

Book Reviews

advances in medical science brought other no less important changes. The kind of disease which the doctor meets today is vastly different from that which he was seeing before the second world war. Hospital care is easier to obtain, acute illness such as pneumonia is quickly cured, even the common measles has lost much of its sting. Many more family doctors practise in groups and in so doing have ceased to some extent to be the guides, philosophers and friends of their patients that their predecessors were. The isolated doctor of the past, tied to his surgery with only the help of his wife may not have had so bad a time as has been pictured by such writers as Francis Brett Young, for there were fewer distractions and the telephone was not in those days a universal method of communication. The doctor had to be summoned by messenger, roads were not good, and horses might have to be saddled before he could be fetched. When he saw his patient he had little to offer in the way of cure: diagnosis and prognosis were his forte, comforting words and dietetic precepts, reinforced by galenicals were his *modus operandi*. Today he can prescribe potent remedies for most of the serious diseases which he meets, but he still remains powerless to deal with the lesser ills which beset mankind and truth to say he little understands them. To hedge himself off from the necessity of meeting with this embarrassment he has surrounded himself with a team of helpers graced with the title of ancillary staff.

The book under review is written by a journalist who has specialized in medical politics and has watched from the side-lines the development of this revolution in medical practice. It is the struggles for better remuneration and conditions of service that especially interest him for it is these struggles that are newsworthy. During most of the time covered by his book another movement was developing; an attempt to bring the patient better service, and to the doctor greater satisfaction in his work. On this aspect of the revolution in practice the author is weak. He mentions the Royal College of General Practitioners more or less in passing and gives the wrong date for its foundation, yet the effect of the college on the future of medical practice in this country has been great and is continuing.

One of the most valuable features of the book is the very complete list of references.

R. M. S. MCCONAGHEY

CONTRIBUTORS

- COHEN OF BIRKENHEAD, *Rt. Hon. Lord*, M.D., F.R.C.P., 31 Rodney Street, Liverpool, L1 9EN.
GRAY, T. Cecil, M.D., F.R.C.S., F.F.A.R.C.S., Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Ashton Street, P.O. Box 147, Liverpool L69 3BX.
GUIRDHAM, ARTHUR, M.A., D.M., D.P.M., 149 High Street, Bathford, Bath.
LEEK, F. FILCE, Mena House, Beechwood Drive, Aldbury, Nr. Tring, Herts.
MCCONAGHEY, R. M. S., O.B.E., M.D., 35 Victoria Road, Dartmouth.
MAEGRAITH, B. G., C.M.G., M.A., D.Phil., F.R.C.P., F.R.C.P.Ed., Dean of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, Pembroke Place, Liverpool L3 5QA.
MATTHEWS, L. G., F.P.S., F.S.A., 2 Pump Court, Temple, London, E.C.4.
MORTON, R. A., Ph.D., D.Sc., F.R.I.C., F.R.S., Emeritus Professor of Biochemistry, University of Liverpool, P.O. Box 147, Liverpool L69 3BX.
ROSS, JOHN A., T.D., F.R.C.P.Ed., Eagle Crag, Caldby Road, West Kirby, Cheshire.
ROWLANDS, JOHN, M.B., B.S., Lakeside Health Centre, Tavy Bridge, Thamesmead, S.E.2.
SANDERSON, G., M.D., F.R.C.P., 35 Rodney Street, Liverpool L1 9EN.
WINDER, MARIANNE, M.A., A.L.A., Wellcome Institute of the History of Medicine, 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BP.
WRIGHT, A. DICKSON, M.S., F.R.C.S., 12 Wimpole Street, London, W1.