BOOK REVIEWS

Endocrine Diagnosis. By H. Ucko. 1951. Staples Press, London. Pp. 513. 42s.

Recent researches on the effects of the anterior pituitary gland and the hormones of the suprarenal cortex in collagen diseases have aroused a widespread interest shared by the general physician and the endocrine specialist alike. In recent years interest has moved from the classical description of the known endocrine diseases to a study of the part played by the endocrine glands in health and disease and the possible endocrine aetiology of diseases with doubtful or unknown aetiology.

Dr. Ucko has attempted to co-ordinate our present knowledge of the endocrine diseases and their diagnosis with a systematic discussion of the involvement of endocrine factors in the physiology and pathology of the organism as a whole and in diseases which are not primarily of endocrine origin. He also discusses endocrine influences, known and probable, on the various organs and structures of the body. The first part of the book, about 300 pages, is devoted to clinical findings and the endocrine influences on different body structures, and on the mechanism of the major events of life. Signs, symptoms, and differential diagnosis are set out in detail, and, where possible, arranged in tabular form. This system of regional clinical findings is an excellent one and saves time for the busy physician in search of a particular sign or syndrome.

The second part of the book deals with the physiology and disorders of the endocrine glands. A separate chapter is devoted to each gland, and the modern laboratory tests used as an aid to diagnosis are included.

Certain sections, particularly those dealing with the adrenal cortex and the anterior pituitary gland might with advantage be expanded. The illustrations are excellently reproduced, and photographs of typical cases clearly bring out many points in the text, so that we hope that they will be more numerous in the next edition. Finally, there is an excellent bibliography.

G. N. MYERS.

Recent Advances in Physical Medicine. Edited by Francis Bach, M.A., D.M.(Oxon.), D.Phys.Med. J. and A. Churchill, London. 93 illus. 27s. 6d.

The division of Medicine into specialties is one of the problems of the times, even cardiologists have their misgivings when they find themselves breeding a series of specialists for each of the three standard and most of the unipolar leads.

The comparatively new specialty of physical medicine belongs properly to a somewhat older hierarchy than that which relates to particular parts or organs of the body. Just as the specialties of radiology and pathology depend upon certain diagnostic techniques involving more capital equipment than can be carried in a top hat, so physical medicine is a specialty depending ultimately upon a particular therapeutic technique and apparatus: it is paralleled by surgery—one of the oldest subdivisions in medicine. It is a little surprising, when the physicians called the use of physic “iatrochemical medicine”, that the surgeons did not call themselves “iatrophysical specialists”, since surgery is the application to medicine of the mechanical physics which guide the carpenter and the plumber (not forgetting the plumber’s mate). Since those days, the connotation of physical medicine as compared with chemical medicine has undergone considerable change, but its province is still the whole of medicine and in particular those diseases and conditions that can be ameliorated by the simpler physical devices, excluding the use of the knife and chisel, and stopping short at about 2,100 Ångström units on the spectrum, which then becomes the responsibility of the radiotherapist and of the atomic physicist.

In the old days, the techniques used in physiotherapy were limited to about five—ultra-violet light, heat in various forms, active and passive movements, massage, and electrical stimulation. The common habit of young house physicians of sending patients