BOOK REVIEWS.

Physician's Handbook, by Marcus A. Krupp, M.D., Norman J. Sweet, M.D., Ernest Jawetz, Ph.D., M.D. and Charles D. Armstrong, M.D. 7th edition. Pp. 380. Price $2.50. Los Altos, California: Lange Medical Publications. 1952.

The preface to this edition—the seventh in a period of eleven years—claims that 'this Handbook offers a readily available source of factual data, laboratory procedures, and clinical aids repeatedly used in all branches of medicine.' Such a claim is fully justified and considerable credit is due to the authors who have achieved the miracle of packing so much useful knowledge into so small a volume. The book is indeed a handbook and will slip easily into any pocket whence it will no doubt be frequently extracted for reference. In terse, matter-of-fact style, aided by excellent artistry, this little book covers a remarkable amount of ground in such diverse fields as unipolar lead electrocardiography (theory, practice and interpretation), all forms of side-room examination, clinical examinations and tests, pathology, paediatric examination and infant feeding and many others. Neither the practical man anxious to verify the dose of a new antibiotic nor the specialist wishing to cover the ground fully in the investigation of phaeochromocytoma will be disappointed. The authors have made an effort to remember everything that one tends to forget, even down to the last minute advice (p. 366) on the arrest of bleeding from oesophageal varices by a Sengstaken tube (a courageous procedure which deserves trial despite indifferent results by workers in this country).

The title of the book is perhaps a little misleading. The 'physician' referred to is no doubt a general practitioner since the work contains much that is useful from the surgical point of view (Chapter 6). However, the majority of the tests are outwith the scope of practitioners in this country and it is to hospital staff that the volume will have most appeal.

It is difficult to be critical of a book at once so comprehensive, up-to-date and compact. A few small slips and omissions do occur. Wagner, of Keith and Wagner, may or may not appreciate identification with the musical composer by the spelling of his name as Wagner; moreover, these authors' classification of eyegrounds is not quite accurately quoted although it is again a measure of the book's scope that this is mentioned at all. In the poison section, ferrous sulphate poisoning in children is surely a common enough occurrence nowadays to include, along with the appropriate treatment. Finally, the arrangement of the book tends to be rather confusing although an ingenious 'rapid index' largely nullifies this criticism. The best trial is practice and in three weeks I have found numerous occasions for reference, so far without disappointment.

First International Symposium on Chemical Microbiology: Microbial Growth and its Inhibition. World Health Organization: Monograph Series, No. 10. Pp. iv + 286; 67 figures, 38 tables. Price 15/-.

Distributed in U.K. by H.M. Stationery Office.

From 25th to 30th June, 1951, in Rome, a symposium was held to mark the opening of the Istituto Superiore di Sanità, which is directed by Dr. E. B. Chain, F.R.S., one of the Oxford workers on penicillin. The present volume contains eighteen of the papers, which were read by C. N. Hinshelwood, L. Califano, D. D. Woods, J. Monod, S. S. Sokhey, E. B. Chain, M. J. Johnson, P. P. Regna, A. A. Miles, E. M. Weber, S. A. Waksman, M. Welsch, L. L. Cavalli, R. Robinson, B. C. J. G. Knight, A. Lvoff, L. Camici, and A. Tonolo. The subject matter covers a wide variety of topics including the chemistry of antibiotics, the application of microbial kinetics to problems of growth of micro-organisms and their adaptation to antibiotics, the role of vitamins, the induction and inhibition of the synthesis of adaptive enzymes, bacteriophage and lysogenic bacteria, genetic aspects of microbial growth, the use of antibiotics in animal feeding and the requirements for international biological standards.

Not surprisingly there is a great diversity of treatment in the various papers and it is sometimes difficult to know precisely from what evidence the many formulae applied have been deduced. Other parts of the work show a bewildering array of facts without much clue to their interpretation in terms of bacteriology or chemotherapy. Some of the contributions are excellently balanced mixtures of fact and thought and for these the publication may be warmly recommended.
Allergy and Seborrhea, by J. Avit Scott, M.D. Pp. 100. Price 12/6. London: H. K. Lewis & Co. Ltd. 1952.

In this little book the author attempts to differentiate between the seborrheic and allergic states. To facilitate rapid comparison the first two thirds of the book is divided into two sections—the left hand page dealing with seborrhoes and the opposite page with allergies. There is an initial assumption that all persons are either seborrhoic or allergic, meaning those with an oily or a dry skin respectively. The effects of many factors both internal and external on these subjects are discussed. Whilst there are many observations with which there will be general agreement, such as the list of conditions which can be classed as seborrhoic dermatoses, yet there are many to which exception will be taken. The division of rosacea into two distinct types and the suggestion that chilblains and herpes simplex are allergic disorders, are cases in point. For example the expression 'strongly sexed' is used on several occasions. This is a loose phrase open to more than one interpretation. Again on the question of sepsis it is difficult to understand the precise difference between 'septic follicular eruptions,' which are said to occur in seborrhoes and 'follicular sepsis' from which allergies are apparently inclined to suffer. This fine distinction gives the impression of an attempt to bolster up a theory. Considerable space has been devoted to diet. Study of the recommendations suggests that seborrhoes should cut down fats, carbohydrates and liquids, whilst allergies would be benefitted by restriction of similar substances.

The logical conclusion from this is that everyone should eat and drink less.

In the section on treatment only slight emphasis has been given to the value of crude coal tar. On the other hand, several very dubious measures have been advocated. First amongst these is gold, which the reviewer regards as a dangerous remedy, and which is here recommended for several conditions including rosacea of the 'papular type.' It is not without significance that the first therapeutic item listed in the appendix to the book is an antidote for the toxic symptoms of gold therapy. The author also stresses the value of large doses of ascorbic acid as a suprarenal cortical stimulant, a function which is yet to be proved in man. It is unusual to find the adjective 'mild' used in conjunction with sulphonamides and consequently not surprising that remedies such as poulticing and hygroscopic dressings are preferred to sulphonamides and antibiotics in the treatment of boils and abscesses.

This monograph makes interesting reading and the unusual arrangement of subject matter might be sufficient to stimulate some to put the author's observations to the test of clinical usage.

A Handbook of Paediatrics for Nurses in General Training, by Q. M. Jackson, S.R.N. Pp. 100. Price 9/-. London: H. K. Lewis & Co. Ltd. 1952.

In many hospitals, the nurse in General training has little opportunity of gaining practical experience in caring for sick children and a suitable textbook is long overdue. It is a pity that the information in this small book is too meagre to make it of great value, even when it is used, as the author suggests, to supplement other textbooks.

A chapter dealing with the Social Services is useful. The development of a child is described very briefly and should have been presented in greater detail. Common neo-natal, medical, surgical and orthopaedic conditions are mentioned, but the writing is uneven, and some important diseases are given small space. The gluten free diet used in coeliac disease is not given, and there is no information on the care of the diabetic child.

Greater detail in describing how practical procedures are carried out would have been helpful, with emphasis placed on how these differ when dealing with children. Difficulties, such as obtaining a specimen of urine from a female infant, are mentioned but not described.

Errors in terminology and spelling occur on several pages, e.g., infected jaundice, inter-cranial disease, and diabetes mellitus; also incomplete statements, e.g., pressure of cerebro-spinal fluid up to 120.

The spacing of paragraphs could be improved.
Rose & Carless' Manual of Surgery. 18th edition. Edited by Sir Cecil Wakeley, Bt., K.B.E., C.B. In 2 vols. Pp. 1,472. Price 63/-. London: Ballière, Tindall & Cox. 1952.

Since its first appearance in 1898, the issue of 18 editions shows that this manual has successfully served the demand for a readable and comprehensive textbook of surgery. This edition appears after a space of almost 10 years from the appearance of its predecessor. These years have yielded striking advances in chemotherapy, anaesthesia and in the scope of surgical attack both in the thorax and in the abdomen. These advances have been included in the new edition. In short, the book provides an up-to-date account of surgical practice and, with very few exceptions, gives a balanced opinion on most of the controversial problems in surgery. Gastrectomy, however, is surely the operation of choice in the surgical treatment of haematemesis. The introduction of the chapter on salt and water metabolism is welcomed although it seems unfortunate that the overemphasized danger of potassium therapy should have given an excuse to exclude an account of the important developments in this field. The reviewer has been most impressed by the number of cases he has seen ' saved on the bell ' by carefully planned administration of potassium. This can be given on clinical assessment and does not necessarily require biochemical estimations.

It is usually easy to find fault, but criticisms of this classic are difficult. The decision of the editor to introduce 18 contributors to deal with special fields is admirable and this innovation gives the manual an authoritative tone. This innovation has not detracted from one of the book's greatest merits, viz., its ability to fulfil the needs of three classes of reader: the undergraduate student in surgery, the general practitioner and the post-graduate surgeon can all turn to these pages with confidence. The lack of an adequate index to a book can prove a source of great irritation to the reader; the index of Rose & Carless is comprehensive and rarely lets one down. The addition of a separate index to Volume I would be most acceptable.

The introduction of 375 new illustrations brings the number of excellent figures to over 1,000. At a time when production of a book is far from easy, the editor and publishers are to be congratulated on two beautiful volumes. These are a joy to behold and to handle, and the contents can be confidently recommended.

The English Complaint, by Franklin Bicknell, D.M., M.R.C.P. Pp. 120. Price 7/6. London: Wm. Heinemann-Medical Books-Ltd. 1952.

This book consists of a vitriolic denunciation of our present national diet. Practically every aspect of the nation's food is considered and condemned. Dr. Bicknell states that our diet is inadequate in fat and protein and compares unfavourably in this respect with our own pre-war diet and the post-war diet of most other countries. The bread we eat is ' the most unpleasant and least nutritious in the world,' has had most of the vitamin E removed (thereby causing an increase of miscarriages), but has had a potentially toxic substance, agene, added to whiten and sterilize the flour. The widespread use of chemicals for the purpose of flavouring, colouring or preserving foods is pointed out and Dr. Bicknell correctly states that there has been no attempt to assess the effect of daily ingestion year after year of small amounts of these substances. Our milk is ' deplorable,' our cheese of very poor quality, while 'the bestial cruelty' of the battery system of poultry farming produces a 'mockery of an egg.' The meat we eat is largely from ' nauseating old hunks of frozen Argentine carcasses,' and our fish is more often than not stale. Pressure cookers and refrigerators are 'the hot and cold devils of our modern houseleets.' Other subjects that came in for similar whole-hearted denunciation are chemical fertilisers and insecticides. In short 'we have too little food; wrong food; bad food; poisoned food.'

As a result of this 'all of us, rich or poor, are fogged by fatigue,' two out of three of us have an illness every month, and work has dropped by a third. This 'trinity of symptoms' Dr. Bicknell designates the English complaint. The remedy occupies one of the seventeen chapters in the book and is to cultivate more land, use organic manure, and thereby produce all the food we require.

Dr. Bicknell is co-author of the standard textbook on vitamins and his opinion on dietetic matters should command respect. Undoubtedly there is much truth in this book and it certainly is not dull. The style, however, is so reminiscent of the soap-box orator that there is a very real danger of the book being dismissed as the work of a crank. Dr. Bicknell would further his cause if he were now to produce a more sober and better documented account of the deficiencies in our diet.
Pharmacology, Materia Medica and Therapeutics, by Dr. B. N. Ghosh, M.B.E., F.R.F.P. & S.(Clas.), L.M.(Dub.). Pp. 860. Price 30/-. Calcutta: Scientific Publishing Company.

Ghosh's 'Pharmacology' has long been recognized as a readable account of the subject and it has probably run through more editions than any other textbook of its kind. Advances in therapeutics in the past three years have necessitated the adding of many new sections and revising others. A short account of radioactive isotopes is now included. Most of the new material is dealt with very briefly. The chief virtue of the book, however, lies in the clear exposition of elementary pharmacology. The author appears to be less confident in discussing the therapeutic application of drugs. Codeine is stated to 'lessen the amount of sugar in diabetes,' and heavy type is used to emphasize that the chief use of this alkaloid is 'in the treatment of diabetes mellitus.' On page 331 however it is included among the 'Sedative Expectorants' which act 'by controlling excessive cough reflex'; and here dionin finds a place, though its use is restricted almost exclusively to ophthalmology. Some of the chapters are marred by the inclusion of statements which even the general reader must regard with scepticism. For example: 'Thyroid deficiency is to a large extent responsible for a number of complaints and infections, and its administration has been advocated in acute and chronic arthritis, phlegmasia alba dolens, Bact. coli infection and chronic gout . . . . It is worthy of trial in children who fail to grow, in nocturnal enuresis, night terrors, and in those who suffer from relaxation of the ligaments causing knock knee, painful heel, flat foot or lordosis.' In the 'Prescribing hints' no mention is made of the need for great caution in the early states of treatment of myxoedema with thyroid. Writing of apomorphine the author says 'as a prompt and certain emetic, apomorphine is used in poisoning, i.e., in narcotic poisoning, drunkenness etc. For this purpose 1/10 gr. hypodermically acts within 1 to 2 minutes . . . . But if a patient is obviously under the influence of a narcotic, what chance is there that apomorphine will stimulate the depressed vomiting centre? Gastric lavage is obviously the correct procedure and a teacher who does not say so fails in his duty to the student as well as to the patient. Does Dr. Ghosh really believe that pilocarpine promotes the growth of hair—p. 241? Instances of this kind could be multiplied, but these examples suffice to emphasize the need for more discrimination and some vigorous pruning in the therapeutic sections of the book. It is true that the author often refrains from committing himself about the therapeutic value of drugs; but the reader of a manual entitled 'Pharmacology, Materia Medica and Therapeutics' has a right to expect a considered opinion. Without the exercise of judgement and discrimination by the author, a textbook of this kind degenerates into a pharmacopoeia. Perhaps the day has passed when any writer can hope single-handed to do justice to pharmacology and therapeutics based on clinical science.

What the General Practitioner ought to know about Human Actinomycosis, by V. Zachary Cope, M.S., F.R.C.S. Price 12/6. London: Wm. Heinemann - Medical Books - Ltd. 1952.

Actinomycosis is not a common disease, but most surgeons treat a few cases and general practitioners meet the occasional case. As a result, the current literature too frequently consists of reports of two or three cases treated successfully by one method or another, and too often the diagnosis of actinomycosis is not considered until an unexpected bacteriological report indicates the presence of the disease.

This book presents a composite and detailed account in a stimulating style, but clarity and accuracy are not lost when Mr. Zachary Cope points a moral or adorns a tale. Much of the material is taken from personal experience, and it is so arranged that reading is an effortless relaxation—even at the end of a busy day. It is surprising to find that a vivid picture remains—a tribute to the author's facility as a teacher.

The practitioner who reads this small book will be conscious of the incidence of actinomycosis and confident in his approach to it. It is a pity there is no list of references as this would increase its appeal and usefulness for the general surgeon.
Cardioscopy, by William Evans, M.D., D.Sc., F.R.C.P. Pp. 144. Price 40/- London: Butterworth & Co. (Publishers) Ltd. 1952.

Radiological examination is now accepted as an essential part of investigation of the cardiovascular system and, for some time, one has felt that there was a real need for an authoritative book of reference. With the advent of this new work the need no longer exists. The writing is lucid and concise; the many illustrations are excellent. The basic principles are clearly defined and the author makes full use of his wide experience to point out the many pitfalls of diagnosis and to indicate how these can be avoided. In future editions we should like to see the written matter more closely associated with the appropriate illustrations and one hopes the author will see fit to deal more fully with congenital heart disease and pulmonary hypertension.

Organic Chemistry for Medical, Intermediate Science and Pharmaceutical Students, by A. Killen Macbeth, C.M.G., M.A., D.Sc., F.R.I.C., etc., Professor of Chemistry, The University of Adelaide. Pp. 312. Price 12/6. London: Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd. 1952.

During the twenty-two years that have elapsed since the second edition of this textbook was published, considerable advances have been made in the study of organic chemistry. In the present edition, a very successful revision of the text has been made by the author who has succeeded in incorporating the principal developments of this period, without destroying the general and introductory nature of the book. This edition is slightly enlarged. The greatest changes have been made in the deletion of descriptions of some macro-analytical methods, and of molecular weight determinations which are usually dealt with in works on physical chemistry. A new chapter, on chemotherapy, of particular interest to students of medicine and pharmacy, has been added. This chapter discusses in a concise way the most effective arsenical and sulphanilamide drugs and mentions also some antimalarial and antibiotic compounds.

The publication covers the wide range of essential organic chemistry necessary for an appreciation and development of the fundamental aspects of the subject, and is thus suitable as a textbook. This, together with the frequent references to materials of medical and pharmaceutical interest makes it very useful as a textbook for medical students. From this standpoint, it is, in the opinion of the reviewer, unfortunate that the proteins have been so briefly discussed particularly in view of their great biological importance. Similarly, it is to be regretted that no mention has been made in Chapter XXVIII that the group of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons contains carcinogenic compounds.

The use of the term 'organic salt' for an ester (p. 127) is also undesirable as, even with the restrictions implied in the text, such an expression tends to obscure the essential covalency of the ester linkage. An error concerning the addition of bromine to allyl derivatives (p. 52) should be noted. One molecule of bromine is required for addition to the double bond, and not two as stated. This is the only error noticed by the reviewer, although Lewisite is usually regarded as β-chlorovinyl-dichloroarsine, and not ethylidichloroarsine.

The book is adequately indexed. It cases where more than one reference to a compound has been made, all but the most trivial are included in the index, the principal references being given in bolder type. In addition the text is liberally supplied with a set of accurate cross references.