

REVIEWS

THE EPIC OF MEDICINE *Edited by Felix Marti-Ibanez*

Clarkson N. Potter, New York (\$15/- U.S.)

The study of history may be undertaken normally in one of two ways. One can approach history with an eye on accuracy with his attention rivetted to chronological events, personalities, documents, and man-made or natural catastrophes. This is essentially a task for seriously-minded historians whose fascination for the subject makes such chores appear as pleasant pursuits. On the other hand, the average person, whose interest in history is not one of systematised scholarship but a desire to understand the linkage between the past and the present, will find this approach wearisome with dates, and undigestible facts. Fortunately, for such people who form the majority, the history of man can also be appreciated as a series of outstanding episodes which punctuated the different eras of human endeavour. A panoramic view of human events can thereby produce both pleasure to the senses, and yet offer sufficient food for thought. A flower can be dissected by a botanist into genus, species, petal, stamen and pollens,

but for the ordinary man keen enough to want to know more, but not dedicated enough to see delight in every vein of a leaf, a discrimination of the colour and the scent may give him both delight and knowledge.

Professor Marti-Ibanez writes with his eye on both medical and non-medical readers, and in narrating history as a series of romantic events, has succeeded in producing "a history without tears". The physician is seen here amidst his surroundings and his activities and living woven into the fabric of his society. The illustrations add charm to a book out to please and attract, and the epics unfolded in concise and lucid style. Perhaps the reader may regret that many great names are cursorily dismissed — the great Osler meriting only a short paragraph, and that the evolution of the philosophy of medical men scarcely touched upon, but sufficient is embodied in the book to provide pleasure for many hours.

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Title: IPPF — MEDICAL HANDBOOK PART I — CONCEPTION CONTROL

IPPF England Price 6 shillings

This publication is the first part of a medical handbook which is put forth by the IPPF (International Planned Parenthood Federation). It has been compiled and edited by the Medical Committee of the IPPF and an inference may be drawn that the majority of the members of the Medical Committee are those in the profession interested in matters of Family Planning.

On a broad basis, the handbook is designed essentially for use by member organisations of the IPPF listed throughout most countries of the world. The IPPF is in fact a young organisation, but it has come to be a very active and important one, especially for, and in countries with population problems.

The bulk of the chapters is devoted to IPPF standards for Family Planning Clinics with appropriate advice for both doctors, nurses and social workers on how best to run such clinics. An important chapter on the standards for

Field Trials has been listed so that the study of the Use-Effectiveness of contraception methods cannot be taken too lightly when assessing results. There is a freshening academic chapter on the more recent and accepted methods of conception control; and a reproduction of a talk by P.F.M. Bishop, D.M., F.R.C.P. — a reputed British endocrinologist — on oral contraceptives has also been suitably appended. The handbook however, lacks illustrations and this appears to be a deficiency. The bibliography is most up to date and quite complete. It should provide a useful source of references for those whose interests veer on problems of world population. Priced at only one dollar Straits, the handbook is a must for those involved actively in family planning problems, but it will also be very useful for those who deal only occasionally with such problems. Part 2 of the handbook in the course of publication should similarly receive an enthusiastic welcome.

T. H. Lean