

Reviews

OPERATIVE OTO-RHINO-LARYNGOLOGY

Professor PORTMANN, with four of his colleagues, has produced in two lordly volumes an account of the operative surgery of the ear, the nose, and the throat,¹ as practised in his clinic. All the ordinary operations, both great and small, are described, and, in addition, a few which are probably more in vogue at Bordeaux than elsewhere, though there is no lapse into fads and eccentric methods. It would perhaps be more correct to say that there is a procedure described to meet all the ordinary requirements, for neither alternative nor untried operations are included, but only those actually used at Bordeaux. The descriptions, with an account of the indications and possible complications, are given in a concise and compact style, and are clarified still further by a profusion of diagrams and pictures illustrating every operative step.

Professor Portmann describes the style of the writing as "presque télégraphique," but the limitation indicated suggests that the term "oracular" would be more fitting than "telegraphic." We do not use this expression in any disparaging sense, but in order to explain that the book is written in such a way that the dogmatic advice of Professor Portmann must either be accepted or rejected. He has no message of philosophy for the operator who, pondering over difficulties in diagnosis and technique, turns to his books for suggestions, alternatives to suit unexpected situations, and fresh ideas generally. This is not to impugn the advice of Professor Portmann, which is generally excellent, and for all who are content to let someone else do the thinking he is a safe and reliable guide. A surgeon who occasionally undertakes this class of work, or one recently appointed to the staff of a hospital, might find the book highly useful for reference on technical points.

On the whole the dogma is orthodox, and naturally a greater reliance is placed on local anaesthesia than is usual in this country. There are, however, some points not without importance which cannot escape attention. The plastic operation on the meatus after the radical mastoid operation would, as it is described, extend so far into the concha as to lead to a severe deformity of the pinna and expose the inner wall of the tympanum unnecessarily. Even if successful surgically, the patient might well resent the success from an aesthetic standpoint. The external operation on the frontal sinus is liberally illustrated with seventeen pictures, showing precisely the various steps, but in seven the patient has changed from the supine to the "Father William" position, which most operators would find inconvenient, if this be what is intended. Again, the method proposed for performing the operation of laryngectomy provides indifferent drainage, and is likely to be followed by severe sloughing, which is stated to be almost the rule, though it is well known that the ultimate results obtained after this operation in Bordeaux are good. The loss of flexibility from ignoring alternative methods is here very evident.

We congratulate Professor Portmann on his choice of the artist, whose skill has made the pictorial part of these two volumes almost equal in lively representation to a visit to the operating theatre itself. Professor Portmann has established an international reputation in the surgical side of otology and laryngology, and this *magnum opus* in which his practice and teaching are crystallized will be welcome to his numerous admirers and students.

¹ *Traité de Technique Opératoire Oto-Rhino-Laryngologique*. Par Georges Portmann. Publié avec la collaboration de MM. H. Retrouvy, et Jean Despons, Paul Leduc et G. Martinand. Paris: Masson et Cie. 1932. (Pp. 855; 467 figures, 2 plates. Paper cover, 290 fr., bound 330 fr., the two volumes.)

DIETETICS FOR THE SURGICAL CASE

The scientific study of dietetics as a branch of medicine has, in recent years, received much attention. The vague rules of the old practitioners have given place to precise formulae involving calories, specific dynamic action, and other matters which have emerged from the many researches carried out in the last twenty-five years. Reliance on these formulae without the exercise of that judgement which comes from accurate clinical observation leads to failure in the dietetic treatment of disease. Combined with this judgement the results of recent researches in dietetics find application in almost every field of medical science. The tendency to regard this new knowledge as a useful aid only in special conditions such as gout, diabetes, or obesity is one which indicates a very narrow view of its value. The recent publication, under the aegis of Professor van Noorden, of a small volume on the application of dietetics in surgical conditions by an expert in metabolic work and a surgeon in collaboration, is timely.² The preparation of patients for operation, and their after-treatment, are so often a matter of routine, even in the larger hospitals, that any untoward sequel is rarely considered from the point of view of errors in diet. In such conditions as diabetes, of course, the necessity for surgical intervention brings with it the added responsibility of carefully controlled diet. But attention is not generally paid to diet, to the extent it deserves, in ordinary surgical cases, except to give those general directions which so often are no directions at all.

The authors of the volume before us have been at considerable pains to present the principles on which rational dietetic treatment of the surgical case should be based. Being something of a pioneer work they, in the theoretical part, restrict themselves to shortly stated general principles. In the application of these principles to the actual problems of surgical practice the book reveals great experience and practical sense. The details of diet before and after operation in almost every type of case, the methods of preparation of the dishes, and a large number of recipes are given in an uncomplicated way, so that the book may be recommended to nurses and sisters as well as to surgeons. As a statement of the practice of so famous a school as the Viennese the book will be of special interest to our own teachers of surgery.

MENTAL DEFICIENCY PRACTICE

The book with this title³ by Drs. F. C. SHRUBSALL and A. C. WILLIAMS is the most recent addition to the steadily growing list of works dealing with the various aspects of mental deficiency. It is written primarily from the administrative point of view, and is chiefly intended for the use of those practitioners who are concerned with the diagnosis and disposal of defectives under the Mental Deficiency Act, and, perhaps more particularly, the Education Act. After dealing with the concept of mental deficiency, a subject regarding which, it may be remarked, there is still a great deal of misconception, the authors then consider briefly in turn the subjects of classification, pathology, aetiology, and the various clinical types of defect. Regarding heredity, in view of the claims of certain fervid advocates of sterilization that a large proportion of defectives are the children of defective parents, it is of interest to note that, of a very large number of defective children in the London special schools, in only 5 per cent. of cases was the father or mother known to be defective.

² *Diätetik bei chirurgischen Erkrankungen*. Von Dr. F. W. Lapp und Dr. H. Nueffer. Wien und Berlin: Julius Springer. 1932. (Pp. x + 158; 7 figures. R.M.9; bound, R.M.9.0.)

³ *Mental Deficiency Practice*. By F. C. Shruballs, M.D., F.R.C.P., D.P.H., and A. C. Williams, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H. London: University of London Press, Ltd. 1932. (Pp. vii + 352; illustrated, 12s. 6d. net.)

On the other hand, the parents were subnormal or unstable in 50 per cent., of average intelligence in about 35 per cent., and slightly above the average in nearly 10 per cent. These figures confirm the views which have been expressed by most workers of experience among defectives, and indicate the comparatively slight preventive effect which would result from the sterilization of defectives.

Having in mind the main purpose of the book, the authors rightly devote three chapters to the subjects of clinical examination, mental tests, and diagnosis. These are sound and practical, and, in addition to a description of the chief tests used for diagnostic purposes, useful information is given as to the methods of application and the chief difficulties which may be experienced. A study of these chapters should serve to correct the all too prevalent idea that the diagnosis of mental defect consists merely in the automatic application of certain routine tests. As the authors truly say—and it cannot be too strongly emphasized—"the assessment of mentality is not a mere matter of so many tests per cent. passed, but involves observation of the whole behaviour." The last half of the book deals with administrative disposal and procedure. It discusses the legal basis; describes the different kinds of training, care, and control which are available; deals with the various duties of education authorities and local authorities under the Acts; and concludes with filled-in specimens of the numerous official certificates and forms.

This is a valuable addition to the literature of mental deficiency. It does not profess to deal exhaustively with the clinical side of the subject. Its point of view, as we have said, is mainly the administrative one; but, in regard to this, it will undoubtedly prove to be a sound and accurate guide. It is a book which should be in the hands of all those who are in any way concerned with the administrative disposal of mental defectives.

THE IRIS IN VERTEBRATES

Ophthalmology is perhaps fortunate among the special branches of medicine in that it provides a large number of points of contact with other subjects. Being very much concerned with both surgery and medicine, it establishes very close relations with branches of science as far divorced as optics and the psychology of perceptions, while on innumerable occasions it makes excursions into the practical affairs of industries and commerce. It is only to be expected, therefore, that among ophthalmologists should be met people of wide interest extending beyond the boundaries of the clinical practice of their subject. An excellent example of this tendency is provided in a monograph written by IDA C. MANN on the iris pattern in vertebrates,⁴ issued by the Zoological Society, a work which forms a milestone in a long series of researches undertaken by her on the embryological and phylogenetical development of the eye.

It is well known that the appearance of the normal iris in man and animals is extremely variable, the variability depending on the arrangement of the blood vessels, the shape of the pupil, the distribution of pigment, and the degree of translucency of the tissues. The problem the writer has set before herself is to determine how far these differences indicate fundamental types in the zoological kingdom, how far they are governed by the vascular arrangements of the developing eye, and to what extent they are determined by, and correlated with, function and habitat. A solution of these problems can only be reached by an immense amount of patient investigation, carried out frequently in difficult circumstances

⁴ *Iris Pattern in the Vertebrates*. By Ida Mann, D.Sc., M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S. Reprinted from the *Transactions of the Zoological Society*, Part 4, 1931. (Pp. 355-412; 2 figures, 4 plates.)

on living animals, many of whom have not been examined before with this end in view. Over two hundred eyes were investigated in the Zoological Gardens in London, throughout the very wide range of 139 species, including mammalians, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fishes. Some of the work must have been tedious and patience-consuming, but the results are of extreme value and interest, and are set out in a fascinating manner, with a detailed and tabulated summary, lavishly illustrated by fifty-seven coloured plates, the work of the author herself. The conclusion reached is that, on the whole, the hypothesis is tenable that the essential structure of the adult iris in the various species is determined by the embryonic ocular circulation, especially the presence or absence of a pupillary membrane and the number and position of the branches of the hyaloid artery. These arrangements, however, are neither sufficiently clear-cut between different species nor sufficiently constant in the same species to form a basis for a complete and adequate classification of the vertebrates, while the supposition that the less basic variations, such as the degree of pigmentation and the shape of the pupil, might be correlated with function or habitat, although supported by a large number of instances, is definitely complicated by other unknown factors.

HAEMORRHOIDS AND ANAL PRURITUS

Dr. LOUIS A. BUIE, of the proctological section of the Mayo Clinic, in writing a monograph on *Proctoscopic Examination and the Treatment of Haemorrhoids and Anal Pruritus*,⁵ divides his work into three parts. In Part I he gives his idea of the attitude of mind desirable between doctor and patient, and describes the use of Hirschmann's anoscope and Hanes's table for proctological examinations. The inverted position is illustrated three times: Fig. 7 is satisfactory; Fig. 9 gives so little additional information as to be superfluous; and Fig. 10 strikes us as being unsatisfactory. We agree that it is not "wise to attempt to evaluate the severity of a haemorrhoidal disorder with the patient in the inverted position." Thrombosed external haemorrhoids are dealt with in this section and frequently referred to as tumours or growths, and not until much later is the fact that they are really ruptured veins mentioned. Part II is labelled "Haemorrhoids," though much that the author has to say has already been said in Part I. He maintains that infection is the condition which is responsible for haemorrhoids, but with such scanty remarks to support this belief that we are entirely unconvinced. The author favours partial sacral block as a regional anaesthesia for haemorrhoid operations, and quotes the description of Lundy. Under the heading of "Pre-operative and post-operative sedation" 10 grains of chlorotone are given at 9.15 in the morning. At 9.30 3 grains of "embutal" are given by the mouth, and at 10 o'clock an injection of morphine. We are not informed of the time of the operation, and post-operative sedation is quite omitted in this part of the book. The operation which the author favours is a combination of clamp, ligature, and suture. We agree that "suturing of the skin should be avoided when possible." Figs. 45 to 47 are very like Figs. 48 to 52, except that in the latter considerable suturing of the skin takes place. The chapter on post-operative care is poor. With regard to injection treatment, the author uses quinine and urea for carefully selected cases. The prescription of his solution is not given, nor is any dose stated. The discussion of cases for treatment by injection is admirable. Part III gives an extremely detailed description of histological changes in anal pruritus. Dr. Buie's treatment is to inject

⁵ *Proctoscopic Examination and the Treatment of Haemorrhoids and Anal Pruritus*. Mayo Clinic Monographs. By Louis Buie, B.A., M.D., F.A.C.S. Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders Company. (Pp. 178; 72 figures. 16s. net.)

from 20 to 40 c.cm. of 40 per cent. ethyl alcohol beneath the skin around the anus. Sloughing occurs in the majority of cases, and six to eight weeks are necessary for the lesions to heal. No statistics are given to encourage us to attempt this drastic treatment. The bibliography is scanty and incomplete.

The monograph by Dr. LAWRENCE GOLDBACHER of Philadelphia, entitled *Haemorrhoids, the Injection Treatment and Pruritus Ani*,⁶ is an attractive little work. His chapter on anatomy is sketchy, with insufficient attention to detail when the arteries and veins of the rectum and anal canal are being described. External haemorrhoids are dealt with very fully. He persistently refers to "thrombotic external haemorrhoids," and makes no reference to the fact that the external haemorrhoid must be ruptured before thrombosis occurs, and never uses the modern term of "haematoma ani." We do not agree that operation is the "only one proper way to treat external thrombotic haemorrhoids." The author's description of internal haemorrhoids is good, but again with insufficient attention to accurate detail. His own instrument, the anoscope speculum, is very attractive. It consists of an ordinary cylindrical speculum, about one-fifth of the circumference of which is made in the form of a slide. He claims that this instrument combines in one the anoscope, the Brinkerhoff or slide speculum, and (to a certain extent) the bivalve speculum. It permits of a distal view, and of any desired amount of a lateral view of the rectal wall at the same time. It is a pity that in the diagrams (Figs. 19, 20, and 21) which illustrate the speculum in use an inaccuracy has crept in, showing the distal end a complete circle, instead of the slide leaving a gap, as in Figs. 17 and 18. The author uses 5 per cent. phenolized cotton-seed oil for almost all types of haemorrhoids, and gives very careful details of his method of preparing the phenolized oil and of his method of injecting it beneath the mucous membrane of the upper part of the haemorrhoid. His methods are commendable for their simplicity, and his special haemorrhoid injection needle appears very satisfactory. In our opinion, differentiation of types of case suitable for injection and suitable for operative procedure is insufficiently dealt with, and although Dr. Goldbacher advises operation for third degree haemorrhoids, the technique is dismissed in a short paragraph. His illustrative cases are of some interest, but detailed statistics are absent. For cases of pruritus ani Dr. Goldbacher uses the same 5 per cent. phenolized oil solution, and injects 10 c.cm. beneath the skin at the area of the most intense irritation, and to a depth of three-quarters of an inch. Further injections are made at intervals of five to seven days wherever irritation is felt, care being taken that the injections do not penetrate the sphincter muscles.

NOTES ON BOOKS

Mrs. DREVER, the wife of Dr. J. R. Drever, who has had to resign the office of Scottish Medical Secretary of the British Medical Association owing to ill-health, to the great regret of all those with whom he came in contact, has lately given a series of broadcast talks to children in Scotland, on the story of the clans. She has now published these in book form,⁷ and the volume will appeal to a large public. The romance of Scotland cannot be separated from the story of her great families, and

"Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!"

⁶ *Haemorrhoids, the Injection Treatment and Pruritus Ani*. By Lawrence Goldbacher, M.D. Second revised edition. Philadelphia: F. A. Davis Company. (Pp. 207; 31 figures. 3.50 dollars net.)

⁷ *Tales of the Scottish Clans for Children (and Grown-ups)*. By Helen Drever. Illustrated by A. Mason Trotter. Edinburgh: Grant and Murray. 1931. (Pp. 224; illustrated. 6s. net.)

Apart from the true Scot, however, are all those (and what legion they are) who like to boast that they had a Macdonald or a Mackay or a Forbes amongst their ancestry. Such folk may find in this book a clear and readable record of the origin and story of these clans, their struggles with their neighbours, their defeats and victories, and their associations with the ever-romantic figure of the young Charles Edward. If these tales are primarily intended for boys and girls, fathers and mothers will find that they will fill in half an hour at the end of a tiring day with an effortless interest which will amply repay the purchase of this book.

An extremely comprehensive, clear, and accurate picture of the whole medical problem of benzol (benzene) poisoning is presented in a mimeographed brochure⁸ bearing this title and published by the Industrial Health Conservancy Laboratories, Cincinnati, U.S.A. The book, which consists of 84 typewritten pages, deals with the history, chemistry, and industrial uses of benzol; the medical, medico-legal, and prophylactic aspects of poisoning by it; and, besides containing chapters on impurities, tests, and the toxicity of homologues, gives a very copious bibliography. A considerable part of the work is devoted to animal experiments, and some new investigations into the relative toxicity of pure and impure benzol are of interest. Arising out of the latter, it appears that leucopenia is not the universal accompaniment of poisoning, and that single blood counts made as the sole routine practice in preventive examination in factories and elsewhere are of restricted value. A sustained leucopenia in suspected benzol poisoning is valuable in diagnosis, but is not in itself pathognomonic. A good summary of treatment is given in the book. The publishers are to be congratulated upon this production, and upon the increased demand for it which has necessitated an early reprinting.

*Abstracts of Dissertations Approved for the Ph.D., M.Sc., and M.Litt. Degrees in the University of Cambridge for the Academic Year 1930-31*⁹ consists of brief synopses of studies in various branches of science, including agriculture, biology, botany, geology, zoology, biochemistry, physics and chemistry, and mathematics. Among those of interest to the medical profession are "Studies in respiration," by J. Caldwell; "Resting bacteria and enzyme action," by B. Woolf; and "Drug addiction," by K. S. Grewal.

The French Medical Annual for 1932,¹⁰ edited by Dr. CAMILLE LIAN, assisted by thirty-six collaborators, has recently been published. Like the ten previous issues, it contains a concise account of recent contributions to the literature of various departments of medicine, mainly, though not exclusively, by French writers. An index to the volumes of the last four years, as well as one for the current issue, is appended.

The eleventh edition of *Guy's Hospital Nursing Guide*¹¹ is not only a handbook of the Nurses' League of that hospital, but also a guide for prospective nurses. Nearly one-half of the volume is devoted to useful nursing information, and to articles on medical electricity, national health insurance, courses of training, etc.

Researches Published from the Wards and Laboratories of the London Hospital during 1931 is a collection of thirty-two contributions to medical science, which appeared in various publications throughout the year. The volume is published by Messrs. H. K. Lewis and Co., Ltd., price 7s. 6d.

⁸ *Benzol (Benzene) Poisoning*. By Carey P. McCord, M.D., in collaboration with Nora Cox and Charlotte O'Boyle. Second edition. Cincinnati, Ohio: The Industrial Health Conservancy Laboratories. 1932. (Pp. 84. 2 dollars.)

⁹ London: Cambridge University Press. 1932. (Pp. 101.)

¹⁰ *L'Année médicale pratique*. Publiée sous la direction du Dr. Camille Lian. Préface de M. le Professeur Emile Sergent. 11me année. Paris: R. Lépine. 1932. (Pp. xxii + 646; 12 figures. 26 fr.)

¹¹ *Guy's Hospital Nursing Guide, Handbook of Nurses' League, and Register of Nurses Trained at Guy's Hospital*. Edited by the Matron. London: Ash and Co., Ltd. 1932. (Pp. 227. 3s.)