

(3) The choroid plexuses of the lateral ventricles are regarded by the author as playing an important mechanical part in the development of the hemispheres. (4) The neural or endymal canal has been studied with respect to its disposition and form at different ages, and attention is drawn to its importance in relation to the formation of nerve cells, which migrate outward from the walls of the canal both in the spinal cord and brain. (5) Finally, Dr. Barbé has studied the sensory and motor roots of the spinal cord with especial reference to their connexions with Clarke's columns and the anterior horns of grey matter. His specimens show, in the human subject, that the anterior roots receive fibres coming not only from the anterior horn of the same side but also from the opposite side, there thus being a decussation of motor fibres in the median plane throughout the whole length of the cord comparable with the pyramidal decussation in the medulla oblongata. From this embryological standpoint the author asks whether it is not permissible to infer that there is a similar decussation of both motor and sensory fibres throughout the whole length of the neural axis.

Dr. Barbé's book represents an independent piece of research, which serves to confirm much of the earlier work carried out by His and later experimental workers; and it not only fills in certain gaps in our previous knowledge of the developmental history of the brain but furnishes a document which may be made use of for further work on the same lines.

INTERNAL MEDICINE

Internal Medicine: its Theory and Practice. In Contributions by American Authors. Edited by John H. Musser, B.S. M.D., F.A.C.P. Third edition. (Pp. 1,428; 39 figures, 18 tables. 45s. net.) London: Henry Kimpton. 1938.

The now well-established *Internal Medicine*, by twenty-seven authors, under the editorship of the professor of medicine, Dr. J. H. Musser, in the University of Tulane, New Orleans, is in its third edition, and has undergone a very extensive revision. Though conciseness has obviously been aimed at—and perhaps the relative fewness of illustrations is due to a desire to economize space—the editor admits that the present edition is 140 pages longer than its predecessor. This, indeed, is not surprising in the light of nearly five years' accumulation of new knowledge. The sections are provided with useful lists of select references. The editor has been so self-denying as to limit his own contribution to an account of the nutritional disorders. Dr. R. M. Wilder, the occupant of the chair of medicine at the Mayo Clinic, writes on diseases of metabolism and gives an account of a new syndrome—that of hypertension, hyperglycaemia, and obesity, described in 1933 by Musser—which may be due to overactivity of the anterior pituitary. The authoritative chapter on endocrine diseases has been extensively revised by Professor J. H. Means of Boston, and an entirely new section on the sex-hormonal aspects has been contributed by Dr. Fuller Albright. Out of his full experience Professor E. B. Krumbhaar writes on the diseases of the spleen and the reticulo-endothelial system. Cardiac diseases are dealt with in a hundred pages by Professor F. M. Smith of Iowa.

"PHYSICIANS' FARE"

Physicians' Fare. By C. G. Learoyd. (Pp. 302; 7s. 6d. net.) London: Edward Arnold. 1939.

Since most of the stories in Dr. Learoyd's collection came out originally in the *St. Thomas's Hospital Gazette*, it might be supposed that they are addressed exclusively to a medical audience; and the same inference could, of course, be drawn from the title which has been chosen for their issue in book form. In several of them, more-

over, there are nuances which few but medical readers will perceive and enjoy; yet there are indications that the author has his eye on laymen as well, which is in some ways a pity. At his best Dr. Learoyd can tell a humorous, or a gruesome, or a dramatic story not merely with a vivid pen but with real distinction, and sometimes with that deft sting in the last sentences which O. Henry exploited and popularized; and there are about a dozen of these stories in which he reaches a high level in one or other of these respects. For this he deserves well of his public, and especially of the professional section of it; but a proper sense of gratitude is somewhat mitigated by the inclusion of pedestrian stuff in which the cheap and tendentious sneer, or the patent striving after a slightly meretricious effect, spoils the treasure-ship for a ha'porth of good judgment. To dwell, however, on the more grateful topic, the first, third, and sixth seem to us all admirable, and easily the best of the first nine stories. The tenth, eleventh, and twelfth are first-class, and the last four are also of a uniform excellence. Each reader will form his own opinion as to the best story of the bunch; the layman may well pass a judgment with which the physician may disagree, but to the latter, at any rate, may be commended with confidence "A Nice Quiet Locum-tenency," "The Old Patient," "Murder on the Fen," "The Sportsmen," "Beloved Brethren," and the last four of the collection. For these the author gets full marks, and if he can reach this standard consistently it is a safe prediction that publishers will jump at his next piece of literary output.

Notes on Books

The third edition of *The Plant Alkaloids*, by Dr. T. A. HENRY (J. and A. Churchill, 42s.), is practically a new book, because the second edition appeared in 1924 and since that date knowledge of the subject has increased very greatly. This increase in knowledge is indicated by the fact that, although the present volume contains nearly 700 pages, yet the section on alkaloids of unknown constitution occupies less than one hundred pages. Dr. Henry gives a systematic account of all the natural alkaloids. He devotes chief attention to their chemical structure and properties, but short accounts are given of pharmacological actions. The introduction contains an interesting discussion on the reason for the occurrence of alkaloids. They are produced by only a small proportion of the plant population and apparently serve no useful purpose to the plants. Pictet suggested that they were waste products. There is evidence that they are formed at the centres of active metabolism, and Robinson has put forward a series of schemes showing how all the common types of alkaloids might be manufactured from materials which exist in the plant.

Forschungsergebnisse auf dem Gebiete biologischer Heilmittel is one of the annual reports on progress regarding natural remedies, and contains articles on a large number of drugs of vegetable and animal origin. The general outlook of the report is indicated by the title of the first article: "The return from synthetic drugs to fresh plants." It is issued by Dr. Madaus Fabrik, Radebeul-Dresden.

Fundamentals of Experimental Pharmacology, by Professor T. H. SOLLMANN and P. J. HANZLIK, was first published in 1929, and a second edition has now appeared. The volume gives full details of all the chief experiments suitable for students of pharmacology, and also describes a large number of demonstrations. The appendices are an outstanding feature of the book, since they contain a mass of important experimental data, such as dosage of drugs and composition of perfusion fluids. The 1939