

TRAINING AFRICAN NURSES

African Medical Handbook. An outline of medicine and hospital practice for African nurses, orderlies and medical assistants. By Michael Gelfand, M.B., M.R.C.P. (Pp. 206; 22 figures. 15s.) Capetown: The African Bookman. P.O.Box 3115.

One of the greatest medical problems of the day is how to provide medical treatment for the vast undeveloped areas of Africa. There are far too few European doctors and in many cases they cannot understand the languages of the peoples with whom they have to deal. African doctors also are lacking. Apart from inadequate facilities for medical teaching there are as yet far too few people with the requisite secondary education to enable them to benefit from Western medical training. In this dilemma an answer has been found in the provision of African dressers, nursing orderlies, and medical assistants, who in many countries have already been placed in charge of important dispensaries. Textbooks are obviously required for the teaching of the African subordinate medical and nursing staff, but although a beginning has been made in Uganda and the Belgian Congo the supply is insufficient. The writing of such books is by no means easy: they must be written clearly and simply, for many Africans have only small knowledge of English: they must be absolutely accurate, for the African still firmly believes in the infallibility of the printed word; and finally they must tell exactly what the African must and must not do in all the emergencies with which he may be called upon to deal.

Dr. Gelfand comes out of the first test with flying colours. On the second count there is less certainty, for there are many minor inaccuracies. No one can diagnose sickling of red cells by placing a drop of blood on a slide and covering it with a cover-glass however long he leaves it (p. 166) unless he rings the cover-glass with vaseline. Red blood cells will not be found in the urine in blackwater fever (p. 193). Blackwater fever occurs more frequently in children than in adults in West Africa (p. 77). Many of the names of diseases used are no longer current—for example, "Malta fever," "catarrhal jaundice," and "climatic bubo"; while the constant use of "M. and B. drugs" as a synonym for sulphonamides is to be deprecated. Infective hepatitis is the name of a specific disease (p. 195). These, however, are minor blemishes which can be removed when a second edition is called for.

The author is at his best in describing treatment in detail from his extensive knowledge of work in a large African hospital, and the instructions in most cases are clear and concise. Some readers, however, would look askance at treating early cases of Gambian sleeping sickness with trypanamide alone. There is no mention of the use of penicillin in the treatment of tropical ulcer, and curiously enough no mention at all of such a common disease as influenza or influenzal pneumonia, though he refers to such rare complaints as mumps encephalitis and to asbestosis. In many parts of Africa carbon tetrachloride has been given up in favour of the much less toxic carbon tetrachloroethylene. A special word of praise must be given to the numerous line drawings by Mr. H. H. D. Simmonds: these will do much to lighten the African's task in grasping the main facts of the cause and cure of common diseases.

G. M. FINDLAY.

The Collected Papers of the Mayo Clinic and the Mayo Foundation. Vol. XXXVIII, 1946, edited by Dr. Richard M. Hewitt and others (W. B. Saunders, 63s.), fall into certain broad groups. There are the hardy annuals such as peptic ulcer, cancer, and peripheral vascular disease, on which there is always something, if nothing fresh, to say. Then there are the Mayo Clinic contributions to recently described or rediscovered syndromes, such as Meig's syndrome, cystic fibrosis of the pancreas, or diffuse amyloidosis with macroglossia, in which a few i's are dotted and a few t's crossed. More useful are the reviews of series of cases—e.g., a study of 31 cases of primary carcinoma of the liver or the review of 83 proved cases of multiple myeloma. Finally there are the papers on subjects which workers at the Mayo Clinic have made their own, such as the group of papers on streptomycin or Allen's report on treatment with dicoumarol. Though there is nothing exciting in these 900 pages, they are nevertheless a fair summary of recent advances in routine hospital work. Few of us would choose this as preferred reading, but few of us, again, would not find much of interest and profit if this were the only book in the house on a wet week-end.

BOOKS RECEIVED

[Review is not precluded by notice here of books recently received]

Disputed Paternity Proceedings. By S. B. Schatkin. 2nd ed. (Pp. 614. No price.) New York: Banks and Company. 1947.

A general account of the medical and legal aspects.

Clinical Ophthalmology. By H. M. Traquair, M.D., F.R.C.S.Ed. (Pp. 264. 25s.) London: Henry Kimpton. 1948.

An introduction to ophthalmology for general practitioners and students.

The Social Sciences. A case for 'their greater use. (Pp. 46. 1s. 6d.) Prepared by the Social Science Committee of the Association of Scientific Workers, London.

A pamphlet advocating the greater use of the social sciences.

Transactions of the Medical Society of London. Vol. 64. Edited by W. E. Tanner, M.S., F.R.C.S. (Pp. 384. No price.) London: Harrison and Sons.

Papers on a wide variety of topics presented during 1944-6.

Practical Food Inspection. By C. R. A. Martin. Vol. 2. 3rd ed. (Pp. 284. 18s.) London: H. K. Lewis. 1948.

The inspection of food other than meat from animals killed in slaughterhouses.

Oxford Essays on Psychology. By William Brown, D.M., D.Sc., F.R.C.P. (Pp. 148. 10s. 6d.) London: William Heinemann. 1948.

Lectures on general psychology delivered to students.

Modern Psychiatry in Practice. By W. Lindesay Neustatter, B.Sc., M.D., M.R.C.P. 2nd ed. (Pp. 275. 12s. 6d.) London: J. and A. Churchill. 1948.

A general introduction to the practice of psychiatry for student and practitioner.

The Universe in the Making. By J. E. R. McDonagh, F.R.C.S. (Pp. 174. 7s. 6d.) London: Chaterson. 1948.

A medical man's personal account of the universe.

Basic Facts of Health Education. By W. P. Kennedy, Ph.D., L.R.C.P., F.R.S.Ed., et al. (Pp. 193. 7s. 6d.) London: The Pharmaceutical Press. 1947.

A collection of short articles for pharmacists.

Voluntary Social Services since 1918. By Henry A. Mess et al. (Pp. 255. 21s.) London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner. 1948.

A review of the social services in Britain.

Harmony of Nature. By L. Richmond Wheeler. (Pp. 200. 10s. 6d.) London: Edward Arnold. 1947.

The author, a biologist, elaborates his theory of "co-operation for existence" in nature.

The Psychology of Diet and Nutrition. By L. S. Selling, M.D., and M. A. S. Ferraro, M.S. (Pp. 192. 8s. 6d.) London: John Lane. The Bodley Head. 1947.

A simple account by a dietitian and a psychiatrist intended for dietitians and housewives.

Tuberculosis in the Commonwealth, 1947. (Pp. 328. 15s.) London: Pendragon. 1947.

The transactions of the Commonwealth and Empire Tuberculosis Conference convened by the N.A.P.T. in 1947.

Psychiatry: a Short Treatise. By W. A. O'Connor, L.M.S.S.A., D.P.M. (Pp. 380. 35s.) Bristol: John Wright. 1948.

A general introduction to psychiatry.

An Outline of the Development of Science. By Mansel Davies. (Pp. 214. 3s. 6d.) London: Watts (Thinker's Library). 1947.

A short history, with illustrations.

Clinical Endocrinology and Constitutional Medicine. By A. P. Cawadiaz, O.B.E., M.D., F.R.C.P. (Pp. 362. 42s.) London: Frederick Muller. 1947.

The author stresses the clinical aspects of endocrinology and includes a number of illustrations.