

## BOOK REVIEWS

Review of the book: THE KIDNEYS AND THE INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

R. J. Harvey

Chapman and Hall, 1974

For a simple, concise book on the basics of renal physiology, this is a useful book to have. Much of the difficulty in the understanding of renal physiology lies in mastering the basic chemical and physical principles involved. This 155 page book begins by explaining the main concepts required for the understanding of the other sections. The author deals with the meaning of aqueous solutions, dissociation, pH, acids, bases, buffers and explains some of the properties of membranes. The mathematical approach he uses may be a little difficult on first reading, but as the author explains rightly in his preface, these basic principles have to be understood before the other sections of the book can be read to their best advantage. The second section of the book deals with the physiology of the kidney. It briefly goes through the function of each part of the

nephron. It also explains the concept of renal clearance and its use as a measure of renal function. The third section of the book concerns itself with acid-base equilibrium. Not only does it explain the role played by the kidneys, it explains the part played by the lungs. There is also mention of abnormal conditions leading to problems in acid-base control. The last section of the book effectively deals with the homeostatic mechanisms involved in the maintenance of a normal salt and water balance.

This is not a book for serious students of renal physiology, or those involved in research on aspects of renal mechanisms. It is a suitable book for medical undergraduates and postgraduates who are not particularly interested in renal physiology per se but who want a simple and short account of what is often a confusing topic.

Dr. Chang Li Lian

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## OPHTHALMOLOGY

by Kenneth Wybar

This is a popular work and one of a series published by Concise Medical Textbooks. It is well written and the Author has made it easy to read and to understand, despite the relative paucity of figures, illustrations and photo reproductions, which is not unexpected in such a volume so inexpensively priced.

This is the second edition, the first being published in 1966 and the Author has kept with the original general pattern and purpose of the

book, namely, a volume designed for the medical student and the general practitioner.

It is a well balanced book with a stress towards the relationship of systemic diseases and the eye. There is one minor criticism, and this is with regard to the rather lengthy and extensive manner the Author has dealt with the subject of Squints, somewhat disproportionately it would seem except to those who, like me, may have a special liking for this subject so well written by an Author who is a recognised expert in this field.

Mr. R. C. K. Loh

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## ERRATUM

The omission of Mr. Robert C. K. Loh's name as the reviewer of "Practical Ophthalmologist" by Arthur Lim and Khoo Chong Yew in

the September 1974 issue is regretted. We extend our apologies.

## BOOK REVIEW

### TROPICAL NEUROLOGY

Edited by J. D. Spillane, 1973 pp. 448 Oxford University Press. Price £8.00

Readers will be grateful to Dr. Spillane for bringing together the clinical experiences of his many friends in various tropical countries.

Of particular interest is the Introduction by the Editor in which he outlines the ways in which clinical experience in the tropics has contributed to general medical knowledge and states clearly what he believes should be the aims of the neurologist in the tropics. "First, we need to learn the incidence of all those well-known diseases of the nervous system described in the classical literature. Secondly we need to learn their natural history. Are there differences in their modes of onset and course? What are the possible effects of climate, diet, infection, customs and genetic factors? Thirdly, any new or apparently new neurological syndrome or disease should be documented in the classical manner of their nosographers using the method of clinico-pathological correlation."

The thirty-two contributions which follow may be viewed upon as attempts to achieve these aims.

They are grouped into six geographical sections—India, Africa, South-East Asia, Oceania (Guam and New Guinea), Latin America and West Indies. There is some unfortunate tendency to present impressions derived from patients encountered in a hospital or unit rather than carefully collected or pooled clinical data. Readers may also feel disappointed in that some authors dwell too much on well-known manifestations of world-wide diseases as seen in the tropics and too little or none at all on tropical diseases and their manifestations. Nevertheless the book contains sufficient similarities and differences (even within the tropics) in neurological diseases and their manifestations which should not fail to fascinate.

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