

Book Reviews

A Laboratory Guide to Clinical Diagnosis. R. D. EASTHAM, B.A., M.D., D.C.P. DIPL. PATH., M.C. PATH., and B. R. POLLARD, M.A., M.B., B.CHIR, M.C. PATH. Bristol. John Wright & Sons Ltd. 1964. Pp. viii + 252. Price 18s. 6d.

This pocket-size book packs between its paper covers a vast amount of information on the laboratory aspects of a wide range of conditions—from abortion to Zollinger-Ellison syndrome. To do this in the space available, the authors make free use of abbreviations (a useful list of which appears at the beginning), Eponyms (many of which are not explained), and bald verbless statement. This does not make for easy reading.

An attempt has been made to indicate for each disease the relative merits of tests in diagnosis and treatment, using five categories. The diagnosis of disease does not commonly rest on a pathognomonic test (group 1) but on the results of several, and in these groups the various tests appear in a rather haphazard fashion. The balance between what is possible and what is practical is occasionally a little strained—that the marrow plasmacell count may be increased in roseola infantum may not seem very relevant to some of us. Because it presupposes a degree of responsibility in the use of the laboratory, this is not a book for the enthusiastic house physician who would be the justification for the general practitioner as “the specialist in anti-specialization” (McKenzie Lecture, 1964).

The approach, viewing the problem in terms of disease entities, in hindsight, as it were, limits the value of this book for the general practitioner, who, more than any other clinician, has to work from a welter of symptomatology onwards.

Despite these criticisms, the authors are to be congratulated on trying to foster “closer co-operation and understanding, with mutual stimulation of interest between clinical specialists, general practitioners and clinical pathologists”.

Diseases of Women by Ten Teachers under the direction of F. W. ROQUES, C.B.E., M.D., M.Chir., F.R.C.S., F.R.C.O.G. Eleventh edition. London. Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd. 1964. Pp. ix + 576. Price 50s.

In the course of years since its first edition in 1919 this book has run through ten previous editions and 22 printings in all. This alone not only proves its worth and popularity but establishes it firmly as a standard textbook for students and a work of gynaecological reference for the family doctor. One might well add to the title “a conjoined textbook from ten hospitals”. The new addition has been divided into 12 sections and new chapters have been added on the determination of sex including intersex and on radiotherapy in gynaecology.

This is a good book for the general practitioner. It contains the basis of gynaecology and covers all one who does not intend to specialize in the subject should need to know. The text is clear and lucid and the
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