

nosis are not underplayed, and the practical application of the subject in relation to clinical management, particularly of gynaecological lesions, is sensibly and adequately stressed.

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## Monument to the C.P.C.

**Differential Diagnosis:** The Interpretation of Clinical Evidence. 2nd edn. A. McGehee Harvey, M.D. and James Bordley III, M.D. (Pp. 1238; 229s.) W. B. Saunders. 1970.

This book is a lavish monument to the clinicopathological conference (C.P.C.). Originally devised by Walter Cannon and developed by Richard Cabot in Boston, the C.P.C. is an established feature of clinical education. At worst it is a kind of medical parlour game, with a histrionic exercise, the opportunity for a virtuoso performance or public humiliation. At best it is a most valuable technique, a kind of war game, but it is always artificial and contrived. Several factors combine to frustrate the attempt to simulate reality. Reconstructions based on clinical records made some time, often years, previously are necessarily erroneous. Even the most stereotyped clinical notes are the physicians' working drawings, incomplete fragments to aid and justify the job in hand, and fully meaningful only to their author.

The introductory chapter includes an analysis of the procedures involved in diagnosis.

The logical, systematic approach outlined and illustrated here must be the basis of our clinical practice, but such complete adherence to the scientific method is not justified and undervalues intuition. In his *Induction and Intuition in Scientific Thought* Medawar has made it possible for clinicians to admit to hunches and empiricism without shame, and to be less in awe of the scientific method. Subsequent chapters are based on symptoms, such as diarrhoea, or on particular lesions, such as aortic insufficiency, or on particular organs. The relevant disorders are discussed briefly from a clinical and aetiological point of view and sometimes exhaustive lists of causes are provided. The 119 causes of congestive cardiac failure and the 90 of diarrhoea are particularly daunting. Fortunately diagnosis is not always reached by exclusion. The major part of each chapter is taken up by illustrative cases, chiefly published clinicopathological conferences from Massachusetts General Hospital, Johns Hopkins Hospital, and Washington University School of Medicine. Drs. Harvey and Bordley explain and defend their reliance on the C.P.C. in the introductory chapter, but somehow they are not completely convincing.

Dr. Harvey and Dr. Bordley speak of the *correct* diagnosis being *revealed* by the pathologist (my italics). Advances in clinical investigation have so far outstripped those of morbid anatomy that we can no longer pretend postmortem examinations finally reveal the truth. It is foolish to claim that the pathologist's observation is necessarily

more to be trusted than that of the clinician, let alone the biochemical observation or the angiographic or electrophysiological record made at the relevant time. Many cases and conditions are largely excluded from the C.P.C. because successful diagnosis and treatment results in recovery, or because the points of interest are not amenable to a definite diagnosis by morbid anatomical means. There are many instances in the real world when to pursue a diagnosis to a degree sufficiently precise as to satisfy the audience at a C.P.C. is not necessary or desirable or good medicine. The duty of the physician is to treat the patient and to relieve suffering. Correct treatment may not require or allow such precision.

The standard of case presentation and discussion is extremely high throughout the book, and reflects the excellence of the units from which the material is drawn. To follow the approach of acknowledged experts is valuable in learning the technique of differential diagnosis. In their ranging over possibilities and sifting evidence they reveal facts and opinions not readily available in text books. Such gems are unfortunately few and the general impression is verbose and repetitious, in spite of the avowed intention of the authors to avoid these faults. This is particularly unfortunate in so expensive a book, and together with the inherent limitations of the chosen style of the C.P.C. must restrict its appeal.

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## Books Received

*Books noticed here may be reviewed later.*

**The Respiratory Muscles:** 2nd edn. Mechanics and Neural Control. E. J. M. Campbell, F.R.C.P. *et al.* (Pp. 348; 100s.) Lloyd-Luke. 1970.

**Parasagittal and Falx Meningiomas.** P. C. Gautier-Smith, F.R.C.P. (Pp. 350; 150s.) Butterworths. 1970.

**Infant Feeding.** Mavis Gunther, M.D. (Pp. 114; 25s.) Methuen. 1970.

**Clinical Handbook of Psychopharmacology.** Ed. Alberto DiMascio, Ph.D. and R. I. Shader, M.D. (Pp. 395; \$17.95.) Science House. 1970.

**Diagnosis and Treatment of Cardiac Arrhythmias.** 2nd edn. J. P. P. Stock, F.R.C.P. (Pp. 271; 78s.) Butterworths. 1970.

**Cell Biology.** Jack D. Burke, Ph.D. (Pp. 343; 90s.) Williams & Wilkins. 1970.

**Immunological Surveillance.** Sir Macfarlane Burnett, O.M., F.R.S., M.D. (Pp. 280; 60s.) Pergamon Press. 1970.

**Understanding Anxiety in Everyday Life.** Eric J. Trimmer, M.B. (Pp. 140; 25s.) George Allen & Unwin. 1970.

**Muscle Diseases.** Proceedings of an International Congress, Milan May 1969. Ed. J. N. Walton, F.R.C.P. *et al.* (Pp. 740; 356s.) Excerpta Medica. 1970.

**The Privileged Adolescent:** An Outline of the Physical and Mental Problems of the Student Society. A. D. G. Gunn, M.R.C.S. (Pp. 158; 35s.) Medical and Technical Publishing. 1970.

**Operative Surgery.** 3rd edn. E. Stephens Gurdjian, M.D. and L. Murray Thomas, M.D. (Pp. 609; 200s.) Williams & Wilkins. 1970.

**Nucleus and Cytoplasm.** 2nd edn. Henry Harris. (Pp. 181; 38s. Boards Edn. 18s. Paperback.) Clarendon Press. 1970.

**A Short Textbook of Haematology.** 3rd edn. R. B. Thompson, F.R.C.P. (Pp. 384; 55s.) Pitman. 1970.

**Oxford Medicine:** Essays on the Evolution of the Oxford Clinical School to Commemorate the Bicentenary of the Radcliffe Infirmary 1770-1970. Ed. Kenneth Dewhurst, D.Phil., D.P.M. (Pp. 212; 50s.) Sandford Publications. 1970.

**Brain Mechanisms and Behaviour.** 2nd edn. J. R. Smythies, M.D., D.P.M. (Pp. 186; 40s.) Blackwell. 1970.

**Atlas of Haematology.** 3rd edn. George A. McDonald, M.D., M.R.C.Path., *et al.* (Pp. 226; 110s.) E. & S. Livingstone. 1970.

**Viruses and Cancer.** Sir Christopher Andrewes, M.D., F.R.S. (Pp. 166; 55s.) Weidenfeld & Nicolson. 1970.

**Textbook of the Fundus of the Eye.** 2nd edn. Arthur J. Ballantyne, M.D. and Isaac C. Michaelson, F.R.C.P. (Pp. 736; 300s.) E. & S. Livingstone. 1970.

**Craig and Faust's Clinical Parasitology.** 8th edn. Ernest Carroll Faust, Ph.D., *et al.* (Pp. 890; 230s.) Henry Kimpton. 1970.

**Progress in Medical Genetics.** Vol. 7. Ed. Arthur G. Steinburgh, Ph.D. and Alexander G. Bearn, M.D. (Pp. 243; 150s.) Heinemann. 1970.

**Principles of Psychopharmacology:** A Textbook for Physicians, Medical Students and Behavioral Scientists. Ed. W. G. Clark, Ph.D. and J. del Giudice, M.D. (Pp. 814; \$19.50) Academic Press. 1970.

**Color Atlas and Textbook of Haematology.** William R. Platt, M.D. (Pp. 445; 270s.) J. B. Lippincott. U.K.: Blackwell. 1970.

**Thomas Campion:** Poet, Composer, Physician. Edward Lowbury *et al.* (Pp. 195; 42s.) Chatto & Windus. 1970.

**Hyperbaric Oxygen and Its Clinical Value:** With Special Emphasis on Biochemical and Cardiovascular Aspects. N. G. Meijne, M.D. (Pp. 261; \$16.50.) Charles C. Thomas. 1970.

**An Introduction to Clinical Rheumatology.** Ed. Michael Mason, F.R.C.P. and H. L. F. Currey, M.R.C.P. (Pp. 343; 70s.) Pitman 1970.

**Dermatology:** Concise Medical Textbook. 2nd edn. E. Lipman Cohen, M.B. and J. S. Pegum, F.R.C.P. (Pp. 210; 35s.) Bailliere, Tindall & Cassell 1970.

**Illustrated Physiology.** 2nd edn. Ann B. McNaught, M.B. and Robin Callander, F.F.Ph. (Pp. 288; 40s.) E. & S. Livingstone. 1970.

**Poisons.** F. Bodin and C. F. Cheinisse. (Pp. 255; 35s. Cased. 18s. Paperback.) Weidenfeld & Nicolson. 1970.

**Clinical Haematology.** 3rd edn. Robert Duncan Eastham, F.R.C.Path. (Pp. 212; 18s.) John Wright. 1970.

**Essays in Toxicology.** Vol. 2. Ed. Frank R. Blood. (Pp. 218; 84s.) Academic Press. 1970.