

MEDICAL RESEARCH

Significant Trends in Medical Research. A Ciba Foundation Tenth Anniversary Symposium. Edited by G. E. W. Wolstenholme, O.B.E., M.A., M.B., M.R.C.P., Cecilia M. O'Connor, B.Sc. and Maeve O'Connor, B.A. Pp. xii + 356. 41 illustrations. 50s. net. London: J. & A. Churchill Ltd. 1959.

This is a very fascinating book. Most of it is comparatively easy to read, wide in its scope, and chock full of interesting ideas and suggestions. As with most of the Ciba publications, the discussions are often more interesting than the set lectures themselves. The vast range of subjects which is considered is evident from the titles of the chapters, and the standard seems to your reviewer to be equally high throughout, as indeed might be expected from such a distinguished company. The chapters are as follows:

Chairman's opening remarks by Sir Harold Himsworth; Molecular structure in relation to biology and medicine by L. Pauling; Fluorimetric studies on pyridine-nucleotide enzyme complexes by H. Theorell; Chemical basis of virus multiplication by G. Schramm; Population dynamics of body cells by Sir Macfarlane Burnet; Genetics and medicine by J. Waldenström; Ten years of general neurophysiology by A. von Muralt; The nature and mechanism of action of hormones by F. G. Young; Metabolic problems involving the pancreas, choline, insulin and glucagon by C. H. Best; Research in chronic pulmonary disease by D. W. Richards; Malignant transformation: its mechanisms and nature by A. Haddow; Research in clinical nutrition by J. F. Brock; The quantitative approach to disease—exemplified by essential hypertension by Sir George Pickering; Factors influencing the substance and dimension of medical research in the United States by J. A. Shannon; General discussion by Brain, Himsworth, Loeb, McMichael, Pickering, Shannon, Waddington, Young; Chairman's closing remarks by Sir Harold Himsworth.

I found the most intriguing contributions to be those of Burnet, who discussed certain aspects of his clonal theory; Waldenström, who talked about genetics in medicine with special regard to porphyria and globulins; and Young, who considered the nature of hormones. But other readers will like other chapters, and certainly it was a great pleasure to see South Africa's contribution—Professor Brock's so clear enunciation of the present position of research on kwashiorkor, largely that of his own unit.

Altogether a very suitable work with which to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Ciba Foundation.

W.P.U.J.

THE NATURE OF DISEASE

A Final Study in the Nature of Disease. By J. E. R. McDonagh, F.R.C.S. Pp. xx + 376. 30s. net. London: William Heinemann Medical Books Ltd. 1959.

The reader must be careful when he encounters new ideas not to discard them offhand simply because they do not conform to accepted thought. When the germ theory of infective disease was first published it met with sturdy opposition. A similar fate might befall other 'break-throughs' (as the journalists call them) in medicine. I have read Dr. McDonagh's theory of disease, and its application to individual diseases, with care. But to me it does not make sense. The author fails to give demonstrable proof of his theory, nor is it expounded by clear and reasoned argument. I reproduce here, verbatim, from the Introduction, the kernel of the matter. The reader can judge for himself:

'The fundamental conclusions are five in number. The first is that every mass and ray in the universe either has been, or continues to be, a product of the condensation of "activity".

'The second is that the least condensed of the have-been products form the basis of "climate".

'The third is that this "climate" penetrates every current product and releases "activity" from where it is stored in the product.

'The fourth is that the released "activity" describes cycles in the product in the course of which "activity" is liberated from and lost to the product, radiated, attracted and stored in the product; and, in the process of which the product expands and contracts, or pulsates.

'The fifth is that owing to the way in which these pulsatory cycles come to be described in the products, each is rendered divisible into three portions, the store, radiant, and attractive; and, its behaviour reducible to the exhibition of the three functions of "activity". These functions of radiation, attraction and storing derive their names from the portions, which are involved in their exhibition.

'In order to complete these fundamental conclusions I should have been able to describe the nature of "activity". But this I cannot do and I doubt whether, what must always have been and still remains the greatest problem facing inquiring man, will ever be able to be solved. All I can say on the subject, is that "activity" is the primordial material, out of which I imagine every mass and ray in the universe to have been and to continue to be being fashioned. I picture this "activity" as

describing a spiral, in the course of which the products of its condensation are being generated. This spiral is divisible into pre- and post-colloid parts, and each part into sections; the pre-colloid part into the atomic and crystalline sections, and the post-colloid part into the colloid, vegetable and animal sections. The main differences between the pre- and post-colloid parts are that in the description of the pulsatory cycles in the former only one function of "activity" is exhibited at a time; and, that the condensation the product undergoes may occur either at a higher or at a lower level. When condensation occurs at a higher level the product may be said to progress, and at a lower level to retrogress. In the description of the pulsatory cycles in the post-colloid products, all three functions of "activity" are exhibited at the same time. The condensation the products undergo may occur at the same two levels; but, from the birth of protein onwards, which I arbitrarily fix to be the last product to have been generated in the colloid section, the words "progress" and "regress" may be replaced by "health", or "life", and "disease" and "death". F.F.

ANTISTOL-TERAPIE

Antithrombotic Therapy. By P. W. Boyles, M.D. Pp. vii + 131. 24 figures. \$5.00. New York and London: Grune & Stratton, Inc. 1959.

Daar is definitiewe indikasies vir antistol-terapie en die langtermyn gebruik daarvan wen meer en meer veld. Dit is dus noodsaaklik dat alle geneeshere 'n redelike begrip het van die indikasies en die gevare verbonde aan die gebruik van antistol-middels.

In hierdie monografie poog die skrywer om so kort moontlik die belangrike punte in verband met die stol-meganismes van bloed en die beginsels van die verskillende laboratoriumtoetse vir die bepaling daarvan, te bespreek.

Die kliniese indikasies en gebruike van die verskillende antistol-middels word ook uiteengesit, insluitende die gebruik van die middels oor 'n lang tydperk.

Die huidige stand van die relatief nuwer trombolitiese terapie word ook bespreek.

In die addendum gee die skrywer 'n lys van die sinonieme van die verskillende bloedstollingsfaktore, asook beskrywings van hoe die verskillende toetse en laboratoriumbepalings van die ondersoek van die stollingsmeganisme, gedoen word.

Die boekie is verreweg nie 'n volledige beskrywing van die onderwerp nie, maar dit was dan ook nie die doel nie. Die belangrike punte word kort en op 'n maklik-verstaanbare manier beskryf. Die boek kan aanbeveel word veral vir algemene praktisyns en andere wat nie direk met die beheer van die antistol-proses te doen het nie, maar wat wel pasiënte daarvoor verwys. Studente sal die boek ook nuttig en leersaam vind. M.A.dK.

GEDRAGSVERANDERINGE IN DIE KLINIEK

Behavioral Change in the Clinic — A Systematic Approach. By Gerald R. Pascal, Ph.D. Pp. viii + 128. \$4.75. New York and London: Grune & Stratton, Inc. 1959.

Die skrywer, wat 'n kliniese sielkundige is, behandel die belangrikste sielkundige faktore — prikkels, spanning, gewoontehandeling, omgewing — wat gedrag beïnvloed, en veral die verandering van gedrag deur psigoterapie. Hy probeer om met behulp van algebraïese formules die relatiewe waarde van hierdie veranderlikes in die gedrag van die persoon aan te toon. Sy hoofdoel is om die kliniese metode, en veral psigoterapie, op eksperimenteel-wetenskaplike gronde te regverdig. Allesins 'n lesenswaardige en baie interessante verhandeling, wat vir die medikus sowel as vir die sielkundige insiggewend kan wees. A.B.vdM.