

REVIEWS

SYMPOSIUM: HAZARDS OF THERAPY

Ed. R.F. Robertson. Royal College of Physicians

Edin. 1969. Pp. 150. Price: 25 Shillings.

The last few decades have been eras of intravenous fluid and blood therapy, use of potent antibiotics and cytotoxics, and the employment of physico-chemical methods of investigation and research. This portency of therapy brings with it significant iatrogenic disorders, and therapeutic hazard has become a topic of increasing importance.

In this volume is collected 10 lectures by well-known workers on subjects ranging from

misuse and dangers of drugs, oxygen, and blood transfusion to hazards of antibiotic resistance, mistaken laboratory results and psychotherapy. In this form, it must be evident that comprehensiveness has to be sacrificed, but a concise, readable and extremely practical account is ample compensation. Clinicians particularly will find this handy volume valuable to ensure that their cure will not be worse than the disease.

Gwee Ah Leng

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PYE'S SURGICAL HANDICRAFT

Edited by James Kyle (1969), Nineteenth Edition, John Wright, Bristol.

Pp. 820. Price not stated.

Walter Pye produced three editions of *Surgical Handicraft* before he died in 1892. Successive editions have recorded medical progress and the latest edition must be a far cry from the first book in 1884.

The present edition contains contributions from 30 surgeons, 9 other doctors, and three laymen (a nurse, lawyer, and coroner)—of whom 3 are dead (the lawyer and two surgeons)—most of whom are from the United Kingdom, with others from the United States, Australia, Canada, India, and Hongkong. The Editor has succeeded in exacting from this diverse group a set of recommendations that should ensure a high standard of patient care before and after operations.

It is too long to read from cover to cover, but a well-stocked index combined with intelligent use of headings in the text enables topics to be looked up quickly. The arrangement also makes it worth while to dip into the book now and then. The short but well written section on

care of the dying deserves careful reading. For the medical problems attending organ transplantation we must await a future edition.

There are mistakes, of course. "The toxic effects (of sea snakes off the shores of India, Burma, and the Malayan Peninsula) are not often severe" makes strange reading. But on the whole the book contains sensible and reasonable advice.

It is equally important that such advice be used with intelligence. "There is no one routine that will always suit every patient," writes Mr. Lockhart-Mummery in his excellent chapter. He was writing of his patient's bowel habits, but his remarks apply equally well to the routine of surgeons. The point to grasp is that Pye's *Surgical Handicraft* is no substitute for analysing the patient's particular problem on the spot and tailoring treatment to suit the patient's condition.

Mah Guan Kong

A SHORT TEXTBOOK OF MEDICAL MICROBIOLOGY

By D.C. Turk and I.A. Porter

2nd Edition. Published by The English Universities Press Ltd.

London. 1969. Pp. 335. Price: 28 Shillings.

It has been only four years since these authors brought out the first edition, and already medical advances have rendered it necessary to have the book revised. According to them, the chapters on immunology and virology have been "largely rewritten". The information is reasonably up to date, and includes such current topics as cell mediated immunity, tolerance, phagocytosis, cytomegalic inclusion disease, Burkitt's lymphoma and glandular fever, and transferable antibiotic resistances.

The book is clearly written, concise and comprehensive; and the arrangement of the contents is better than most other textbooks on microbiology. There are sections on the anatomy and physiology of micro-organisms,

pathogenesis of microbial diseases, systematic microbiology, clinical microbiology, and preventive aspects of microbiological infections. There is no attempt to go into technical details, and the reading therefore is easy. The appendix contains a useful glossary of technical terms, and the meanings of some abbreviations.

As the book is written primarily for the medical students, the text can benefit from a few more illustrations. The busy clinicians with an interest in infectious diseases will find informative chapters on diagnostic serology, hospital infections, immunization and anti-microbial agents.

The book is reasonably priced, and can be recommended.

E.H. Sng

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LECTURE NOTES ON PATHOLOGY

By A.D. Thomson and R.E. Cotton

2nd Edition. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford and Edinburgh. 1968.

Pp. 1,138. Price: 63 Shillings.

This book, first published in 1962, is based on lectures in Pathology given to students at the Middlesex Hospital Medical School, London. It presents Pathology, both general and systemic, in a comprehensive and yet concise form. The material has been brought up to date in this second edition. The scope covered is very wide, including new chapters on medical genetics, exfoliative cytology, clinical immunology and acid-base-electrolyte balance.

From the students' angle, the format is probably the most attractive aspect of the book. There is very liberal use of headings and sub-headings. Each chapter begins with a tabulated list of its contents. The subject matter is then clearly laid out in a concise classified form.

However, there are, of necessity in a work of this nature, certain disadvantages. The coverage on pathogenesis of disease is too concise; relatively little emphasis is placed on how diseases evolve and the changing dynamics of disease processes. Facts are stated with little discussion and explanation. Illustrations are scarce, and there is little stress on clinico-pathological correlation. On these accounts, the book is best used as a companion to one of the standard texts in Pathology. When used as such, it is excellent in providing a rapid view of the main pathological features of disease, and therefore also is a very useful aid for quick revision for examinations.

E.P.C. Tock

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NEW EXCHANGE

1. Annals of Clinical Research 1969 (Combined publication of Annales medicinae internae fenniae and Annales paediatricae fenniae.
 2. Folia Facultatis Medicae Universitatis Comenianae Tomus V. Fasc. 1/1967.
 3. Union of Burma Journal of Life Science Vol. 1. No. 2.
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