The Essentials of Medical Diagnosis, by The Rt. Hon. Lord Horder, G.C.V.O., M.D., F.R.C.P. and A. E. Gow, M.D., F.R.C.P., revised with the assistance of Ronald Bodley Scott, M.A., D.M., F.R.C.P. 2nd edition. Pp. 462. Price 22/6. London: Cassell & Co. Ltd. 1952.

There is a need for an easily read book which will guide the medical student in his quest to acquire the art of medical diagnosis. The present volume is an attempt to supply that need. The twenty-four years that have passed since the first edition was published have seen great advances in medicine. In the field of diagnosis these advances have been concerned principally with the application of ancillary methods, mechanical, biochemical and radiological. No one questions the value of such procedures when properly employed but the danger, as far as the student is concerned, is that in a modern teaching hospital, he may be taught unconsciously, if not consciously, to rely too much upon data provided by instruments of precision and the biochemical laboratory. The aim of the authors of this book is to teach the student how to arrive at a diagnosis from a careful clinical examination and the use of simple laboratory tests. For the present edition the sections dealing with the Blood, with Jaundice, with the Liver, and with the Urinary System have been rewritten and the remainder ‘carefully revised.’ It is regrettable that this revision has not included the bringing up-to-date of anatomical terminology. The student is unlikely to be encouraged to read further when in the first few pages of the first major section he comes across many unfamiliar anatomical terms, for example ‘pneumogastric.’ This fault persists throughout the book but is most evident in the section on the Nervous System. It is unfortunate too that this chapter and that which follows it on the Cardio-Vascular System are the poorest parts of the book; much that comes after, especially in the re-written sections, is good. In these two all-important chapters there are many statements that are open to serious criticism in the light of modern knowledge and much new information which should be included in a book of this nature has been omitted. The conception and arrangement of the book is good, there is a comprehensive index, the volume is a convenient size and the price reasonable but because of the grave defects mentioned above it cannot be whole-heartedly recommended as a suitable book for the student starting out on his clinical career.

Visceral Circulation, a Ciba Foundation Symposium, edited by G. E. W. Wolstenholme, O.B.E., M.A., M.B., B.Ch. assisted by Margaret P. Cameron, M.A., A.B.L.S. and Jessie S. Freeman, M.B., B.S., D.P.H. Pp. 278. Price 30/-. London: J. & A. Churchill Ltd. 1952.

The idea of holding a conference in which a number of experts present different aspects of a chosen subject and then publishing verbatim the subject matter of the presentations and the discussion which follows so that they become available to a wider audience is one which originated in America and has recently been introduced into this country. This volume is the record of such a conference which was held in London under the auspices of the Ciba Foundation in July, 1951. The general subject of the symposium is Visceral Circulation but the title has been interpreted in a wide sense; in addition to discussions on the circulation in the stomach, heart, lungs, kidney and liver, uterus and ovaries there are papers on such subjects as skin blood flow, reactive hyperaemia, fainting, noradrenaline and sympathin and laws of physics and flow in blood vessels. This last chapter by Professor A. C. Burton of Canada is in many ways the most interesting and useful in the book. It should be read by all who are interested in the problems of the circulation for it presents clearly certain fundamental data which are too often ignored. There are three sections: on visceral vascular architecture, general factors in blood flow regulation and regional blood flow regulation, and as Professor McMichael says in his concluding remarks an enormous field is covered. Anyone who wishes to find out what the latest views are on the circulation as a whole or on the circulation to any particular viscus will not refer to the book in vain. He will find his subject lucidly presented by an expert and discussed by other experts and will be stimulated by the number of questions that have yet to be answered. The editing is excellent and there is a good collection of up to date references. The book is well produced, the illustrations in particular being first class, and it is of convenient size.
A Modern Practice of Obstetrics, by D. M. Stern, M.A., M.B., B.Ch.(Cantab), F.R.C.S., F.R.C.O.G., and C. W. F. Burnett, M.D.(Lond.), F.R.C.S., F.R.C.O.G. 1st edition. Pp. 248 + viii, with 140 illustrations. Price 35/- London : Ballière, Tindall & Cox. 1952.

In this book the authors have described the practice of Obstetrics, based on their own experiences over the past sixteen years, in the West Middlesex Hospital.

Their aim has been 'to write upon the subject from a new aspect' but for whose benefit and instruction is not quite clear. The value of the book is therefore difficult to assess.

As a record of the authors' beliefs and practices it is full of interest, especially to the experienced and discerning obstetrician; as a refreshing change from the usual 'heavy going' of standard textbooks it is of value to the embryo specialist; but for the untutored undergraduate for whom presumably it is intended, it leaves rather too many gaps to be wholly satisfactory.

The authors have, avowedly, produced a concise textbook but to condense the science and art of obstetrics into 240 pages is attempting the impossible, even for undergraduate instruction. They have, on the whole, succeeded in their aim of stressing the normal and commoner abnormal conditions, but there are omissions and some important subjects are discussed too briefly or summarily dismissed.

Theory is rather avoided and many problems are treated in a purely practical manner but often the practice is dependent on dogmatic statements which are unsubstantiated and not explained. Many ideas are indeed controversial and the reader is given no chance to ponder their validity or judge their worth. Novel ideas are not necessarily good ones and there is a danger that the inexperienced student may be misled through ignorance of more generally accepted teaching.

The principal deficiencies are the omission of introductory anatomy and physiology, the rather sketchy chapters on the 3rd stage of Labour, Ante Partum Haemorrhage and Shock, and a lack of detail in many other chapters which would seem to be due to an optimistic assumption that the student already knows the basic facts.

The early chapters, Abortion, the First Stage of Labour, the normal puerperium and the Radiological chapter are all concise but clear and well done. The mechanism of Labour is rather brief and does not make clear that with anterior parietal presentation there is posterior tilting of the head, i.e., posterior asynclitism. Puerperal Pyrexia is not clearly enough defined as distinct from puerperal sepsis.

Obstetric operations are dealt with very briefly and the use of the curette is not mentioned. The indications for the application of forceps repeat the old criteria of maternal and foetal distress and ignore the more intelligent use of the instrument to prevent these contingencies. Incidentally, forceps is a singular noun. There are two useful appendices, one of obstetrical definitions, mostly accurate, and one of Etymology. In the former, care is taken to distinguish 'Primigravida' from 'Primipara' so it is a pity that throughout the book the terms are misused.

Despite these destructive criticisms, the book is well written and very readable, and does strike a new note. The production is excellent, printing errors are few, and the illustrations are clear and simple, though the diagrams of forceps on p. 189 are wrongly labelled.

How to Use a Medical Library: a Guide for Practitioners, Research Workers and Students, by Leslie T. Morton, A.I.A. 2nd edition. Pp. 44. Price 5/-. London : Wm. Heinemann Medical Books Ltd. 1952.

This is a paper-bound booklet containing information on library and catalogue arrangements, sources of information, location of medical literature, compilation of medical bibliographies, with some notes on periodicals and a list of the principal medical libraries in Britain. Mr. Morton is Information Officer, British Medical Journal and first published this little guide for the user of medical libraries in 1934.

He has re-written it and expanded it for re-issue. It is a useful guide for the amateur in these matters and will be a help to the often arduous, evaporation and time-consuming job of 'looking up the literature.' There is a list of references to books and papers containing further information on the subject. This book is recommended to all beginners in writing for the medical press and will not be without use to older hands.
Recent Advances in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, by Aleck W. Bourne, M.B., B.Ch., F.R.C.S., F.R.C.O.G., and Leslie H. Williams, M.D., M.S., F.R.C.S., F.R.C.O.G. 8th edition. Pp. 339 + viii, 92 figures.

Price 27/6 net. London: J. & A. Churchill Ltd. 1953.

Five years have elapsed since the publication of the seventh edition of ‘Recent Advances in Obstetrics and Gynaecology,’ and wide-spread changes have consequently been made in the present volume. No less than eight chapters from the last edition have been excluded, the subjects being ‘The Anaemias of Pregnancy,’ ‘Anaesthesia and Analgesia in Obstetrics,’ ‘Penicillin in Obstetrics,’ ‘Vitamin K and Haemorrhagic Disease of the Newborn,’ ‘Stillbirth and Neonatal Death,’ ‘Sympathectomy,’ ‘Penicillin in Gynaecology’ and ‘Radiological Investigation and Diagnosis in Gynaecology.’ New chapters have been added on ‘Hypertension and Pregnancy,’ ‘Functional Uterine Haemorrhage’ and ‘Intravascular Thrombosis,’ and the sections which have been retained show considerable addition and amendment.

The first chapter deals with nutrition of the pregnant woman and covers this subject in a most interesting and comprehensive manner. The next section is devoted to weight changes and water retention in pregnancy and is principally concerned with physiology, although the relationship to hypemesis gravidarum and pre-eclampsia is fully discussed. Lactation forms the subject of the next chapter and the most recent views on physiology and the lactation process are presented in detail. Much attention is paid to the question of failure of human lactation and the vital importance of the new ‘tint’ of Waller is extensively quoted in this connection.

A very clear account is given of the complex subject of erythroblastosis, which should prove of great value to those who find it difficult to keep up with the extensive literature on this condition. The next chapter on hypertension and pregnancy is interesting and includes a critical review of the literature on this somewhat controversial question. Particular attention is paid to the prognosis for mother and child in the various hypertensive conditions associated with pregnancy. Dr. E. Rohan Williams has written the section on radiology in obstetrics and confines his attention to the radiological study of the obstetric pelvis, foetal-pelvic proportions and the placental site. Full consideration is given to the work of Caldwell and Moloy in discussing X-ray examination of the pelvis.

The gynaecological portion of the book opens with a very full account of present trends in carcinoma of the cervix. This chapter is excellent and is one of the best in the book. Particular attention is paid to early diagnosis of cervical carcinoma by the smear technique and to the estimation by means of the cell-count method of Spear and Glucksmann of the prognosis after irradiation therapy. In the latter part of this chapter, the various types of treatment now available are considered in turn and the reasons for and against the selection of any given method are discussed.

Stress incontinence forms the subject of the next section and the place for the various sling operations and for colpo-cystopecty is discussed fully. In considering the etiology of this condition, the authors speak of ‘that objectionable practice lateral or posterolateral episiotomy,’ although many would disagree with this view. In the new chapter on functional uterine haemorrhage, the various modern views on this subject are well discussed and the endometrial histology is described in detail. One statement which is open to question is that there seems to be no relation between the blood dyscrasias and functional uterine bleeding.

The final sections are devoted respectively to intravascular thrombosis and pulmonary embolus, with full consideration of the various modern views on treatment, and to X-ray therapy in gynaecology, the latter being by Dr. Walter M. Levitt. In this chapter it is stated that the treatment of choice in patients over the age of 40 with metropathia haemorrhagica, which has not responded to hormone treatment, is radiation therapy. The reviewer is in full agreement with this view, but an entirely different opinion is expressed in the chapter on functional uterine bleeding, where hysterectomy is advised for cases of this type.

This new edition of ‘Recent Advances in Obstetrics and Gynaecology’ is a most important one. It covers a wide range of subjects in a thorough and interesting manner and the authors’ comments throughout are critical, thoughtful and stimulating. A minor criticism is that typographical errors are rather too frequent, particularly in the new sections of the book. It can be confidently recommended to all who are interested in obstetrics and gynaecology and should be carefully studied by candidates for higher diplomas in these subjects.
The Spread of Tumours in the Human Body, by R. A. Willis. Pp. 448 + 28 pp. illustrations. Price 63/-. London: Butterworth & Co. Ltd. 1952.

This book is more than the new edition of the one first published in 1934. Much of the text has been rewritten and the number of necropsies on which it is founded has been raised to 500. 260 new references have been included, all personally consulted by the writer. The work now issued by Butterworth & Co. forms an indispensable companion volume to Willis’s Pathology of Tumours and both should be on the work table of every morbid anatomist. Familiarity with the contents of this work would save some writers from recording and editors from accepting improbable case reports based on incomplete investigations supported by fanciful theories but inadequate knowledge of the behaviour of tumours. Consultation with this work will spare the intending writer of a report on an unusual mode of spread of a neoplasm an immense amount of labour, because the essence of what is already known is condensed here.

As in Willis’s other books the treatment is strongly individualistic and highly critical and the writer does not hesitate to dissent from the conclusions of the author whose paper is under discussion. There will not be universal agreement with Willis’s conclusions in all instances but his critical attitude is infinitely more helpful to the reader than the blind acceptance of conclusions on which there may be doubt. The text is attractively written, magnificently documented and beautifully illustrated, the method of segregating the illustrations to the end of the book being fully justifiable in a text of this kind. The work is one which can be most cordially recommended to all morbid anatomists.

Kielland’s Forceps, by E. Parry Jones, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.O.G. Pp. 210. Price 35/-. London: Butterworth & Co. Ltd. 1952.

This monograph is devoted entirely to a study of Kielland’s obstetrical forceps and it covers every aspect of the subject in a most thorough manner. The first chapter is concerned with the historical side of the matter and the second reviews briefly the very considerable literature, further details being included in the form of four tables in an appendix. The instrument is then described and the reasons for each point in the design are clearly and fully stated. The place for Kielland’s forceps in obstetrics is discussed at some length and the technique in various obstetrical conditions is given in great detail. In a later chapter the maternal and foetal complications which may be found after using Kielland’s forceps are considered and their prevention is discussed.

In the section dealing with results, 2 series are analysed, a group of 233 cases delivered by various obstetricians in the Liverpool Maternity Hospital and a personal series of 60 cases delivered by the author. The small size of the latter group constitutes a weakness in the work as a whole, though the author is fully aware of this and draws attention to it on more than one occasion.

An interesting feature is the inclusion in an appendix of what is considered to be the first English translation of Kielland’s original article from the Montatschrift für Geburtshilfe und Gynäkologie, 1916, 43: 48.

The monograph is well produced, the type is clear and the quality of paper is good. It is well illustrated with over 100 figures, the majority being line diagrams. The style is clear and easily followed and the book is altogether most readable. It forms a comprehensive and lucid study of a subject which has so far received little attention in the British literature and can be confidently recommended to obstetricians and to all others interested in operative midwifery.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

Tuberculosis in the Commonwealth. Pp. 443. Price 21/-. Published by the National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis, Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.

British Medical Bulletin. Pp. 84. Price 15/-.