

Reviews

ST. MARY'S

The History of St. Mary's Hospital Medical School: A Century of Medical Education. By Zachary Cope. (Pp. 258; illustrated. 25s.) London: William Heinemann Ltd. 1954.

The teaching hospitals and medical schools of London have a proud and honourable history, the eldest of them, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, extending back to Norman times, while the youngest of all (except the Royal Free Hospital), St. Mary's Hospital, has reached its centenary this year.

This history, which, as its subtitle states, describes also a century of medical education, has been entrusted to the erudite and capable pen of Sir Zachary Cope. In increasing the reputation and teaching of the school, especially in surgery, he has played no small part. This is not apparent in the *History* itself, but some amends are made in the foreword by the Earl of Verulam, president of the medical school council, which pays a well-merited tribute to the author as a "loyal and devoted servant of the Hospital and of the Medical School."

The early chapters of the book describe the rise and passing of the private medical schools and the system of medical apprenticeship. Sir Zachary tells how the new hospital and medical school in Paddington were founded to meet the needs of a rapidly increasing population. The succeeding chapters describe the triumphs and progress of the school, which under the capable administration of its deans—here a special chapter is given to the successful work of Lord Moran—has done so much for modern medical education. Half the book is devoted to short, illustrated biographies of the staff of the school. To name but a few, what a galaxy they are: Burdon Sanderson, Broadbent, the three Lanes, Pepper, Spilsbury, Willcox, Waller, Leonard Rogers, Charles Singer, Almroth Wright, Fleming, and Leonard Colebrook. They have not only made their school illustrious, but their discoveries have benefited medicine and mankind. The book is admirably produced. While fulfilling its purpose as a history of St. Mary's Hospital and School, it is also a valuable contribution to the history of medicine.

ARTHUR S. MACNALTY.

ISOTOPIC TRACERS

Isotopic Tracers: A Theoretical and Practical Manual for Biological Students and Research Workers. By G. E. Francis, W. Mulligan, and A. Wormald. Foreword by G. Hevesy. (Pp. 306; illustrated. 37s. 6d.) London: The Athlone Press. 1954.

When any important technique of investigation is increasing rapidly in scope and value there is need for a sound and simple description of its method for those who are starting to make use of it. The radioactive and stable isotopes have just such an extending field of application, and Professor Wormald and his colleagues have produced just the right book. They wisely avoid the temptation to enumerate the existing applications of tracer methods, for that has been done often and well already; they confine their account to those methods which depend on examination of samples rather than on counting *in vivo*, and have produced a supremely clear, sound, and readable description of what they are driven to call "isotope methodology." Their account deals in detail with the preparation and counting of samples for the main types of radioactive isotope, with mass spectrography, with the labelling of organic compounds, briefly with autoradiography, and adequately with the necessary precautions in the use of these materials. They then describe fully a dozen experimental exercises that they have included in the practical course on isotope techniques that has been running for the last few years at the Medical College of St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

The impression that this work gives is of the frankness and lucidity with which its authors describe the practical

troubles as well as the principles of these methods, even to the best way of pouring liquid from an M6 counter tube. They might have dealt rather more fully with statistics of counting and given less on the symptoms of radiation sickness, which, as they say, should not arise in tracer work. They might perhaps have mentioned the possibility of radiochemical changes in labelled compounds kept on the shelf at high specific activity or of counts arising from potassium in reagents. They could have said more of scintillation counters, and particularly on the sensitivity of the "well" type. These, however, are details of emphasis which do not detract from the pleasure of reading a book which is so sound and clear on the field it covers.

E. ERIC POCHIN.

ANTITUBERCULOSIS VACCINATION

BCG and Vole Vaccination: A Practical Handbook. By K. Neville Irvine, M.A., D.M., B.Ch.(Oxon), M.R.C.S.(Eng.), L.R.C.P.(Lond.). Foreword by Frederick Heaf, M.A., M.D. F.R.C.P. (Pp. 96; illustrated. 12s. 6d.) London: National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis. 1954.

This is an excellent and authoritative short guide to the use of antituberculosis vaccines, by the author of *BCG Vaccination in Theory and Practice*. After summarizing the theory of vaccination and the properties of B.C.G. and vole vaccines he presents the main topics of the techniques of tuberculin testing and vaccination. A description of complications follows, and the book concludes with comments on organization specially directed to the British scene. The author has succeeded in compressing the essential information into a small space; the illustrations are good. He maintains a balanced view of the probable place of vaccination in public health work and stresses the difficulties of statistical appraisal; it might be added that the usefulness of the method is likely to differ with the varying epidemiology of the disease from country to country, and to change from one period to another. Chapter 6 might be better titled "Vaccination Techniques" instead of "Vaccination," and part of its introduction transferred elsewhere. "Lupoid reactions" should probably be changed to "lupus," since the conditions appear to be indistinguishable. It is implied that P.P.D. and O.T. are biologically equivalent, but there is recent evidence that the two are qualitatively different and that dose equivalence is not quite the same throughout the scale of potency; hence one should not change from the use of O.T. to P.P.D. without good reason. But these are minor comments on a most useful contribution, which can be recommended to all undertaking antituberculosis vaccination.

P. D'ARCY HART.

SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF MEDICINE

Lectures on the Scientific Basis of Medicine. Volume II, 1952-3. (Pp. 380+xi; illustrated, with 29 plates. 35s.) London: The Athlone Press. 1954.

Some educators have toyed with the notion of two streams in our medical schools—the general practitioners and the specialists; others have discussed the possibility of a postgraduate diploma in clinical science or research methods. Neither of these ideas has got very far, for obvious practical reasons. In the meantime Sir Francis Fraser and his colleagues in the British Postgraduate Medical Federation have made an immense step forward in higher medical education by the series of lectures on "The Scientific Basis of Medicine," of which this is the second annual volume. The quality which distinguishes these lectures is that they deal with medicine as a science, whether it be Spence writing of planned clinical observation or Neuberger telling the story that leads from Garrod's observations on alkaptonuria to modern views on the relation between nucleic acids and protein synthesis. This science is not disinterested; indeed, the writers are fully aware of the possible implications of their work—as, for example, Wilson Smith writing about virus adaptability in relation to human disease; but it is