

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES

Heart—A Physiologic and Clinical Study of Cardio-vascular Diseases. By Aldo A. Luisada, M.D. Foreword by Herrman L. Blumgart. Second edition. (Pp. 680+xiv; illustrated. £5 14s.) London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox. 1954.

To read the table of contents of this book is at once stimulating and novel, for the headings show that an original point of view may be expected; and this proves to be the case. The brief historical chapter is useful in giving some idea of chronology. The chapter on physiology is very well done and forms a good foundation. In the clinical study, as one has so often noted, the interrogation of the patient as to the symptoms, and how full understanding and knowledge of these experiences is gained, receive but little attention. For instance, dyspnoea has only ten lines or so in a half-page column, and palpitation, which oddly enough comes first, has only thirteen. The simple clinical study of the veins in the neck receives little attention, but the phlebogram, unlikely to be taken, has pages of print devoted to it. All technical procedures are clearly described and critically assessed. The short chapter on the classification of disease is very useful. Throughout expression is direct and brief—sometimes too short, so that there are important omissions. For example, in one place the reader might think that the paradoxical pulse occurred only with a constricted pericardial sac.

Advice on treatment is good; the action of the various drugs is clearly described, but the methods of their administration might be more fully explained. Each chapter has a large number of references, conveniently referred to in the text by numerals. Many of the illustrations are rather crude and ill drawn, if not inaccurate. The picture of the man in an attack of angina hardly conforms to the usual gesture patients use to locate their pain; the dramatic illustrations of the drug merchant that appear in the journals are much better. Nor does Fig. 257 suggest that the pain spreads to the jaw. Much of the author's individual opinions are given well-deserved space. This book is throughout full of information of the best and most up-to-date kind.

TERENCE EAST.

ARTIFICIAL LIMBS

Human Limbs and Their Substitutes. By Paul E. Klopsteg, Ph.D., Sc.D., Philip D. Wilson, M.D., et al. (Pp. 844+xiv; illustrated. 96s.) New York, Toronto, London: McGraw Hill Book Co., Inc. 1954.

After the second world war the United States Government allotted large sums of money for the investigation of human locomotion and research on artificial limbs. This they did at the instigation of the Veterans Administration. Surgeons, engineers, and scientists attached to universities co-operated in investigating these problems, and as a result much information has been gathered over the years and is collated in this volume.

The first part deals with the medical problems of the amputee—for example, phantom limbs, psychological adjustment, and the principles of prosthetic prescription, but specific instructions regarding the prescription of limbs are omitted. The second part embraces the biomechanics of the upper extremity, the mechanics of voluntary muscle, and the development of prosthetic hands, hooks, cosmetic gloves, and artificial arms. The next section deals with the functional structures of the lower limb—for example, walking and some of the new developments in prostheses. The last section is concerned with the adjustment of the amputee to his limb and some of the problems involved in fitting, alignment, training, and artificial-limb evaluation.

This book has been compiled by 30 contributors headed by Klopsteg and Wilson. Each author has been given a free hand to record his own impressions, but the book is not a textbook, neither is it a guide to how artificial limbs should be made or what is the best type of prosthesis. Much of the information is academic, and in some instances the devices evolved have been found unsatisfactory in practice and have

since been discarded. Some of the mechanisms are elaborate and costly to maintain, and in the reviewer's opinion are contrary to the generally accepted principle that a prosthesis should be of the simplest design consistent with effectiveness for its purpose.

There does not appear to be in the U.S.A., as there is in this country, a central organization catering for the whole industry which can develop, reject, or accept mechanisms for artificial limbs. It apparently devolves upon the individual manufacturer to decide what type of device he can best sell rather than what is found by research and long development to be the most suitable for the amputee. The book is, nevertheless, most interesting, and one supposes that for the first time there is included in one volume many different ideas and theories of which the forward-looking prosthetist should be aware.

LEON GILLIS.

ION EXCHANGE AND ADSORPTION

Ion Exchange and Adsorption Agents in Medicine. By Gustav J. Martin, Sc.D. (Pp. 333+vii; illustrated. 63s.) Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Co. London: J. and A. Churchill Ltd. 1955.

In the author's foreword, in the material on the dust-sheet, and in the subtitle, "The Concept of Intestinal Bionics," prominence is given to a theory that "all chronic degenerative disease has as an important component in its aetiology the absorption from the intestine of small quantities of toxic chemicals." The author believes that ion exchange and adsorption materials may be able to prevent this process; but it is admitted that this contention is "as yet unsubstantiated by clinical observations." Fortunately perhaps for the merits of the volume as a whole the development of this theory occupies less than 10% of the book; the argument is oratorical and persuasive but not convincing. The greater part of the book is devoted to an account of the chemistry of ion-exchange resins, and the application of anion exchangers in the treatment of peptic ulcer and of cation exchangers in depleting the body of sodium or potassium. There are also short chapters on adsorption materials other than resins and on chelating agents. It is perhaps unfair to expect from a book of this type a balanced account of clinical indications; but it is surprising to read, for example, that "there seems little question but that the anion exchange resins represent the agent of choice in the treatment of peptic ulcer." The figures in Table 40 (p. 218) do not warrant the conclusion drawn from them on page 219. In Table 1 (p. 10) the ionic composition given for blood is that of plasma or serum.

This book cannot be recommended as a reliable account of the medical applications of exchange resins.

D. A. K. BLACK.

In *Doctor at Large* (Michael Joseph, 10s. 6d.) Richard Gordon continues the medical saga to which *Doctor in the House* gave such an uproarious start. After qualification the hero finds the outlook intoxicating, and the path to surgical eminence strewn with roses. But even the life of a young doctor turns out to be real and earnest. The post of junior assistant casualty officer at St. Swithin's offered some well-taken opportunities for dropping bricks on the toes of the professor of surgery, and soon Dr. Gordon was knocking at the door of a shady medical employment agency. From then on he gathered experience (not all medical) the hard way. From an industrial practice in the Midlands, where the principal's love-starved wife proved an unusual professional hazard, he moved on to a smart Mayfair outfit, where an electrocardiograph followed the doctor on his rounds in a second Rolls. After a fairly quiet spell in a rural practice, the hero returns to St. Swithin's as temporary senior assistant house-surgeon. In this post he achieves the status of eligible bachelor, and this leads to one of the funniest scenes in the book—dinner with the family of a nurse as a prelude to the announcement of an engagement of which the prospective fiancé was blissfully unaware. In a conversation with Grimsdyke—that admirable man of the world so well portrayed by Kenneth More in the film of *Doctor in the House*—Dr. Gordon reveals the seriousness of his ambitions. Fortunately this has not restrained him from making outrageous, but not unkindly, fun of the medical profession on nearly every page of this book.