

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

as only the true expert in his own field can achieve.

The College of General Practitioner's tentative beginning of an adverse reaction notification scheme achieves pride of place in this book, along with the subsequent development of the Committee on Safety of Drugs (Dunlop Committee). However, it seems that in the U.S.A. where there is a vigorous attack on a problem once recognized, and with infinitely greater resources, computers and Adverse Reaction Registers are being pressed into service with a truly 20th century efficiency and speed, and will overtake our British counterpart in a very short time.

No medical practitioner opening this book will find himself bored, but will read on fascinated through the many challenging questions to which we, in our responsible positions have to attempt to contribute, and thus help to solve.

**Review of Medical Microbiology.** Sixth edition. ERNEST JAWETZ, PH.D., M.D., JOSEPH L. MELNICK, PH.D., and EDWARD A. ADELBERG, PH.D. Los Altos, California. Lange Medical Publications; and Oxford. Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1964. Pp. ix + 456. Price 45s.

To those family doctors who are unfamiliar with previous editions this book will come as a shock and a pleasure. Shock, to realize the immensity of factual knowledge about 'microbes', compared with what was known to Shaw's doctors in their dilemma; pleasure at the clear arrangement and lucid interpretation of so much detail in a style so easy to read.

New to this edition is a chapter on Microbial Genetics, while that on Diagnostic Medical Microbiology has been completely re-written. Five pages of index set out clearly the subject matter of 40 chapters and their subheadings. Just over one page of references contain an unexpectedly brief list of books and journals—not all American—that would repay further attention. Few family doctors will need to own this book, but all would find parts of it stimulating, relevant and instructive.

**The Story of the Progress of Medicine.** C. F. V. SMOUT, M.D. Bristol. John Wright & Sons Ltd. 1964. Pp. viii + 156. Price 30s.

To write a popular history of medicine in the confines of 150 pages is well nigh impossible. Dr Smout is to be congratulated on a very valiant attempt. He has brought under review all the important events and given them their relative prominence in the story—for as he says in his preface he has intended the book to be a complete story. There is little here to cavil at but he is surely incorrect in referring to the act of Elizabeth I as the Public Health Act. The Poor Laws of Elizabeth had no reference to public health and, ignoring the sick, were only concerned with the 'sturdy' beggars. Dr Smout has been well served by his publishers; the book is beautifully produced, and the illustrations, which are well chosen and often unusual, are well produced.