

of the complementary nature of clinical, laboratory and population studies. This is not so much a textbook as a way of thinking.

Current Achievements in Geriatrics. Papers read at a conference on Medical and Surgical Aspects of Ageing, held in Glasgow, 20-22 November 1963 under the auspices of the Glasgow Postgraduate Medical Board. Edited by W. FERGUSON ANDERSON and BERNARD ISAACS. London. Cassel and Company Ltd. 1964. Pp. xii + 268. Price 30s.

This short book is a collection of the papers read at a conference on medical and surgical aspects of 'ageing', held in Glasgow in November 1963. The conference was divided into five sections with papers on epidemiology and gerontology, cerebrovascular disease, urology, psychiatry and clinical topics. The section on epidemiology and gerontology was not concerned with infectious diseases but with the application of epidemiological methods to certain geriatric problems, such as the cause of death in old age. This particular study shows quite clearly that multiple pathology is the rule and not the exception. These methods of studying the elderly define where the major problems lie and where most effort must be directed whilst resources and manpower are limited. Cerebrovascular disease is the cause of much distress and many deaths in the elderly. This section included papers by a neuropathologist, a neurosurgeon and a physician, all of whom have an essential part to play in the diagnosis and treatment of this condition.

'Water troubles' cause much discomfort and a great deal of social inconvenience in the aged. The value of cystometry in the investigation of urological disease is stressed. Some differences of opinion are evident amongst the contributors on some subjects: for instance on the value of chlorhexidine swabbings prior to the collection of samples of urine. The papers on psychiatry reveal the growing problem of mental ill-health in old people and the strain it is putting on the National Health Service. The dementias and depressions seem to be the main disorders found. The final session was concerned with clinical topics. The chairman in his opening remarks said he detected a common theme—trauma, not only physical trauma but malnutrition, pressure, cold and coal-gas poisoning.

This book is a collection of interesting and up to date papers giving an account of 'what is going on' in geriatrics. Time spent reading it is time well spent.

Basic Cardiology. Second edition. T. E. GUMPERT, M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.P. Bristol. John Wright & Sons Ltd. 1964. Pp. vii + 234. Price 42s.

This is an excellent book. The claim that it bridges the gap between the specialist cardiological texts and the necessarily concentrated account often found in standard textbooks of medicine is well substantiated—in fact, the practising cardiologist could read this book with profit. Six years have elapsed since the first edition appeared; it is a reasonable assumption

that the interval between the present edition and the third edition will be much shorter. When he is revising his text for the third edition, Dr Gumpert might care to look at the following points. (1) The reproductions of chest x-rays are of uneven quality, e.g. the rib-notching referred to in the description of figure 81 has to be seen with the eye of faith. (2) Bretylium tosylate is in the discard, even now. (3) Recognition, albeit with sentimental regret, that 'atrium' and 'atrial' are now 'in' and that 'auricle' and 'auricular' are now 'out'. Auricular fibrillation is now atrialfibrillation and will almost certainly remain so—at least until the anatomists alter their terminology yet again.

Drugs in Our Society. Based on a conference sponsored by the John Hopkins University. Edited by PAUL TALALAY, assisted by JANE H. MURRIAGHAM. Baltimore, Maryland. The John Hopkins Press. London. Oxford University Press, 1964. Pp. v + 311. Price 48s.

It is fashionable to publish the discussions of the select and few on some special occasion, but nowhere has this filled a greater need, and been more clearly justified than in this important publication. Twenty-one essays are presented here, based on the conference held by a small group of highly selected individuals from the United States and the United Kingdom in November 1963 under the auspices of John Hopkins University. And all this is summarized by the editor in a most readable final chapter.

The intense concern of our time in the ethical and professional problems of drug development, testing and usage, are fully reflected, and make this volume most fascinating. The essays are divided into five groups—

- (a) Therapeutics, past and present;
- (b) Drug effectiveness and safety;
- (c) Roles and responsibility of industry and government;
- (d) Economics and advertising;
- (e) Sociological, legal and ethical aspects.

Whilst this conference and discussion was set against the U.S.A. background of drug promotion and drug consumption there are many applicable facets intensely interesting to any responsible doctor, particularly a prescribing or dispensing doctor. The conference consisted in the main of about 50 distinguished members from the U.S.A. in the field of medical historian, legislators, drug manufacturers, legal experts, physicians, pharmacologists, patent experts, economists, sociologists and philosophers. The United Kingdom was represented by Sir John Gaddum, Sir George Pickering and Richard Titmuss. Their chapters alone are a delight and stimulation to read.

Many basic facts and truths are discussed and looked at in this volume and fresh concepts and requirements for therapeutic research and testing of safety of drugs and their relation to efficacy are fully outlined. The abysmal difficulties in these problems makes one almost despair of there ever being an adequate unravelling of the interdependencies of socio-economic and multifactorial biological problems. Yet, in the superbly clear writing of these selected few, each subject stands out in its simplicity