

RADIOTHERAPY

A Short Text-book of Radiotherapy for Technicians and Students. 2nd edition. By J. Walter, M.A., B.M. (Oxf), M.R.C.P. (Lond.), F.F.R., D.M.R.E. (Camb.) and H. Miller, M.A., Ph.D. (Camb.), F.Inst.P. Pp. xi + 527. 303 illustrations. 56s. net. London: J. & A. Churchill Ltd. 1959.

Since its first appearance in 1950 this work of collaboration between a radiotherapist and a physicist has deservedly gained the reputation of being the standard elementary text-book of radiotherapy.

The second edition, recently published, has been extensively revised to take account of new concepts in radiobiology, dosimetry, and modern developments in technology, including super-voltage apparatus. There are new sections devoted to hormone therapy, chemotherapy, radio-active isotopes and radiation hazards.

The growing importance of irradiation as an ancillary therapeutic measure in medicine and surgery, the wider use of radio-active isotopes, public concern with the increasing danger of over-exposure to internal or external sources, have resulted in a demand for a better understanding of the fundamental biological effects of radiation by workers in all fields of medicine. Moreover, such knowledge would tend to foster a freer interchange of ideas between radiotherapists and their medical and surgical colleagues, thereby promoting the ideal cooperative approach towards the treatment of cancer patients. Drs. Walter and Miller are to be congratulated on adequately fulfilling this need.

The present volume admirably serves the vital function of providing a clear and succinct presentation of radiation physics, radiobiology and radiation therapy. The text which is basic and practical, is devoid of complexities and bewildering mathematical formulae, and should be readily understood by the non-specialist in radiotherapy. The reviewer warmly recommends the publication to student radiographers, hospital physicists, tutors, hospital administrators, consultants, and registrars. D.D.

TEXT-BOOK ON DIABETES

The Clinical Syndrome of Diabetes Mellitus. By John Lister, M.A., M.D., M.R.C.P. (Lond.). Pp. x + 234. 34 illustrations. 35s. net. London: H. K. Lewis & Co. Ltd. 1959.

I think the author is right in saying that a small general text-book on diabetes should fill a definite want. Dr. Lister (who is also the London correspondent to the *New England Journal of Medicine*) has certainly succeeded in providing a pleasant, simple, clear and common-sense book for medical students and general practitioners. Lists of references are quite considerable, and seem well chosen. These may be of assistance also to the more specialized physician. The historical introduction is nicely written.

In a few matters Dr. Lister is not entirely correct, or seems a little behind the times. Thus chronic pancreatitis (p. 29) is not at all uncommon in this country and characteristically produces severe (not mild) diabetes. A weight-reducing diet of 1,000 calories (p. 61) is now generally believed to be inadequate restriction for really obese people. There is no evidence that growth hormone in the human is implicated in any way in diabetes (except in acromegaly), or in prediabetic phenomena. The dietary considerations refer to carbohydrate only—it may well be that a restriction of fat intake is of greater importance. This at least merits a discussion. Finally, although the importance of urinary infection is rightly stressed, the great danger of catheterization in the diabetic is not; many of us today avoid this as completely as possible.

Nevertheless this book can be heartily recommended and I intend to recommend it to my students. W.P.U.J.

TUBERCULOSIS NUMBER OF THE WHO BULLETIN
Bulletin of the World Health Organization. Vol. 21, No. 1. Pp. 144. Illustrations. 10s. Geneva: World Health Organization. 1959.

This issue of the Bulletin presents papers on two interesting and widely divergent aspects of the control of tuberculosis.

The first paper is an outline of the result of the first 4-year

follow-up of the 1950-52 mass campaign in Denmark, where intensive work on a nation-wide scale has been going on for years. Arising from this survey the authors suggest the delaying of BCG vaccination of infants and children until the last year of school and the application of the tuberculin test each year to all children. They make the further point that persons of any age with suspicious X-ray lesions, and young people with large tuberculin reactions, should be followed-up systematically—the use of a chemoprophylactic agent may, in this group, further the eradication of tuberculosis.

As a complete contrast to the first, the second paper deals with a pilot scheme among the poorer classes in Madras to compare the advantages of sanatorium and home treatment. The authors found that after 12 months the end results showed only small advantages in the sanatorium group in spite of the fact that the patients on home treatment had unfavourable clinical features at the start of treatment. The small number in the home group (96) made for good control, but the point is brought out that it is difficult to maintain efficient control without adequate supervisory staff, cooperation on the part of patients, and monetary help.

J.B.P.

PHARMACOLOGY OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

The Effect of Pharmacologic Agents on the Nervous System. Proceedings of the Association for Research in Nervous and Mental Diseases. Vol. XXXVII. Edited by F. J. Braceland, M.D. Pp. xi + 488. 124 illustrations. 34 tables. 108s. net. London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox. 1959.

It is sometimes said that psychiatrists are rapidly becoming pharmacists and biochemists have taken up psychotherapy, but the sneer is misapplied, for it has always been tacitly implied in medical practice and teaching that brain-mind relationships are on interactionist levels. This fine volume is packed with interest for physicians and psychiatrists as well as for neurologists and anyone interested in therapeutics. The three great highlights in the pharmacological approach to the understanding and control of abnormal emotional states have been derived from three different disciplines—physiology (the reticular activating system), therapeutics (the phenothiazine derivatives), and experimental psychiatry (the hallucinogenic drugs); these three divergent roads have recently criss-crossed and now seem to be running parallel to each other.

It would be invidious to pick out any one article in a book which is well up to the high standards of the Association for Research in Nervous and Mental Diseases; the subjects covered range from studies of experimental methods to precise descriptions of the metabolic and physiological problems embraced by the closing arms of neurology and psychiatry. Despite the rapidity of advances in the subjects dealt with in this volume there is no doubt that it will remain a source-book for a long time to come.

J.M.MacG.

SPEECH AND THE BRAIN

Speech and Brain-mechanisms. By Wilder Penfield and Lamar Roberts. Pp. xiii + 286. Illustrations. \$6.00. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1959.

'Men ought to know that from the brain and the brain alone arise our pleasures, joys, laughter and jests, as well as our sorrows, pains, griefs and tears. Through it, in particular, we think, see, hear, and distinguish the ugly from the beautiful, the bad from the good, the pleasant from the unpleasant . . . To consciousness the brain is the messenger'. Hippocrates wrote these words 2,000 years ago and since then all manner of men have devoted themselves to a study of the brain of man and of that very special function of the brain, speech, which uniquely distinguishes man from other living creatures. Penfield, of Montreal, is one of the great figures in medicine of this century and his studies of the living brain in man have added greatly to our knowledge and understanding; this new book, written in conjunction with Lamar Roberts, will add considerably to his stature and place us all even more in his debt. Aphasia is a difficulty in the ideational elaboration of speech and this book deals with the history of its study, with the many theories propounded to account for it, and describes the authors' own investigations and the conclusions they draw from them. Briefly these are: The speech mechanism must function as a whole and is not divisible into restricted functional units, though it is a useful clinical convention to talk of motor and sensory aphasia when one or other aspect of speech is predominantly involved. The left hemisphere is usually dominant for speech regardless of the handedness of the individual, with the exclusion of those who have cerebral injuries early in life. The areas of importance for speech are the posterior temporoparietal, Broca's, and the supplementary motor areas. The book is well written and excellently produced, with many figures, and is essential reading for all who are interested in the brain and the mind.

S.B.

BIOGRAPHY OF A MEDICAL IDEALIST

Doctor Squibb—the Life and Times of a Rugged Idealist. By Lawrence G. Blochman. Pp. xii + 371. \$5.00. New York: Simon and Schuster. 1958.

There can be few medical men who can claim to have kept a full diary for more than 50 years of their lives. Dr. Squibb did this in spite of a life of activity in practice and in campaigning for pure drugs and the establishment of the US pharmacopoeia. He was the first to invent a suitable mask for ether anaesthesia and was the first man to distil pure ether by means of live steam.

From the thousands of pages of his handwritten diary his biographer has set out a story of contemporary American life as seen through the eyes of a man who was Quaker turned Naval Doctor, and who built up what is now a world-famous pharmaceutical corporation.

It makes fascinating reading.

A.H.T.