

BOOK REVIEWS : BOEKBESPREKINGS

CARDIAC EMERGENCIES

Cardiac Emergencies. Diagnosis and treatment. By B. A. Bradlow, M.D. (Rand), M.R.C.P., M.R.C.P.E. Pp. xiii + 178. Illustrated. R3.80. London and Durban: Butterworths. 1963.

This is mainly a book of applied medicine. It is no exaggeration to say that the physician certainly comes into his own and produces results as dramatic as any surgeon in the handling of emergencies, especially cardiologic ones. The book is primarily intended for house-physicians, registrars and general practitioners, and succeeds in its purpose.

A few statements are perhaps not quite acceptable, such as 'positive angina test is indicated by sagging of S-T segment of any degree' (page 22), or that the special type of rhythm referred to (page 17) 'invariably heralds a fatal outcome.'

I would have liked a little more discussion of the treatment of paroxysmal acute hypertension with some of the newer parenteral hypotensive agents, and also mention of the beta-receptor blocking agent, pronethalol, so useful especially in digitalis intoxication. Also more on the direct current-shock (D.C.) for arrhythmias and the treatment of 'pseudo-ventricular' tachycardia in Woolf-Parkinson-White syndrome with prostigmine; this syndrome and its tendency to cause arrhythmias perhaps does merit a longer consideration. The danger of anaesthesia in patients receiving certain hypotensive agents and its management is worthy of inclusion. It would also be useful to differentiate between the centrally acting catechol-amines, such as amine, and the more peripherally acting ones, e.g. phenylephrine (neosynephrine). In the treatment of heart block 'saventrine' (long-acting isuprel) should have been listed. Illustrations would have added authenticity to claims of personal successes in many instances. However, these comments do not detract from the book's value.

At the end of the book there is an appendix suggesting emergency drugs and appliances for the doctor's bag. There are 38 drugs listed, some of more use than others, but all have their special applications and this provides a useful 'check' list. The author is to be congratulated on this very useful book, which is definitely recommended.

M.N.

VASCULAR SURGERY

Occlusion of the Superior Mesenteric Artery. By B. B. Jackson, M.D., F.A.C.S. Pp. xiv + 141. Illustrated. \$7.50. Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas. 1963.

The author states that this book is not presented as a definitive work on occlusion of the superior mesenteric artery but as a help to bring about a better understanding of the difficulties and management of this condition. He mainly discusses experimental observations and the current vascular techniques in treating occlusion of the superior mesenteric artery.

In the first few chapters the incidence, aetiology and anatomy of occlusion of the superior mesenteric artery are described. Then follows a discussion of the experimental work on superior mesenteric artery occlusion, including the patho-physiology and pathology: the pathology of thrombosis, embolism and stenosis of this artery is discussed in detail. The difficulty of early diagnosis and the importance of an accurate clinical history is stressed and the value of a trans-lumbar aortogram is discussed. An extensive chapter deals with the treatment of this condition. The technique of the removal of an embolus from the artery, of thrombendarterectomy and of the use of a bypass graft is described in great detail. At the end of this monograph six illustrative case histories are given and an extensive bibliography then follows.

This book is not intended to be a reference work on superior mesenteric artery occlusion. It, however, contains very useful information and the chapters on the patho-physiology and techniques of various operations are particularly valuable. The book will be of value to the surgeon interested in vascular and abdominal surgery.

B.J. van R.D.

ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF GENERAL PRACTICE

The Encyclopaedia of General Practice. Vols. I and II. Ed. by G. F. Abercrombie, V.R.D., M.A., M.D. and R.M.S. McConaghey, M.D. Pp. xvi + 515 and ix + 587. R60.00 per set of 6 volumes + index, or R9.50 per volume and R3.00 for index volume. London and Durban: Butterworths. 1963.

The first two of the 6 volumes of the *Encyclopaedia of General Practice* deal with a variety of conditions in alphabetical order from 'Abdominal swelling' to 'Colon' and 'Colour blind' to 'Fungus diseases'. The many and varied sections are written in the majority of cases by general practitioners and scrutinized by consultants for accuracy. The rarer conditions are written by consultants on the staffs of various hospitals in collaboration with general practitioners whose opinion they value. Each section records the names of those who wrote it and those who were consulted, as well as references for suggested further reading.

As in all series of works of this nature some sections are of a higher standard than others. However, this encyclopaedia is of particular value as many of the subjects dealt with in detail are not usually well covered in most of the accepted textbooks of medicine seen in general practice. The writers of individual sections attempt, some with more success than others, to condense their subject into just what is needed in general practice, e.g. the minor and consulting room procedures are dealt with in detail, and the very specialized procedures are not.

The book is written to assist general practitioners in the UK, with special reference to the problems of practice existing there, but apart from this relatively small aspect, it is of great value to all in general practice and will be a most useful reference book to those who wish to teach the subject but have not had adequate practical experience.

F.E.H.

ADVANCES IN GENETICS

Progress in Medical Genetics, Vol. III. Ed. by A. G. Steinberg, Ph.D. and A. G. Bearn, M.D. Pp. v + 266. Illustrated. \$12.25. New York and London: Grune & Stratton. 1964.

The high standard of the two previous volumes is maintained in the latest edition, each of the seven chapters being contributed by a distinguished worker in the field. While perfectly lucid, the content is varied and specialized and is not intended for the beginner. Remarkably current data are included—thus references to papers to be published this year (1964) are cited! Aspects of the genetic code and protein synthesis are clearly outlined; significantly, and happily, the growing field of pharmacogenetics is surveyed and then elaborated in terms of the pseudocholinesterase variants and saxamethonium sensitivity; tissue transplants and antigens are seen in a genetic context; an appraisal of trisomy-21 by its discoverer, Lejeune, is timely; multifactorial inheritance is considered; and the polemics of radiation and hereditary damage are well reviewed.

I.F.A.

HEAT STRESS

Heat Stress and Heat Disorders. By C. S. Leithead, M.B., Ch.B., D.Obst., D.T.M. & H. and A. R. Lind, B.Sc., D.Phil. Pp. xiii + 304. Illustrated. R3.50. London: Cassell. 1964.

The book is in two parts, and the section by Dr. Lind on 'Heat stress' includes many important formulae and quotes much recent work, and it is a pleasure to see the preventive approach stressed: the physiology of thermo-regulation is concisely and simply put. Dr. Leithead's section on 'Heat disorders' is in general satisfactory: there are omissions, debatable statements, and one or two inaccuracies. He has, however, presented a difficult subject in a fair and concise form.

The bibliography and the appendix are comprehensive, and the book will be valuable to all practitioners in this field.

B.A.K.