Book reviews

The Diseases of Occupation. 4th ed. By Donald Hunter. (Pp. 1259; 455 figures; 210s.) London: English University Press Limited. 1969.

It is good to welcome the 4th edition of this famous book. Fourteen years ago the first edition made a great impression and since then the book has been read and enjoyed, both by doctors working in industry and by physicians and general practitioners faced with a problem in industrial medicine. The text is interspersed with fascinating stories and anecdotes which carry the reader along. In fact, when consulting the book it is wise for the reader to discipline himself or he may find he has been beguiled into reading an interesting account of quite a different subject. The author's personality dominates the book. It is obvious that he is deeply interested in the human problems of work and that he is a clinician of great insight, whose special hobby has been the collection of information about the diseases of occupation.

The new edition is some 200 pages longer than the original. Some new sections have been added and changes have been made in a few of the other sections. The reviewer cannot help being disappointed to find a section so important as that on lead so little changed from the original. A great deal of work has been done in recent years on this subject on both sides of the Atlantic and considerable advances in prevention and supervision have been made but these receive no mention. The methods of care of the lead workers are matters of considerable importance in industrial medicine and certainly merit better treatment. It may be argued that the author meets this criticism by stating in his Preface that the doctor working in industry will have to consult books more detailed than this, but in that event a modern bibliography should be included. Perhaps the time has come for some of these large and important sections, dealing with subjects in which rapid progress is being made, to be radically re-written – shedding perforce some of the interesting material of the past and bringing them up to date by including more about new attitudes and modern practice. Similar criticism might be levelled at the section on the dust diseases of coalminers where space is devoted to the important work of the Pneumoconiosis Research Unit done in the forties but no mention is made of the recent advances that have resulted from work carried out by members of the medical service of the Coal Board in the sixties.

The same criticism applies to many of the illustrations which tend to show industry of 20 years ago. It is true, of

course, that these were the conditions which produced much of the disease and as such are of historical interest. But this book should show more of the conditions as they exist today.

Despite these criticisms this book remains the only one in the English language which attempts, on a comprehensive scale, to cover the subject of occupational disease. It is a book of rare character and one which should be on the shelves of every doctor interested in industrial medicine. It should be available for consultation to all students and physicians who will be entertained by its pages and instructed in a sound philosophy towards the problems of industrial disease.

R. E. LANE

Presymptomatic Detection and Early Diagnosis. Edited by C. L. E. H. Sharp and Harry Keen. (Pp. 384; illustrated; 126s.) London: Pitman Medical Publishing. 1968.

This book falls into three main divisions, the first part being concerned with general screening programmes, the second with screening for specific disorders, and the third with attempts to assess the place of screening in a general medical context.

The opening chapter was written by the late Dr. Sharp, of Bedford, a pioneer of the screening approach, which he believed capable of stimulating new instruments, new drugs, new knowledge of disease, and new organization, which will be based more on industrial and scientific management techniques than on the traditional ways of medicine. Acting no doubt on the principle of *Si vis pacem, para bellum*, he warns 'The active opposition of some clinicians must be expected'. Nevertheless, his general advocacy is so restrained, and so closely reasoned, that appetite for the immediately succeeding chapters is stimulated. The second chapter, by Collen, is in this context profoundly disappointing. It could be summarized as a prescription for neurosis, or a valetudinarian's charter. The most interesting observation is that, whereas men dress and undress in three minutes flat, women take eight minutes to undress, but (surprisingly) take only one minute longer to dress again. Perhaps in California there are people who like this kind of thing; they will then find this the kind of thing they like. By comparison, the techniques of 'chemical health screening', described by the Jungners, of the Värmland project, make at least the concession to human dignity of being impersonal. Sanity