

# Book Reviews

## To-day's Drugs

**To-day's Drugs.** Specially Commissioned Articles from the *British Medical Journal*. (Pp. 400 + viii. 30s.) London: British Medical Association. 1964.

This volume comprises the articles under the title of "To-day's Drugs" appearing in the *B.M.J.* between January 1963 and May 1964. They cover the majority of important recent advances in the drug treatment of common diseases. An able group—mostly of younger contributors—has been commissioned to assess not only the therapeutic value of the new remedies considered but also their toxic and side-effects and the precautions to be taken in their use.

A lecture—perhaps very successful when delivered—may lose all its quality when published, and it is notoriously difficult to make a good paper for a scientific periodical out of an M.D. thesis. In the same way short

journalistic articles, often of great ephemeral interest to flip through, may be unsuited to enshrine in a more permanent setting. For example, "Any Questions?", so interesting, singular, and amusing when asked and answered in their weekly column, are a trifle overpowering when hundreds are reproduced in book form. Nevertheless, the same criticism cannot be levelled at "To-day's Drugs," which in this volume provides a most acceptable and authoritative guide to modern drug therapy. The articles are indeed models of accurate and wise compression. In 55 different contributions it would be difficult to maintain an equal standard of excellence, but this does not mean that the book is like

the curate's egg, for *all* the articles are good, though some are better than others. Occasionally the amount of space devoted to one drug seems curiously out of proportion to that given to another. Thus, there are many who believe that the use of sulphonamides should nowadays be limited to the treatment of meningococcal infections; yet twelve-and-a-half pages in this volume are devoted to them and only four to insulin. Incidentally the statement in the latter article that "Most diabetics who require insulin can be well controlled on a single morning injection of lente" (insulin) makes one wonder what criteria the author adopts in determining the control of his diabetic patients.

This book can be thoroughly recommended as a clear, concentrated, and up-to-date account of modern drug treatment which will be of the greatest value to doctors in general and hospital practice.

DERRICK DUNLOP.

## Clinical Surgery

**General Principles and Breast.** Clinical Surgery—1. Edited by Charles Rob, M.C., M.Chir., F.R.C.S., and Rodney Smith, M.S., F.R.C.S. (Pp. 580 + xiii; illustrated.) London: Butterworth. 1964.

**The Eye.** Clinical Surgery—2. Edited by Sir Stewart Duke-Elder, K.C.V.O., Ph.D., LL.D., M.D., F.R.C.S., F.R.C.P., F.R.S. (Pp. 365 + ix; illustrated.) London: Butterworth. 1964.

**Accident Surgery.** Clinical Surgery—3. Edited by Charles Rob, M.C., M.Chir., F.R.C.S., and Rodney Smith, M.S., F.R.C.S. (Pp. 232 + vii; illustrated.) Set of 16 volumes, £72. London: Butterworth. 1964.

This is an ambitious work of 16 volumes intended to be complementary to the series on operative surgery under the same authorship. It will include volumes on general surgery, gynaecology, obstetrics, eyes, ear, nose, and throat, and on various other special and regional fields. Each volume is the work of many contributors under the supervision of a consultant editor.

Volume 1 includes many particular instances as well as general principles. In addition to the subject of breast diseases mentioned in the title there is a long chapter on anaesthetics. There are sections also on anthrax, candidiasis and melioidosis, on oil granuloma, conjoined twins, and systemic lupus erythematosus, in addition to subjects more commonly found in the early pages of a surgical textbook.

Volume 2, on the eye, under the editorship of Sir Stewart Duke-Elder, exhibits a more coherent pattern and firmer direction, and is a kind of Every Doctor's Guide to Ophthalmology.

Volume 3, on accident surgery, deals at length with the organization of an accident unit, with the general response to injury, the treatment of wounds, and the general management of patients with multiple in-

juries, but apart from a chapter on burns there is little mention of individual injuries.

In general, it can be said that a high standard has been achieved, though the work might have been improved by more vigorous pruning and the avoidance of duplication. At £72 for the complete set it looks as though the libraries will find it in great demand.

CHARLES ILLINGWORTH.

## Medical Surveys

**Medical Surveys and Clinical Trials.** Some Methods and Applications of Group Research in Medicine. 2nd edition. Edited by L. J. Witts, C.B.E., M.A., M.D., Sc.D., F.R.C.P. (Pp. 367 + xi. 42s.) London, New York, and Toronto: Oxford University Press. 1964.

The five years that have elapsed since the first publication of this book have witnessed the increasing development of computers and other electronic devices for acquiring, processing, and retrieving data in clinical and preventive medicine. Such methods are bound to extend to the problems of diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis of disease and they may well make practicable hitherto impracticable problems in epidemiology and medical statistics. It thereby becomes increasingly important that the clinical research worker, for whom the book is intended, should be well informed in the methods of group study. As Professor Witts points out in his preface to this second edition, one would be a trifle bold to embark on a biochemical study of disease without knowing anything about milliequivalents or hydrogen-ion concentration. It is equally bold to set about a clinical trial or survey without knowing a good deal about controls and randomization, the difference between a cross-sectional and a longitudinal study, and the pros and cons of retrospective

and prospective inquiries. This book sets out much of the required knowledge and it is good that a second edition has been required. Various substantial alterations have been made and three chapters have been rewritten, namely, "Volunteers, Controls, Placebos, and Questionnaires in Clinical Trials" by E. M. Glaser, "Diseases of the Joints," by J. S. Lawrence, and "Tropical Diseases," by A. W. Woodruff. While the book has a quite general appeal, workers overseas, where there is so much to be done in this field, should find it particularly helpful.

AUSTIN BRADFORD HILL.

## Tumours of Childhood

**Tumours of Infancy and Childhood.** By Paul Michael, M.D. (Pp. 461 + xiii; illustrated. £7 10s.) Philadelphia and Montreal: J. B. Lippincott Company. 1964.

Neoplastic disease in childhood now takes third place among the causes of death in children, and is thus of great importance in paediatric pathology. Dr. Michael has attempted a formidable task in the present volume, which is not unduly large. He not only describes the macroscopic appearances and histological picture of most of the tumours likely to be encountered in children but includes the statistical incidence of these tumours, the clinical picture, together with laboratory and radiological data, and a note on prognosis and treatment. As if this were not enough he also includes case reports of some of the more striking examples of tumours among his own material. This has inevitably resulted in a lack of detailed histological description, which may foil the efforts of the pathologist to resolve a diagnostic problem. Similarly, the clinician may be confronted by a section on prognosis and treat-