such wide coverage and readability are provided that suggestions for improvement seem superfluous. The brief notes drawing readers' attention to other chapters related to the subject matter would save readers' time if at the beginning and not the end—or why not both? And if there is reference after Hand (J. M. Roberts) to chapters on Dupuyten's contracture, Raynaud's phenomenon, chilblains and chaps, then why not to nails (Sir John Richardson Bt.)? The index to be published finally will be a test of cross reference. In congratulating the editors on this achievement there must be sympathy too, for its high quality will demand a further edition before very long.