

ANOTHER SKIN TEXT-BOOK!

Bailliere, Tindall and Cox Limited have just started to publish the first four of the series of concise medical text books of which the volume entitled "Dermatology" (by R. B. M. MacKenna and E. L. Cohen) is claimed to provide a survey of the subject for the students and a handy guide to the newly qualified practitioner. With the rising tide of medical publications tending to overwhelm both students and shelves one is compelled to ask if such a book is needed. Knowing regretfully the standard of dermatological teaching throughout the world the answer must be yes, but it must be said, even more regretfully, that this is not the book. It is claimed by the publishers that tropical dermatology is dealt with "fairly thoroughly and the book will be useful in many countries" but the inadequate treatment of the subject defeats this aim.

In the section on Hansen's disease there is no mention of borderline leprosy nor any account of the spectrum of clinical disease being dependant on the host-parasite relationship, while the severe and difficult problem of erythema nodosum leprosum is not mentioned at all. It is unfortunate to advocate Gram's stain with a counterstain of methylene blue for the demonstration of *M. leprae* and not all leprologists would agree that ditophal (Etisul) is "very efficient." The section on Leishmaniasis does not refer to the lupoid

variety which is now most common in Iran and other parts of the Middle East, while the 10 lines devoted to granuloma inguinale and lymphogranuloma inguinale will not help doctors in India.

Turning to straightforward dermatology most dermatologists would not agree that the so-called pyogenic granuloma should be included in a chapter devoted to Superficial Bacterial Diseases and it is hardly necessary to have a section on Besnier's Prurigo which is more than 80 pages away from Atopic Eczema. Another unwarranted divorce is the separation of malignant melanoma from cellular naevi by articles on Rodent Ulcer and Epitheliomata (the authors apparently do not subscribe to the view that Rodent Ulcer is an epithelioma). It is also doubted whether general physicians would fully accept the classification of treatment of purpura as proposed.

The total lack of photographs is explained by the desire to keep down the price but it is felt that a slightly more concise volume with some photographs would better have served the purpose for which the book was planned. The reviewer believes that this volume will not replace Borrie's recent edition of Roxburgh's Common Skin Diseases as the best simple summary of dermatology.

(Sd.) J. H. S. PETTIT

BOOK REVIEW

"Psychiatry" by E. W. Anderson, Concise Medical Textbooks,
Bailliere Tindall & Cox, London, 1964, pp 296. 16s.

This is the first of a new series of "Concise Medical Textbooks," each on a different subject, which the publishers propose to bring out in place of their "Students Aids Series." Prof. E. W. Anderson, a noted authority in British psychiatry, was the co-author, with Prof. W. S. Dawson, of the predecessor of this volume, the "Aids to Psychiatry."

This book is in fact a modification of and an improvement on its predecessor of the "Aids" series. Although the layout of the book is largely the same, it is brought up-to-date and contains some new and useful chapters.

The descriptions of symptomatology in most chapters have been enlarged and improved upon. The discussions of theories and treatments have been brought up-to-date, notably in the chapters on Schizophrenia, Affective Illnesses and Mental Subnormality.

The chapter on Epilepsy, with minor modifications, is largely the same as in the "Aids." The subject of the schizophrenia — like psychosis of epilepsy which is currently topical in the journals and often important in psychiatric differential diagnosis is omitted completely. The various psychosomatic syndromes are mentioned but not discussed to any extent, making the whole section rather disjointed to the newcomer to psychiatry. Mention of the role of the emotions and the unconscious in the neuroses is cursory, and the psychodynamic theories, admittedly controversial, are barely touched upon. There is however a concise description of the philosophical schools of "Existential Analysis" of L. Biswanger and H. S. Sullivan.

There are new chapters not found in the "Aids." The chapter on "Drug Treatment in Psychiatry" is well written, concise yet comprehensive, and would provide a good guide to the student and the general practitioner who are often bewildered by the array of drugs and names which may be confusing. The discussion on the "Social Aspects of Psychiatry" gives a good survey of the scope of psychiatry in its non-medical aspects.

The chapter on Psychopathology defines and describes quite clearly such terms as "delusions," "hallucinations," "disorders of thinking," "disorders of emotion," etc., concepts which are basic in psychiatry yet often nebulous in the minds of students and practitioners.

Clear descriptions are provided of such subjects as the biochemistry and genetics of oligophrenia, electroplexy, psychopathy, and criminal responsibility. The description of the difference between "neurosis" and "psychosis" will be useful to the student.

On the whole the book is to be recommended to the audience to which it is directed, namely the undergraduates and general practitioners who have not the time to digest the standard tomes on the subject. Whereas the small print of the "Aids" sometimes makes for difficult reading, the format and the larger print of this new volume makes it much more readable.

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BOOK REVIEW

VENEREOLOGY FOR ALL

Every time a doctor reads through a medical journal, he probably glances at several book reviews, but the number of books he buys each year, is much less. The reviewer is occasionally — rarely, might unfortunately be a better word — faced with the problem of persuading his readers that the book under review should be on everyone's bookshelf. Such a book is "Venereal Diseases" by King and Nicol.

The publishers claim that the book aims to "help undergraduates, general practitioners and consultants to appreciate the full scope of the subject and the manner in which it impinges on many other specialities." The authors succeed admirably in all this and the reviewer is sure that all doctors in Malaya should own this book, especially as there are no consultant venereologists in the country and everyone must diagnose and treat cases of venereal disease without being able to refer them to a consultant for opinion. This book should ease the task. It is profusely illustrated with 164 admirable black-and-white pictures and 16 in colour and in addition to a detailed and easily readable 120 pages on syphilis (including chapters on neurosyphilis and congenital syphilis) and 50 pages covering the problem of gonorrhoea, there are well-illustrated chapters on Yaws, chancroid, lymphogranuloma venereum, granuloma inguinale, non-gonococcal urethritis, Reiter's Disease, Trichomonal infections, pinta and bejel, as well as a very useful section headed "Other Lesions of the genitalis."

The reviewer learnt a lot from this book and is certain that any practitioner would derive instruction and pleasure from its possession. It is whole-heartedly recommended.

JOHN H. S. PETTIT.

"VENEREAL DISEASES" by Ambrose KING and Claude NICOL, published by Cassell & Co. Ltd., London, 1964. (50 shillings).

BOOK REVIEW

CLINICAL TOXICOLOGY OF COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS

Acute Poisoning (Home and Farm)

By

Marion N. Gleason M.Sc., Robert E. Gosselin M.D., Ph.D., and

Harold C. Hodge Ph.D., D.Sc.

Published by Bailliere, Tindall and Cox, 7 & 8, Henrietta St., Covent Garden, London W.C.2.
Second Edition 1963.

Chemical poisoning is one of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in the advanced countries. As our country gets more industrialised and as more chemicals are introduced in the home and in the work place, we may have similar experience.

The purpose of this book is to help the physician in the diagnosis and treatment of acute poisoning. This book will be of great value to the private practitioner and the doctors in a hospital who have to treat cases of poisoning. However, to get the maximum benefit from the book, one should become familiar with the book and not leave it on the shelf for use at the time of an emergency. The book is divided into eight sections. Section I deals with First Aid and Emergency treatment. Section II is an alphabetical index of chemicals (which are the main ingredients in the commercial products) giving details about the degree of toxicity and cross references to more information in Sections III and IV. Section III gives toxicological data on 76 classes of compounds. Section IV deals with supportive treatment and problems in treating a case of acute poisoning. Section V is an alphabetical index of over 14,000 commercial products giving their trade names and the various ingredients in each of the products. Section VII gives the addresses of the manufacturers. Section VIII is a classification of poisons based on "Standard Nomenclature of Diseases and Operations" published by the McGraw Hill Book Co., Inc., New York, 1961. The authors should be congratulated for the tremendous amount of work that has gone into the preparation of a book of this nature. The list of references at the end of Section III is a comprehensive list and will be of much value to those who require further information on any particular toxic agent.

The book would be easier to use if the number of sections were reduced. The sections dealing with emergency treatment and supportive treatment could have been combined in one section. Gastric lavage is mentioned in the section on emergency treatment while external cardiac massage and artificial respiration are included in the section on supportive treatment. The section giving the names and addresses of manufacturers will be more useful to those in North America since practically all the manufacturers are either from the U.S.A. or Canada. If this book is aimed at physicians, it is not necessary to mention precautions like "Never use alcohol" for gastric lavage!

One of the difficulties in publishing a book of this type is that it has to be revised constantly and new editions have to be published at short intervals.

My general impression is that this is an excellent book and there will be a demand for books of this nature in Malaysia in the coming years.

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