quality which may be deceptive, and do injustice to one whilst overrating another.

Dr. Blomfield's introduction is good, and his analysis of the present situation of anaesthetic practice is clear and brief. The first four chapters contain reviews of the theory of anaesthesia, use of volatile anaesthetics, nitrous oxide and basal narcotics. The first two chapters are excellent but lack references to guide the interested, but little experienced, practitioner in a choice of profitable reading for the limited time he may have available.

In chapter III, Professor MacIntosh gives a precise and a practical survey of nitrous oxide administration, but again without references.

Brigadier Ashworth, in chapter IV, supplies some useful references which enhance the value of his chapter and make it possible to use it as a guide for a House Surgeon. He gives details of technique which are clear and easy to follow.

Chapter V would have been improved by the use of a few line drawings and diagrams, in economy of much reading.

Authors in England should remember that long descriptions in English are difficult to follow by the people of countries where English is merely the language of examinations. Line drawings explain far more to these people, as they do also to anyone else, apart from saving time and leaving deeper memory impressions.

It is a pity Dr. Hasler has not given us a more practical chapter on spinal anaesthesia; he certainly explains some points of difficulty but, as one who gives his own spinal anaesthetics, I would have appreciated a clear description of his preferred technique, with its variations and his treatment of the complications. Again he gives no references.

Chapters VII and VIII are excellent. Chapter IX is good but would be more valuable if details of technique, such as spheno-maxillary block, had been given. Again no references.

Chapter X, in the same way, lacks short exact descriptions of techniques for the common regional blocks. The use of amethocaine which gives such prolonged and even anaesthesia, and which has recently become popular is not mentioned.

Chapter XI could have been longer and more detailed, for the practitioners' troubles truly begin with the post-operative period and the gathering of anxious relatives at the bedside.

Chapter XII gives a short survey of Anaesthetic Explosions but no reference to recent work on the subject.

This is a disappointing book in many ways, but should be read, with discretion, by all practitioners interested in anaesthetics and by all junior anaesthetists.

A. T. A.

THE PHYSIOLOGICAL BASIS OF MEDICAL PRACTICE.—By C. H. Best, C.B.E., F.R.S., and N. B. Taylor, F.R.S., F.R.C.S. Fourth Edition. 1945. Baillière, Tindall and Cox, London. Pp. xiv plus 1169, with 497 illustrations. Price, 55s.

THE labour spent on writing a comprehensive account of close correlations between the latest developments in physiology and medicine is enormous. Further, the need for revising such an account is twice as great as it would be in either of the two subjects singly. The present book is the result of a successful attempt at the correlation and revision. A progressive physician must have access to it.

The basic physiological items are treated with conciseness and precision in 9 sections and 81 chapters. The new two-column format helps both the reader (by bringing a whole paragraph before the eye at a time) and the printer (by reducing the length of the line in which a correction is to be made).

In the next edition the table on blood groups on page 37 may be readjusted and the linkage between the laboratory and the clinic made more complete in the matter of the intrapleural pressure which the physiologists measure in mercury and clinicians in

water: the book appears to measure it in mercury only.

In conformity with the economy standard the get-up is satisfactory. A few printer's errors (one occurs on page 297, last but one line, 'n' instead of 'in') are not likely to cause inconvenience.

S. D. S. G.

HOWELL'S TEXTBOOK OF PHYSIOLOGY.—Edited by John F. Fulton, M.D. Fifteenth Edition. 1946. W. B. Saunders Company, Limited, London and Philadelphia. Pp. xxxv plus 1304. Illustrated. Price, 40s.

THIS well-known textbook of physiology has been thoroughly revised by a team of editors and other contributing authorities collaborating with Professor Fulton, in all numbering 24.

While the fluent prose style of the original has been preserved newer developments have been presented *de novo* rather than worked into the older text. Some sections on old topics have been rewritten completely. The physiological studies of sex and aviation include the latest developments in these rapidly unfolding items of knowledge.

Perhaps the sections on nervous system which take up nearly half of the book could have been reduced to provide space for endocrinology which is still treated along old lines. The alleged features in an old picture of a decerebrated cat (hyperextension of the neck, opisthotonos and extension of the tail, on page 187) are not very striking.

The book is fully representative of modern American physiology and will provide reliable reference to post-graduate workers anywhere. Undergraduates particularly interested in the subject and physicians who keep abreast with the times will find it helpful.

The printing and illustrations, nearly all in black and white, are excellent. No printer's errors attract attention. The paper and binding are decidedly better than those of most standard books produced under economy standards.

S. D. S. G.

THE CHEMICAL COMPOSITION OF FOODS.—By R. A. McCance and E. M. Widdowson. Second Edition. 1946. Published by His Majesty's Stationery Office, London. Price, 6s. net

THE problem of human nutrition as well as the nutritional and dietetic treatment of disease requires, as an essential, an exact knowledge of the chemical composition of food. The Medical Research Council in England has for many years past been collecting data of the analytical work of food chemistry done in that country to provide a standard work on the subject. With this object in view an intensive work on the analysis of foodstuff was started by McCance and others at the King's College Hospital, London, in 1925, and more recently at the Department of Medicine, Cambridge.

Comments are unnecessary on the present volume which comprises mostly of a reliable collection of data published from time to time. The authors, who were themselves the pioneer workers, have taken trouble to scrutinize the whole work and make corrections wherever there were doubts about the validity of the figures after subjecting them to fresh analysis.

The figures as given in the book can thus be taken as true and correct and herein lies the great value of the book as a standard book of reference in the matter of chemical composition of foods.

J. P. B.

FORENSIC CHEMISTRY AND SCIENTIFIC CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION.—By A. Lucas, O.B.E., F.R.I.C. Fourth Edition. 1945. Edward Arnold and Company, London. Pp. 340. Price, 25s.

IN the present, fourth, edition of this book the general plan of the last edition has been preserved although alterations and additions have been made throughout.

Forensic matters dealt with are many and go beyond the range of forensic medicine. Naturally all of them have not been treated in detail. References and bibliographies, however, are ample and put the seeker on the path every time.

Some lack of agreement may exist on the following : (1) The test of blood by antisera (p. 23). This is an immunological, not a biochemical reaction. The worker should be able to make his own antisera. (2) The light used in searching for stains on fabric (p. 24). Candle light falling obliquely is useful and easily available. (3) Dyes (p. 37). They do show a spectrum which may be mistaken for that of (cyan) hæmochromogen (Greval, S. D. S., Chowdhury, A. B. R., and Das, B. C., *Indian Journ. Med. Res.*, **33**, 173, 1945). (4) Stains not giving the benzidine test (p. 37). They are best rejected: further examination including spectroscopy is not necessary. (5) Differentiation between bloods of sheep and goat or other closely related species (p. 38). This is possible with complement fixation tests. (6) The adsorption (= absorption) method in precipitin test (p. 38). This is not a success. Further, it is the *ring* not the *turbidity* which should be aimed at. (7) Incubating bloodstains (p. 39). At least in the tropics prolonged soaking at blood heat leads to trouble. Half an hour or so at room temperature is ample. Prolonged soaking at ice box temperature may at times be necessary to get the solvent into joints of weapons. (8) The salicyl-sulphonic acid test (p. 41). The 'upwards' figure indicative of the dilution must be limited. (9) The method of determining blood groups (p. 47). The use of whole blood is undesirable and the testing serum from group B (serum *a* or better still serum *a*) might as well be on the left side of the slide to detect group A on that side.

The length of the last paragraph (which could be made longer) is directly proportional to the readability of the book which has become one of forensic classics in laboratory methods. No one entrusted with criminal investigation, inside or outside a laboratory, can afford to do without it, particularly in the matter of Documents and Firearms, etc., which together form more than one-third of the book.

The author's methods of scientific criminal investigation in Egypt are applicable in India.

The get-up has been markedly affected by the 'authorised economy standards'. It is hoped a reprint (minus the errata) on better paper and better bound will soon be available. The small type, unfortunately, will remain until the next edition.

S. D. S. G.

TEXTBOOK OF MEDICAL TREATMENT.—Edited by D. M. Dunlop, B.A. (Oxon.), M.D., F.R.C.P. (Edin.), M.R.C.P. (Lond.), L. S. P. Davidson, B.A. (Camb.), M.D., F.R.C.P. (Edin.), F.R.C.P. (Lond.), and J. W. McNee, D.S.O., D.Sc., M.D. (Glas.), F.R.C.P. (Edin.), F.R.C.P. (Lond.). Fourth Edition. 1946. E. and S. Livingstone Limited, Edinburgh. Pp. xix plus 923. Price, 30s.

LITTLE need be said about the new edition of this well-known book by the distinguished Scottish writers. The passage of a textbook through four editions with two reprints over a period of less than seven years is sufficient evidence of its success. In this edition, the format has been changed, and the book has become larger but slimmer. Among the additions we notice that a new chapter has been added on penicillin therapy, the sections on venereal diseases and diseases of the thyroid gland have been rewritten, and the chapter on respiratory diseases has been revised while a short account of D.D.T. has been included in a postscript to the book. We have, however, a few criticisms to make. Thymol has been given the first place as an anthelmintic in the treatment of ancylostomiasis, but very few would really recommend its use now. Although excellent results of the treatment of bacillary dysentery with sulphonamides have been mentioned, it gives us a shock to read in 1946 'An initial dose of $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce of castor oil . . . followed by

the administration of 1 drachm of sodium sulphate every two hours . . . is a routine method of treatment'. Anthiomalin tops the list of drugs recommended for treatment of kala-azar, but is hardly used in practice. Penicillin has not been mentioned in the treatment of agranulocytosis. We hope these will receive due consideration at the next revision, while the present one will maintain the popularity of the previous editions.

R. N. C.

AN INTRODUCTION TO MEDICAL SCIENCE.—By William Boyd, M.D., F.R.C.P., F.R.S.C. Third Edition. 1945. Henry Kimpton, London. Pp. 366 with 125 engravings and a coloured plate. Price, 18s.

THIS book, designed for nurses, is meant to give an 'airplane view' of disease, its causes and the bodily changes which accompany it, so that they may get a better understanding of their work. The first section of the book deals with the general principles of disease, the second with the diseased organs, and the third with some practical applications. There is a brief summary of the structure and function of each organ, and the symptoms have been described in their relation to the pathological changes. In this edition, a considerable number of changes have been made, including a chapter on the principles of treatment. The book is an introduction to the study of disease, though a sketchy one, but rather too much emphasis has been put on pathology, the details of which may be too much for the nurses who have already got enough to learn. Is it necessary, for instance, for them to know of the mitotic figures of cancer cells, microscopic differentiation between epidermoid carcinoma and adenocarcinoma, or the histopathology of the tuberculous lung? One or two slips under treatment should be mentioned: it is misleading to say that for malaria, quinine must be given for several months, and in view of what mepacrine has done for the last war it seems unfair not to mention it. In treatment of amoebic dysentery emetine is not usually given in the form of ipecacuanha. These are, however, small blemishes in an otherwise good introductory book.

R. N. C.

VENEREAL DISEASES IN GENERAL PRACTICE.—By Svend Lomholt, M.D. (Copenhagen), M.D. (Honorary), Riga, O.B.E. 1946. H. K. Lewis and Company, Limited, London. Pp. 231. 39 illustrations in colour in 16 plates and 78 illustrations in black and white. Price, 25s.

THIS work is the first English edition of Dr. Lomholt's book, a Danish textbook which has been used widely in the Scandinavian countries (3rd edition, 1945).

In spite of the small size of the book every item covered by the title has received full consideration in diagnosis and treatment. Pictures, in black and white as well as in colour, are excellent.

Those who have seen English and American works on venereology growing at each edition will find in this book of moderate size a pleasant change. Nothing one sees in a venereal clinic is missed. In the diagnosis and treatment the essential has been presented without interference from the non-essential. Quaint expressions include 'utensils' for douche can, etc.: as a matter of fact douche can, etc., are utensils.

The nomenclature is not strictly in accordance with the English usage. The same is true of most American books. Granuloma Venereum, for instance, has been called Granuloma Venereum Inguinal (which causes confusion with Lymphogranuloma Inguinale). There is no ambiguity, however, in the description and identity of a disease. A supplement gives full information on the use of penicillin, mapharside, etc.

Printer's errors are many, yet they do not lessen the value of the book and are bound to be removed in the next edition. Page 134 is particularly defective in this respect. The index could be made more useful. The binding is indicative of the general want of material in Europe.