

## NUTRITION AND DIETETICS

*Human Nutrition and Dietetics*. 3rd ed. By Sir S. Davidson, B.A. Cantab., M.D., F.R.C.P. Edin., F.R.C.P. Lond., F.R.S.E., M.D. (Hon. Oslo), LL.D. (Edin.) and R. Passmore, M.A., D.M. Oxon. Pp. xii + 864. Illustrated. R10.00. Edinburgh: E. & S. Livingstone, 1966.

It has been a most pleasant experience to have read the third edition of this excellent book, which must now approach as near the status of the practical man's encyclopaedia on the subject as one could possibly want.

I am filled with admiration at the continuing ability of the authors to have written in such a way upon a subject (only too often made as dry as dust), as to have given us a book that can be read as a *book*, as opposed to a *reference book*.

The section on diabetes is very good, and greatly eclipses similar sections in other books from the same school, though I could not agree with the 'benign'-ness of the lag curve. I felt that the part on the anatomy of the brain was a little over-stressed, but from a university where so much signal work has been done on that area of physiological and anatomical darkness—the diencephalon—we must possibly excuse this.

As someone with an extensive interest in the artificial sweeteners, I feel that future reprints and editions *must* include a very substantial account of these widely-used and in a way important substances, bearing in mind that in certain countries like Japan, they now form 29% of all sweeteners used.

At the same time as having greatly enjoyed the book, I am still filled with nostalgic distress at the persistence of the irrational basis of nutrition—the 'calorie'. Diabetes for instance is a disease of 'too many calories' some people say, and yet the people with the highest prevalence (the Pima Indians) have a daily total caloric intake of 2,200, while certain labourers in Natal, who have no diabetes, take 5,000 calories per day. People on gargantuan caloric intakes ('Eat Fat and Stay Thin') lose weight: others upon much lower caloric intakes from CHO get enormously fat, and run very high blood cholesterol.

I do wish that someone would invent an 'effective food unit' in its place, based in some way upon the clinical effects in the body, rather than on the results of an electrical discharge, in a high oxygen atmosphere, with a platinum catalyst, upon food in a small bomb in a laboratory! It has become an almost heinous crime to suggest nowadays that the laboratory in which to study effects of nutrition is Nature's laboratory—in epidemiology—rather than in odd exotic investigations of the ilk of the bomb calorimeter. Vastly more emphasis must be placed in future on whether foods are refined or not, a basic distinction that is now being realized to play an enormous effect upon disease emergence in advanced, as compared with primitive, peoples. Indeed such thinking is giving the eventual *coup de grace* to the animal fat myth.

We are all used to the high standards of writing of Sir Stanley Davidson, and here, he and Dr. Passmore will not disappoint the medical reader whether physiology student or advanced nutritionist. The publishers, as usual, combine superb quality with reasonable cost, and we are once again indebted to them. This book is understood not only by doctors and expert nutritionists, but intelligent laymen as well. I know, because I have put it to the test!

G.D.C.

## THE PATIENT WITH MALIGNANCY

*Psychosomatic Management of the Patient with Malignancy*. By H. H. Garner, M.D. Pp. ix + 136. \$5.75. Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1966.

While the basic importance of the medical interview and of indirect questioning in medical histories is fittingly stressed, the subordination of the doctor-patient relationship to the doctor-organ relationship is exaggerated as in the following sentence—'Under the aegis of "scientific medicine" the primary and almost exclusive emphasis is placed on the organic and chemical aspects of illness and treatment'.

The development of the theme 'comprehensive medicine' is a hopeful approach but it appears inadequate to a cancerologist and a Christian faced with the total care of a cancer patient in his environment.

J.M.G.