

Book Reviews

Clinical Practice in Chest Disease

Respiratory Diseases. By John Crofton, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P. and Andrew Douglas, F.R.C.P. (Pp. 719 + xiv; illustrated. 155s.) Oxford: Blackwell. 1969.

This is the first large British textbook of respiratory diseases, apart from compilations of multiple authorship, since the monograph by the late Dr. Maurice Davidson, first published in 1935 and reaching its fourth and last edition in 1954. Professor Crofton and Dr. Douglas in their introduction state that it "is designed principally for postgraduates wishing to learn something of chest disease and as a modest reference book for general physicians or others".

Perusal of the contents reminds us of the very wide range of expert knowledge that is now required of physicians who specialize in chest disease. They must evidently be familiar with the structure and function of the respiratory system. Epidemiology is important in the understanding, not only of infectious diseases like tuberculosis, but also of other diseases, like chronic bronchitis and lung cancer, in the causation of which environmental, social, and economic factors are important. Chemotherapy of infections plays

a larger part in this specialty than in most others, and major advances in practical chemotherapy have stemmed from large-scale clinical studies in pulmonary tuberculosis and chronic non-tuberculous bronchopulmonary disease. Each of these has a separate chapter devoted to it, as well as references in the discussions of individual diseases. In the latter, due attention is given also to immunology and to industrial factors. The approach throughout is that of the alert and critical clinician, who keeps himself informed about advances and techniques in all relevant fields of study, and applies them to the problems he encounters in his patients. This multidisciplinary approach is much to be commended; textbooks which approach clinical problems predominantly from the point of view of a single discipline have their place, but cannot provide a balanced view for the practising clinician.

There is no doubt that the authors have succeeded, not only in their primary purpose

to provide a textbook of respiratory diseases for postgraduates, but also in their secondary purpose, to provide "a modest reference book". Well-chosen and quite extensive bibliographies, principally to English language publications, at the end of each chapter will provide invaluable help for those who need to go back to original sources.

A justified criticism of the book is that, although radiology receives full attention in the text, there are only a very few radiological illustrations. Apart from these, an attempt is made to illustrate radiological appearances by line drawings, but this is not very successful. While recognizing that the decision to adopt this expedient was probably made on economic grounds, since the inclusion of reproductions of radiographs of a standard comparable with that of the rest of the book would have led to considerably increased costs, one must regret this deficiency in an otherwise admirable production.

This is undoubtedly the best account of current knowledge of and clinical practice in chest diseases now available within the covers of a single volume in the English language.

J. G. SCADDING.

Clinical Neurology

Brain's Diseases of the Nervous System. 7th Edition. Revised by the late Lord Brain, D.M., F.R.C.P., F.R.S. and John N. Walton, T.D., M.D., F.R.C.P. (Pp. 1062 + xiv; illustrated. 95s.) London: Oxford University Press. 1969.

Russell Brain's *Diseases of the Nervous System* has been the standard full-length British textbook of clinical neurology for more than 30 years. Lord Brain had already revised about a third of the text of this seventh edition, published three years after his death, and the new editor, Professor J. N. Walton, has preserved the structure of the book as well as its style and format. He has, however, provided a new introductory section of nearly 140 pages dealing with the applied anatomy and physiology of the nervous system, and has also drawn on his own knowledge and experience for a comprehensive review of muscle disease—a splendid account of this very active field of clinical and pathological investigation. Sections on disturbances of the spinal fluid circulation, virus infections of the nervous system, the rare demyelinating diseases, and polyneuritis are among others extensively reshaped by the new editor.

The volume is comprehensive, scholarly, and well documented, and is a convenient source of reference for the neurologist as well as for the physician whose contacts with the field are more occasional. It has never been the easiest of reading; it is too long for the average student, and its bulk and weight are somewhat forbidding. But it

is excellent value for money, splendid pabulum for the postgraduate aspirant for the M.R.C.P. or D.P.M., and in general a worthy monument to its progenitor.

To bring someone else's book up to date is a daunting prospect, especially one so extensive. It is impossible to think of any British neurologist who could have done justice to it except Professor Walton, who presents a unique combination of energy, enthusiasm, and encyclopaedic neurological knowledge. It will be interesting to see how far the nature of the book changes in the hands of a neurologist of a different generation. So far Dr. Walton's amendments and additions are so discreet and so tactfully dovetailed that the book remains essentially "Russell Brain". But no doubt the next edition will be different and the subsequent one more different still. There seems no reason to doubt that under its new management this remarkable and comprehensive textbook will survive to its half-century and beyond.

HENRY MILLER.

Pathogenesis of Osteoarthritis

The Biology of Degenerative Joint Disease. By Leon Sokoloff, B.A., M.D. (Pp. 162 + ix; illustrated. 59s.) Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press. 1969.

This is a short but comprehensive systematic treatise on the pathogenesis of degenerative joint disease written by one of the

acknowledged authorities on the subject. Chapters are devoted to the pathology of degenerative joint disease, osteoarthritis and aging, collagen, the ground substance, and repair of articular cartilage, and biomechanics of and systemic factors in osteoarthritis. The book is a good critical cross-section of the subject, not only in man, but in animals. With 38 pages of references and some 24 references to the page, the world's literature on the subject is well covered, and if few firm conclusions are reached in many subjects this is only because in the present state of our appreciation of the pathological process at work in degenerative joint disease ignorance still greatly outstrips knowledge.

The author's "Concluding Remarks" are therefore not very inspiring, as he admits that in the past 20 years study of the other rheumatic diseases has progressed more quickly and further than it has in osteoarthritis. This is a well-written and worth-while review of a difficult subject, written more for the worker in the field than for the general reader. As such it is to be recommended.

F. DUDLEY HART.

Mycoplasmas

The Mycoplasmatals and the L-Phase of Bacteria. Edited by Leonard Hayflick. (Pp. 731 + xix; illustrated. 280s.) Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing. 1969.

The only thing which will in any way limit the usefulness of this excellent book is its