

Reviews

THE THYROID: SURGICAL PATHOLOGY

Surgical Pathology of the Thyroid Gland. By Arthur E. Hertzler, M.D. (Pp. 298; 238 figures. 21s. net.) Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Company. 1937.

Professor Hertzler's book on thyroid disease had had three editions, the last being reviewed in these columns about two years ago. In this review comments were made of the unorthodoxy of many of the author's statements. Professor Hertzler has now brought out a larger volume dealing with the surgical pathology of the thyroid gland, in which he elaborates his own views, which often run counter to accepted opinion. The book is therefore stimulating to read, refreshing in its racy way of expressing matters, but dangerous unless read critically. In his preface the author suggests that he is only following accepted opinion to its ultimate conclusion when he urges that, if removing a part of a diseased gland is beneficial to the patient, nothing could be more logical than to assume that removing the whole will be better.

In brief synopsis the thyroid case is shown to present a serial story; in early life the thyroid gland attempts to adjust itself to function harmoniously with the other endocrine glands, or, partaking too much or too little of something, it becomes the colloid goitre of adolescence. There being no anatomical change, spontaneous recovery is possible. If the enlargement does not regress with the passage of time the goitre changes its shape, developing non-toxic bosselations. During this period neither patient nor doctor can quite decide whether the goitre is toxic or not, and in their combined optimism they regard it as non-toxic. Then follows the period when everybody learns that the goitre is toxic and the heart already a thyrotoxic one. Professor Hertzler describes these stages as the non-toxic diffuse goitre, the non-toxic nodular goitre, and the toxic nodular goitre, of which there may be atypical varieties. There is also the toxic diffuse goitre, with exophthalmos and increased metabolic rate (Graves's disease).

This clinical classification does not give a true differentiation, however; in all cases there is a mixture of hyperplasia and recession, and, as Professor Hertzler admits, the absence of thyrotoxic manifestations does not attest that the heart is not being injured by the goitre. He believes that the cardiotoxic element arises from degenerative changes in the goitre; some changes of the colloid are postulated, the nature of which is not known. This is because no definite cellular pathology is found in the cardiotoxic goitre. The essential thing is to detect impending toxicity before there is heart damage, to study the genesis of toxicity rather than the bosselations or nodules. The basal metabolic rate is a measure of the cellular hyperplasia, and gives no measure of the toxicity of degeneration and no warning of the progress towards a damaged heart. Non-toxic nodular goitres do not represent a stage of innocence but the threshold of more important changes which will surely come in advancing years. Logically the surgeons should not be frightened to aid the cardiologists with total removal of the whole gland. The author has never seen post-operative myxoedema, and doubts if it exists. The surgeons, then, should push matters to a complete try-out, though he admits that the clinical judgment of surgeons is not infallible.

Pathologists and physiologists are content for the most part to worship at the shrines of the past. Now, accord-

ing to Professor Hertzler, myxoedema may be due to a deleterious product of a diseased gland, and in myxoedema the surgeon may be culpable in not removing enough gland. These hypotheses will need more substantiation than mere statement. The illustrations are numerous, typical, and beautifully reproduced.

VITAMINS DURING PREGNANCY AND LACTATION

Der Vitaminhaushalt in der Schwangerschaft mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Vitamine A und C. By Dr. Med. Gerhard Gaethens. Volume 24 of *Medizinische Praxis*. (Pp. 161; 21 figures. RM.12; bound, RM. 13.20.) Dresden and Leipzig: Theodor Steinkopff. 1937.

This book gives a short summary of the metabolic processes concerned with proteins, fats, and carbohydrates. The chemistry and chemical method of estimation of vitamin C (*l*-ascorbic acid) are described, together with the application of this method to the "saturation" test for human beings. The function of vitamin C in the animal body is discussed (a part in the oxidation-reduction processes). Carotene and vitamin A are treated similarly, but unfortunately the only measure of vitamin A used by this author is the "Lovibond unit." (Incidentally, Coward is erroneously credited with having used the occurrence of xerophthalmia as a criterion of vitamin A deficiency.)

The main part of the book deals with the findings of the author and of other writers on the vitamin C, carotene, and vitamin A content of the blood and urine during pregnancy and lactation, an estimate of the pregnant woman's daily need for vitamin C, the storing of these factors in the placenta and foetal tissues, and their presence in very variable amounts in the amniotic fluid. There is a long account of the importance of vitamins C and A in lactation as evidenced by the daily determinations of the volume and vitamin C content of the milk and urine of many women. The need of the lactating mother for vitamin C is shown to be greater than for the woman at ordinary times. The finding for vitamin A was similar. The antagonism of the thyroid gland and vitamins A and C is discussed at some length, with the "greed" of certain organs for storing certain vitamins. The last section is devoted to the practical aspect of feeding the pregnant and lactating mother. There is a list of vitamin concentrates available in the market and a short table of the vitamin contents of the commoner foodstuffs. References are given for most of the results of other workers quoted in the text.

The book is well printed and the illustrations well drawn and reproduced.

ALCOHOLISM

Alcohol: One Man's Meat. By Edward A. Strecker, A.M., M.D., Sc.D., and Francis T. Chambers, Jr. (Pp. 230; 10s. 6d. net.) New York: The Macmillan Company. 1938.

The reader in search of general information on the subject of alcohol will be disappointed. From the sub-title one is not surprised to encounter an early reference to "allergy," but the term is employed in this connexion in a rather peculiar application. "There is," states the author, "nothing more humiliating or disgraceful about having a psychic allergy to alcohol than there is about having a physical allergy or sensitivity to fish or strawberries."

A rather startling confession printed in the introduction is made the basis of a special claim to authority. The author expresses his indebtedness to his collaborator, whom he proclaims to be one of the few men who have

intelligently studied the problem of alcoholism, who has established his key position for the understanding of the problem since "he himself was an alcoholic, whose investigation and cure of his own case has assured the capacity to comprehend all the factors involved in the production of alcoholism." Yet it cannot be said that despite this promise the result is very illuminating. The greater part of the book is occupied with wearisome reiteration, with psychological details in description of lurid cases, with explanations of the urge towards alcoholic indulgence which are on the whole elementary and yet are put forward as if profound discoveries. The last chapter of thirteen pages on psychological and nutritional factors is fairly comprehensive but much too abbreviated and concentrated for the uninformed reader, though it might serve as a convenient list of references for the more experienced. It devotes itself for the greater part to an insistence on the relation of hypoglycaemia to alcoholism and wastes space in describing at length the investigation in the laboratory of four cases when one would have sufficed.

The final sentence, "We feel that the most satisfactory treatment of alcoholism consists of an intensive psychological—re-educational approach, reinforced by a sensible correction of physical damage, and particular attention to a carefully considered nutritional program," epitomizes the problem succinctly. The attempt thus to deal with it has not been avoided, but the method employed cannot be approved.

MATERIA MEDICA, PHARMACOLOGY, AND THERAPEUTICS

Materia Medica, Pharmacology, Therapeutics and Prescription Writing for Students and Practitioners. By Walter Arthur Bastedo, Ph.M., M.D., Sc.D., F.A.C.P. Fourth edition, reset. (Pp. 778; 81 figures. 30s. net.) Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders Company. 1938.

Textbook of Materia Medica, Pharmacology, and Therapeutics. By A. S. Blumgarten, M.D., F.A.C.P. Seventh edition, completely revised. (Pp. 845; illustrated. 12s. 6d. net.) New York: The Macmillan Company. 1937.

The textbook by Dr. W. A. Bastedo of Columbia University is well known and well established. The first edition appeared in 1913, and now a fourth reaches us for review. It is interesting to note that, though it is only five years since the last edition, yet the author mentions eighteen important drugs which now make their first appearance, and states that numerous important articles have been rewritten. He writes from the standpoint of a practising physician, but fully recognizes the need for laboratory research in providing a sound basis for rational therapeutics. He remarks: "I believe that, as the outcome of critical laboratory research and the adoption of laboratory methods in clinical research, we are at the dawn of a new era of simple and practical therapeutics, an era in which knowledge will supplant credulity on the one hand and scepticism on the other, and in which fewer drugs will be used but better treatment given." In general the volume gives a very clear account of pharmacology and therapeutics, and great care has been taken to deal adequately with recent developments. The author states that he has included many drugs only to condemn them, and it is questionable whether such substances do not occupy too large an amount of valuable space. The best attitude to take to such remedies is, however, a difficult problem, and Dr. Bastedo has found space for full and clear discussion of the action of all drugs of known value.

The textbook by Dr. A. S. Blumgarten of New York is intended primarily to assist nurses in their class-work and practice. It was first published in 1914 and now

has reached its seventh edition, hence it evidently fulfils its purpose in a satisfactory manner. The author has had the difficult task of explaining the pharmacological actions of drugs to students with a limited knowledge of physiology. He has made a free use of diagrams, and the coloured diagrams deserve special notice on account of the effective manner in which they illustrate certain fundamental facts about drug action. The book covers a very wide field and naturally treats the subject in as simple a manner as possible, but great care obviously has been spent on its revision, and adequate accounts are given of recent advances in such subjects as the action of benzedrine, the use of insulin in treatment of schizophrenia, protamine-zinc-insulin, sex hormones, and vitamins. In general the volume gives a very clear account of the essential facts of pharmacology.

BOYD'S PATHOLOGY

A Textbook of Pathology. An Introduction to Medicine. By William Boyd, M.D., LL.D., F.R.C.P., F.R.S.C. Third edition, thoroughly revised. (Pp. 1064; 459 figures, 16 coloured plates. 45s. net.) London: Henry Kimpton. 1938.

Professor William Boyd's *Textbook of Pathology*; a third edition of which has now appeared, has attained remarkable popularity. The author's flair for vivid expression makes it more readable than most works of the kind, and his constant endeavour to relate morbid changes to the clinical features of disease has rendered an important service to the better study of pathology. The motto of this work might be a sentence in its original preface: "A world of disordered function lies revealed in any lesion if we only have the eye to see it." This edition has been modified by including a large number of brief references to subjects, or aspects of subjects, previously untouched, space for which has been made by placing certain sections in small type, and by introducing many new illustrations, some in colour. In so comprehensive a work, and especially in one which discusses aetiology with such freedom, it is easy to find statements which are disputable and sometimes perhaps even misleading, but the general effect on the student's mind of the author's enlightened method of treating his subject can only be admirable.

BLOOD GROUP HEREDITY

A Critical Investigation of the Blood Groups and their Medico-Legal Application. By Dawood Matta, M.B., Ch.B., Ph.D. Faculty of Medicine Publication No. 11. (Pp. 231; 80 tables. No price given.) Cairo: Egyptian University. 1937.

The established theories of blood group determination and heredity are benefited by an occasional overhaul. Dr. Matta's thesis contains the results of a considerable body of research into the existing theories of blood group inheritance. In his preface he acknowledges help from Professor John Glaister of Glasgow University, with whom he has been associated in this work for some years. He covers much well-trodden ground, but reaches some interesting conclusions. Besides confirming the serological bases of the four main groups, he finds that proof has been obtained of the existence of subgroups A_2 and A_1 , B_2 and B_1 , and their combinations with each other. The difference between these subgroups is, he says, quantitative. He confirms Schiff's observation on the existence of an agglutinin O, not only positive in character but equal in value with the characters A and B in the foundation of the system of the four groups. This observation is interesting in that before Schiff's work the character O was always regarded merely as an indication of the