

REVIEWS

GRADWOHL'S LEGAL MEDICINE. 2nd Edition.

Edited by Francis E. Camps. John Wright & Sons. Bristol 1968. 768pp. 340 illustrations Price 175s.

The first edition published in 1954 was done by a panel of experts with the objectives of providing comprehensiveness and authority. Whilst this to some extent sacrifices the uniformity and balance of books under a single authorship, the division of labour by experts ensures that the field is not constrained by personal limitations and oversight. The present edition has maintained this approach, and included some new materials. The chapter on the history of medico-legal medicine is brief and to the point, and should provide a welcomed introduction to students of medico jurisprudence. Current issues such as the relationship between law and medicine, the problems of life and death, the difficulties of medical and legal semantics especially in court, and the vexed question of the impact of a changing society on medical ethics, are brought to view succinctly and forcefully.

Inclusion of latest techniques like chromatography and new problems like pesticides and aviation accidents, usually neglected in present textbooks, make it a valuable source in an as yet uncharted field, and the chapters on the polygraph and sexual asphyxias made interesting reading to medical jurists outside America and Europe. An introduction on credibility and probability is not out of place as frequently medical evidence in court has been subjected to merciless cross examinations and scrutiny, and awareness of the basis of credibility should

lend weight to, rather than decrease the value of the doctors' evidence.

It is a pity, however, that under early changes of death, cessation of the circulation as detected by Magnus's test and fluorescein injection should still find their places, and the prints of the various certificates reproduced are so small as to require magnification to be readable. The chapters on industrial accidents and hazards, and radioactive substance and irradiation are disconcertingly brief when compared with other chapters, in spite of the importance of the subject matter. The definition of consciousness as "the totality of psychic events which is experienced by a person at a given time" sounds hackneyed and inexact. The assertion that "the oft-taught dictum that the stomach should not be washed out in corrosive poisoning is not correct," is equally unfortunate particularly when it has not been backed up by evidence.

However, these are minor faults considering a work of this size, and the private bias of the reviewer makes him pleased to note that Singapore finds mention by virtue of the "dragon in the nose". It is an expensive book, but its value as an authoritative source of reference should make it a must in the shelf of doctors and lawyers interested in the practice of legal medicine.

Gwee Ah Leng

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INTESTINAL ABSORPTION

Edited by D. H. Smyth, (1967) British Medical Bulletin, 23, 205-292.

This excellent symposium on intestinal absorption is most timely, as there have been exciting advances in this field in the last few years. The recognition that disaccharides are hydrolysed by their specific enzymes, lactase, maltase, sucrase etc., which are localised in the microvilli of the brush-border of the intestinal epithelial cell, and the increasing knowledge of the ultrastructural set-up of the intestinal epithelial cell, are indeed important advances in intestinal absorption. This is dealt with in the chapter on carbohydrate absorption by H. Newey, who

also discusses the transport processes involved.

Prof. Pearse and Dr. Riecken describe in full the histology (including ultrastructure) and cytochemistry of the intestinal epithelial cell, in relation to absorption; while Dr. Margot Shiner discusses the ultrastructural changes in the intestinal epithelial cell in cases of untreated idiopathic steatorrhoea as compared to the normal.

The columnar epithelial cells of the intestinal villi are not static but are actively turned over.

Cells from the crypt zone become more mature as they ascend towards the villus tip, where they are finally shed off into the gut lumen. The mechanics and the significance of this phenomenon are very well discussed by Dr. Brian Creamer who himself has introduced recently the idea of paneth-cell deficiency in adult coeliac disease.

For those who are interested in techniques and methodology in the study of intestinal absorption, there are two chapters by Dr. Levin and Prof. Duthie. Membrane transport in relation to absorption is more than adequately dealt with by Prof. Smyth and Prof. Whittam.

Fat absorption is well reviewed by Dr. A. M. Dawson who deals mainly with the various steps in fat absorption. Other chapters are on absorption of proteins, salt and water, water-soluble vitamins and iron. For the basic researcher, there are chapters on electrical changes in relation to transport, and inhibitors of intestinal

absorption. There is a most interesting chapter on compensatory changes in intestinal absorption by Dr. H. Dowling who discusses evidence to support the view that the small bowel can compensate by increasing its absorptive capacity in the face of various stresses. Hereditary abnormalities of intestinal absorption are reviewed by Prof. M. D. Milne who starts by describing the rare families with monosaccharide malabsorption and ends with hereditary intestinal B₁₂ malabsorption. The last chapter deals with the relationship of the intestinal bacterial flora to absorption. Evidence discussed indicates that the steatorrhoea in blind loop syndrome is due to abnormal bacterial flora breaking down conjugated bile salts into unconjugated bile salts resulting in decreased micellar formation.

On the whole this is a really excellent review of intestinal absorption; well worth reading by both physiologist and clinician.

Fung Wye Poh

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CIBA FOUNDATION STUDY GROUP NO. 25: MONGOLISM.

Edited by G. & W. Wolstenholme, O.B.E. In commemoration of Dr. John Langdon Hayden Down

This comprehensive little book is a book of papers on Mongolism read on 10.5.66 by a group of experts on this subject. Lord Brian, Chairman of the Group, gives a very good history of John Langdon Hayden Down who in 1828 first described Mongolism. The chapter by Matsunaga deals with 834 cases of Down's syndrome in institutions for mentally defective patients in Japan which is one of the few Asian countries with figures on the subject. Forssman and Akesson from Sweden show that 0.8% of 1344 subjects with Down's syndrome were born of first cousins or closer blood relatives. Penrose has a chapter in which he has made an analysis of inter-correlations of dermatoglyphic patterns

on fingers, palms and soles on the assumption that this might be due to similar syndromes caused by trisomy of chromosomes in 21 and 22 but the evidence was insufficient to confirm or reject the hypothesis. The rest of the book deals with DNA synthesis in cells grown in tissue culture from patients with Mongolism, and with DNA replication patterns of chromosome numbers 21 to 22 in female mosaic mongols. Despite being a little book, it takes time to absorb the subject and the statistical analysis, and is therefore recommended for those interested in the subject of Mongolism.

Freda M. Paul

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STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF THE LIMBIC SYSTEM.

Progress in Brain Research Vol. 27. Ed. W. R. Adey and T. Tokizane.

Elsevier Publishing Company, New York 1967. Pp. 490. Price 146 shillings.

This is not a comprehensive monograph of the Limbic system, as its name might have implied, but rather a collection of papers read at the Brain Research Institute, University of Tokyo during a symposium held at Hakone, Japan 1965. The symposium was under the auspices of the Brain Research Organisation of

UNESCO, and the bulk of papers dealt with the correlates of limbic electrical and metabolic function with behavioral processes in animals ranging from the rat to the squirrel monkey. For anyone who has already some stake or interest in neurology, this would provide a challenging collection of data, conclusions and hypotheses

The Limbic System has been a common meeting ground in recent years of psychologists, psychiatrists, and neurologists, for it is there that behaviour, memory, learning, appetite, emotions, and conditioning found ample expression, as the accumulation of data from researchers in the field increased. In this volume, recent work on hippocampus and behaviour is particularly of interest, as there seems to appear the indication of some ultimate unity of concept regarding hippocampal function. For that alone, it would deserve a place on the shelf of doctors interested in the Limbic system.

It is a pity however, that the errors of printing are many, although not serious, except on page

359 line 32, where a whole line seems to have been left out. The insets showing histological sections are also usually not clear, but this perhaps is more the fault of the original photograph than that of printing technique. The inclusion of contributions from Russia and France provides interesting comparison of research outlook and technological approach, especially the former, represented by two workers from the Pavlov Institute of Physiology, and showed a radical difference in conference communication technique from that of Japan and U.S.A. All in all, it is a highly enjoyable book, well worth the price.

G. A. L.

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PAIN: Psychological and Psychiatric Aspects by H. Merskey and F. G. Spear. Pp. 232

Published by Bailliere Tindall and Cassell Ltd. Price 40 shillings.

Pain is a universal experience and very few must be the individuals who have not had their quotas of headaches, aches and pains. Pain is therefore of immense medical interest. Many contributions on the subject have been made by physiologists, anaesthesiologists and clinicians, but surprisingly psychiatrists have so far not figured prominently in this field although the symptom of pain must surely be an extremely common complaint in psychiatric patients. Even textbooks on psychiatry betray this lack of emphasis by the almost negligible mention or discussion of pain as a symptom in psychiatric illnesses.

This present book by two psychiatrists comes as a welcome addition to the literature on the subject. It will at least help to correct the generally held delusion that pain is always due to physical causes. The book deals fairly comprehensively with the psychological and psychiatric aspects of pain. In addition to reviewing significant papers from both psychological and psychiatric journals, the authors have also gathered data from other medical sources.

This book provides stimulating reading. Discussions of certain controversial aspects are particularly thought provoking. The meaningful definition of pain, for example, demonstrates how complex and intriguing the subject of pain can be and why a satisfactory definition has not

been arrived at. Another interesting chapter deals with the phenomenon of psychogenic pain—a concept still grudgingly accepted by physicians in which no organic lesion or physiological abnormality is detectable. Psychological factors are clearly of importance here and these are discussed in details. Other absorbing topics dealt with at some lengths include masorchism, chronic pain and its treatment, pain asymbolia, phantom limb pain and theories of pain.

After reading this book, many readers will, if they have not previously done so, pay increasing importance to the emotional factors when dealing with the subject of pain. However, it is difficult to accept the authors' view that the word 'pain' is best used to refer to a psychological state. Usage in this way may help to stress the importance of emotional factors but this is hardly justifiable or applicable in certain clinical conditions when pain is merely 'sensed' rather than 'experienced'.

This is one book all psychiatrists will not want to miss reading. General medical readers will, no doubt, benefit from a subject presented from a different point of view although certain sections, couched in psychoanalytical terminology, may not provide intelligible reading to those not familiar with psychoanalytic theory.

S. H. Teo

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SYSTEMIC MYCOSIS: A Ciba foundation symposium edited by G. E. W. Wolstenholme and Ruth Porter, published by J. A. Churchill Ltd. 1968. Pp. 287. Price not stated.

Histoplasmosis, coccidioidomycosis, cryptococcosis, blastomycosis, nocardiosis, phycomycosis etc . . . are, until very recently, exotic diseases endemic in certain geographical localities of the world (where they are not that exotic). Due to speedier, easier and cheaper travel, these diseases are no longer confined to their original localities. The doctor today may be confronted with one of these diseases which he would not dream of in by-gone years.

This book is the transaction of a symposium, with contributions by expert clinicians, pathologists, immunologists, mycologists, radiologists, epidemiologists and therapeuticians of

international fame from various countries. It contains a host of very useful and up to date scientific information on systemic fungal infections. Of special interest is the recent application of immunological techniques in the diagnosis of the deep mycosis.

The book is very easy reading. Illustrations are excellent. Each chapter ends with a wealth of references of earlier work on the subject. It will interest as wide a range of readers as the contributing authors. If there is a small but good reference book on systemic mycosis this book can be recommended for it.

Y. O. Leong
