

PUBLIC HEALTH

*The Theory and Practice of Public Health.* Ed. by W. Hobson, B.Sc., M.D., D.P.H. Pp. x + 354. Illustrated. R6.00. London and Cape Town: Oxford University Press. 1961.

This is an excellent and very impressive publication compiled by a number of specialists in the health field under the able editorship of Dr. W. Hobson.

Like all books of this type, each aspect of health, including the social ones, is handled by a recognized authority on the particular subject in the form of an essay. In this particular form a book might well be faulted in that the style and continuity of a single author is thereby broken; but to anyone reading this publication—or even scanning the titles of each chapter—it at once becomes apparent that the very wide field that is covered, including such diverse aspects as the history of the health work of the League of Nations and WHO completely rules out any possibility of its compilation by a single individual.

This publication is very well planned and the ground covered is most extensive. It can rightly be claimed that this is a reference book not only for undergraduate and post-graduate medical students, but also for the Medical Officer of Health and his clinic staff, as well as the many individuals who are concerned with the broader social aspects of medicine.

Although all the chapters are exceptionally well written and set out, and it is invidious and difficult to pick out any outstanding section in the book, I nevertheless cannot refrain from referring particularly to Prof. J. N. Morris's account of the epidemiology of non-communicable diseases, which forms chapter 23 of this publication.

The lessons which are sketched in the various chapters are so planned that most of the information, although based on the British practice of public health and social medicine, could be made applicable to any part of the world—whether the country concerned be an advanced or an underprivileged one.

One of the most important and useful aspects of this publication is the list of references and recommended additional reading at the end of each chapter. The value of this book is greatly enhanced by these lists.

The print is clear and the paper of very good quality. My only valid criticism is its shape. Difficulty will be experienced

in finding a shelf in the average library deep enough for its accommodation.

The index appears adequate; and check references of several items were found to be accurate.

I am happy to state that personally I greatly enjoyed reviewing this publication, and have little hesitation in fully recommending it, without reservation, as a work of reference and study for all physicians, medical officers in local authority and government service, social workers and, last, but not least, undergraduate and postgraduate medical and social science students.

E.D.C.

OVULATION CONTROL

*Control of Ovulation.* Proceedings of the Conference held at Endicott House, Dedham, Mass., 1960. Ed. by Claude A. Villee. Pp. x + 251. Illustrated. R7.00 net. London: Pergamon Press Ltd. 1961.

This book contains the 12 well-prepared papers, together with discussions, read at a recent conference of some 30 international investigators. The role of oestrogens and progesterones, stimulation of ovulation by pituitary hormones in animals and humans, developments in the control of the pituitary by certain brain regions, and some current attempts to control ovulation by analogues of the steroid hormones, are discussed.

While it is fascinating to learn how careful, detailed and ingenious 'backroom activity' can be, there is little of actual practical value to the clinician.

H.C.

OBSTETRIC EMERGENCIES

*Obstetrical Emergencies.* By D. Cavanagh, M.B., Ch.B. (Glasg.). F.A.C.O.G. Pp. xxii + 380. Illustrated. R10.00 Oxford: Blackwell Publications Ltd. 1961.

This book covers the field of obstetric emergencies, but includes also paediatric and anaesthetic emergencies which may be met with in the delivery room.

This is a short practical textbook. It is well illustrated. The text is concise and to the point and this should make it an easy reference book. For those readers who would like to delve more deeply into any individual subject there are detailed references at the end of each chapter.

The manual should prove a reliable stand-by for any practitioner undertaking much obstetrics. Its high price is a disadvantage.

E.M.S.

## SECTION CUTTING

*Section Cutting in Microscopy.* By H. F. Steedman, Ph.D. Pp. 172. Illustrated. R2.10 net. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1960.

This small book must be of considerable value to microtommists.

Those engaged in section cutting, whether in a routine laboratory or in research, will know that the production of a good histological section may be influenced by a host of variable factors, such as the apparatus used, the technique employed, the nature of the embedding media or even the climate. A small and subtle deviation, often frustratingly elusive in its detection, may have profound effects on the end result, as every technologist must have found to his cost.

Apart from the accepted procedures, which are thoroughly dealt with, much of the value of the book is contributed by the

author's obviously wide experience which answers so many of these little queries that may arise.

There is also available valuable information on the more recently evolved materials for embedding and their relative merits, and on newer methods, such as ultra-thin section cutting for electron microscopy.

However, it is a pity that a book so complete in many respects should have a serious deficiency in that it makes no reference to the cryostat. With the increasing use of fluorescent-labelled antibody techniques in the histological laboratory and with the growth of histochemistry, especially enzyme histochemistry — both procedures which require thin sections of unfixed tissues — the cold microtome has become an absolute necessity. A chapter dealing with this aspect of microtomy would make any future edition of this book more complete.

C.J.U.