

Book Reviews : Boekbesprekings

SIR WILLIAM WILLCOX—DETECTIVE PHYSICIAN

The Detective-Physician. The life and work of Sir William Willcox, K.C.I.E., C.B., C.M.G., M.D., F.R.C.P. By P. H. A. Willcox, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P. Pp. xiv + 332. Illustrated. £3.50. London: William Heinemann Medical Books. 1970.

This is a description of the professional life of one of the great doctors prominent on the British medical stage in the first 4 decades of this century. It has been written by his son, himself a physician, who was fortunate enough to inherit an ample supply of his father's records which have been used in this contribution to the medical history of Britain.

Willcox started his professional life as a chemist but fairly soon embarked upon a medical career, attaining eminence in, among others, the field of forensic medicine and in toxicology in particular. He featured prominently in several of the best-known murder trials of the early part of this century, e.g. Crippen, Seddon, Greenwood, Smith (Brides in the Baths) and many other poison cases. He played a leading role in the campaign against the indiscriminate use of the barbiturates by the general public. During World War I he performed outstanding medical service as consulting physician to the British Army.

This is an account of a truly versatile and outstanding physician which should appeal particularly to those interested in the medico-legal history of Britain.

E.M.S.

HIRSCHSPRUNG'S DISEASE

Hirschsprung's Disease. By T. Ehrenpreis, M.D., F.A.A.P. Pp. 179. Illustrated. \$13.50. Chicago: Year Book Medical Publishers. 1970.

This book collates all the available information in the literature on this important disease. Dr Ehrenpreis's signal contributions to the recognition of this disease in the neonate, the physiological understanding of the underlying defect and the superb results of his own large experience make him one of the most distinguished authorities on this subject and have contributed to the high scientific quality and clinical soundness of this volume. Of particular importance and interest is the chapter on 'basic facts' where the current concepts of pathology, pathophysiology and aetiology of Hirschsprung's disease are discussed.

This is an excellent book, well written and is highly recommended to all paediatricians and paediatric surgeons.

S.C.

STEROID BIOCHEMISTRY

Advances in Steroid Biochemistry and Pharmacology. Vol. 2. Ed. by M. H. Briggs. Pp. ix + 479. £7.00. London and New York: Academic Press. 1970.

Laboratory Guide to Disordered Haemostasis. By T. A. detail, with many references, figures and tables, on the following subjects: steroid hormones and sebaceous secretion; the role of sex steroids, hypothalamic LH-releasing hormone and FSH-releasing hormone in the regulation of gonadotrophin secretion from the anterior pituitary gland; steroid metabolism in the foeto-placental unit; metabolic effects of steroid contraceptives; steroid biosynthetic pathways in the human adrenal; indices of androgen production in women; interaction of sex hormones with target tissues and steroids in nidation. There is much of value here for those interested in the chemistry, metabolism and actions of steroid hormones.

N.S.

HAEMOSTASIS

Laboratory Guide to Disordered Haemostasis. By T. A. Harper, M.B., B.S. (Madras), M.R.C. Path. Pp. ix + 200. R4.20. London and Durban: Butterworth. 1970.

Although intended as a laboratory manual for workers in the field of coagulation, Dr Harper's book could equally well serve

as a primer for medical students and trainee haematologists, because many of the investigations described have immediate clinical application. The author provides an explicit and up-to-date account of the mechanisms of coagulation and fibrinolysis, thereafter setting out an approach to the diagnosis of disordered haemostasis. This work is recommended as a useful *vade mecum* for the coagulationist.

M.S.

CLINICAL PATHOLOGY

Progress in Clinical Pathology. Vol. III. A review of significant advances in the field of clinical pathology. Ed. by M. Stefanini, M.D. Pp. ix + 426. Illustrated. \$19.75. New York and London: Grune & Stratton. 1970.

The third volume of *Progress in Clinical Pathology*, a review of significant advances in this field, succeeds in its purpose with the same high standard set in the preceding volume.

A bulky section on quality control in the clinical laboratory gives an excellent insight into this often neglected aspect of laboratory practice. Good chapters are devoted to the exocrine function of the pancreas, evaluation of thyroid function, antibodies of the auto-immune type and chromatography. A most interesting section deals with aspects of tumour embolization in man from the technical point of view regarding the detection of malignant cells in the blood stream and its place in the clinical diagnosis of malignancy. With the customary extensive bibliography covering every chapter, this book should be of great value and interest to workers in diverse fields.

D.M. d. V.

NAPOLEON'S SURGEON

Napoleon's Surgeon. By J. H. Dible. Pp. xv + 346. Illustrated. £6.00. London: William Heinemann Medical Books. 1970.

The writer of this volume is an eminent pathologist who through the chance acquisition of 4 volumes of Larrey's *Mémoires de Chirurgie Militaire* became intensely interested in this outstanding French surgeon of Napoleon's armies.

Dr Larrey's memoirs are charged with his very wide surgical experiences as well as his extensive first-hand accounts of Napoleon's historic campaigns. Of these records Dible says: 'Indeed so much of his writing is history that one is torn between the drama of the period in which he was sometimes an actor, sometimes a spectator, but always a participant, and what is more strictly of surgical interest . . . The campaigns in which Larrey found himself immersed were the backcloth before which the surgical drama is revealed, and it is against this he would wish to be judged by his contributions to his Art.'

Larrey was probably one of the greatest military surgeons of his day and it is well to remember that he carried out his surgical feats before the anaesthetic and antiseptic era. He revolutionized the treatment of battlefield casualties by the introduction of a light, mobile ambulance wagon which could keep up with the troops and enable the surgeons to attend to the wounded in the fighting area. Larrey was the first to describe the therapeutic effect of maggots on wounds and discovered the important principle of immobilization in treatment of wounds. He devised several operations and left detailed accounts of amputation through the shoulder and hip joints, the surgery of blood-vessels and wounds of the skull and bladder. Larrey was familiar with trachoma and discussed the treatment of cholera and typhus, the surgeon having been himself the victim of the latter fever during the Grand Army's retreat from Moscow. In more peaceful times (1826) the great doctor paid a visit to the British Isles where he received what he himself described as an 'honourable and generous welcome'.

This book makes enlightening reading, is well illustrated and should afford enjoyment to all doctors who find entertainment in medical history and its many enthralling ramifications.

E.M.S.