

The illustrations are good and the treatise gives a clear account of the authors' own experiences. Our main criticism, which applies to many other articles on this subject, is that details of the final results of treatment of individual cases are wanting.

EXPERIMENTAL AND COMPARATIVE EMBRYOLOGY

Form and Causality in Early Development. By Albert M. Dalcq, professor of human anatomy and embryology at the University of Brussels. (Pp. 198; 64 figures. 12s. 6d. net.) Cambridge: At the University Press.

This is an excellent presentation of recent work on experimental and comparative embryology, which is supplemented by a record of much of the author's own work, and comments upon the results and ideas arising therefrom. Professor Dalcq demonstrates the essential unity in the modes of development and organization of chordate, prochordate, and invertebrate development, more especially with regard to the manner in which corresponding presumptive territories in the early gastrular and blastular stages are capable of being mapped out by means of vital-staining methods, combined with observations made on complete ova and reconstructions of serial sections. Numerous fundamental problems are discussed with reference to the interpretation of observations upon conditions such as organogenesis; the kinematic aspect of embryogenic processes; the influence of physicochemical factors; regional organization of the unfertilized egg, and of the ovum during and after cleavage; presumptive areas; induction; polarity; "individuation"; fields of influence; axial gradients and regulation.

From the standpoints of human embryology, the scientific study of heredity, and pathology many would welcome a further consideration of the bearing that these more recent observations have upon some of the older conceptions—for example, the generally accepted idea that the raising of the lateral borders of the medullary plate which precedes the closure of the neural canal is produced by a coincident proliferation of the paraxial mesoderm rather than the change in form of the neural cells. Moreover, although most embryologists would agree that a change occurs in the form of the neural cells which are concerned in the outgrowth of the neural crests, and that this may in part be responsible for the outgrowth, it is certain that the process is also accompanied by proliferation of these cells and that other factors may take part in the movement. Such phrases as "Cell groups endowed with a definite presumptive value migrate in a well-ordered troop towards their precise aim" are likely to be misinterpreted, and what is required is not only the demonstration of the movements but also a knowledge of the factors which initiate and control such movements. Further, it is obvious that the phenomena of life and the well-established facts of evolution and heredity cannot be fully explained by physicochemical factors alone, and the time seems ripe for a concerted and co-operative effort towards a fuller elucidation of such problems as the origin and control of proliferative malignant tumours, and a better understanding of the exact mode of transmission of hereditary characters and the influence of heredity on ontogenetic and evolutionary processes.

Professor Dalcq's book brings together in a brief survey of the subject a very large amount of information, which otherwise can only be obtained by consulting original treatises; it stimulates imagination, and is an admirable incentive to further work.

CONSTITUTION AND THE SPECIFIC FEVERS

Rôle de la Constitution dans les Maladies Infectieuses des Enfants. By Hanna Hirszfied. Preface by Professor Robert Debré. (Pp. 152; 20 figures. \$0.70.) Paris: Masson et Cie. 1939.

From the university paediatric clinic and State institute of hygiene in Warsaw Dr. Hanna Hirszfied has produced a most interesting monograph on the role of the constitution in the infectious diseases of children. Put briefly this authority opposes the old view that the infectious agent always provokes the disease once it has become disseminated among a relatively susceptible population, by the modern notion which attaches much less importance to the question of infection and much more to the resistance of the host, with the claim that such resistance is largely a matter of inherited immunity. Dr. Hirszfied's husband, Professor Ludwik Hirszfied, has been responsible for valuable pioneer work on the inheritance of blood groups, and much of the evidence on the inheritance of immunity is bound up with a study of the blood groups. Statistical considerations of mortality and morbidity figures in relation to age, sex, and blood groups, with studies of familial infections, are fascinatingly set out. Dr. Hirszfied raises problems of the highest importance, and her conclusions, if accepted and confirmed, would affect in due course the whole public health outlook and policy as regards the control of infectious diseases. It is sincerely hoped that the destruction of Warsaw spared the author of this monograph to work elsewhere on her important subject.

LARYNGEAL CANCER

Cancer of the Larynx. By Chevalier Jackson, M.D., Sc.D., LL.D., F.A.C.S., and Chevalier L. Jackson, A.B., M.D., M.Sc.(Med.), F.A.C.S. (Pp. 310; 189 illustrations on 116 figures, and 5 plates in colour. 40s. net.) Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders Company. 1939.

In recent years a series of books has been issued from the Jackson Clinic in Philadelphia, and the last of these is entitled *Cancer of the Larynx*. The arrangement of this book is peculiar, for it is divided into three parts, of which Part II is in many respects a repetition of Part I but written from a different aspect; the reason given being that diagnosis and treatment, or "what to do and how to do it," are of such practical importance that Part I should be devoted to them. Part II is a concession to the more reflective and scientific reader, and in it such matters as aetiology, prophylaxis, and results are considered; while Part III is a historical summary provided largely in the form of tables and paragraphs dated in chronological sequence, without any effort to trace the evolution of our knowledge of this disease. That the book should be presented in this form, which from the literary standpoint is a mere jumble, shows that the Jacksons have but a low opinion of the intelligence of their prospective readers, though doubtless they had no intention of revealing this.

In the matter of diagnosis enormous importance is attached to biopsy, and the endoscopic method of examination by which this is done is described at great length. All this and much more has already appeared in other books by the same authors, and it is not until a method of excising the larynx by what is called "narrowfield technic" is reached that something which is not merely repetitive is encountered. The authors do not say what results have been obtained from following this technique, but it appears to embrace every fault and hazard which the great masters of the past have endeavoured to eliminate from this operation. The "technic of widefield

laryngectomy" is also described, but the authors seem to be little interested in the ways of operating based on sound surgical principles, nor do the complications and methods of repair sometimes required later receive anything but scant attention. Lateral pharyngotomy is dismissed in a chapter of ten lines, and it appears that any case unsuitable for anything except a most limited operation is condemned to irradiation. It is even recommended that lymphatic glands should always be treated by irradiation no matter how slightly involved. This pusillanimous attitude even goes to the extent of including an illustration on page 156, where a lymphatic gland is seen exposed in the anterior triangle of the neck, and into the substance "radium gold implants" are being inserted.

The book is beautifully illustrated and contains several fine coloured plates. No doubt it faithfully presents the practice at the Jackson Clinic, where surgery is confined to cases of limited intrinsic cancer, but it quite fails to give an adequate account of what can be done for patients with laryngeal cancer, many of whom present themselves with the disease in a more advanced form or in situations unsuitable for the timid surgery advocated. There is an accurate bibliography, in which some of the older references copied by one writer from another have been carefully verified, but it has not been brought up to date. The most depressing feature of the book, however, is the failure to give credit to the work of those surgeons by whose efforts the present position has been reached. The most notable of these are Gluck and Soerensen, who receive the barest mention, and Trotter, who is entirely ignored even in the bibliography.

BIOCHEMISTRY

Fundamentals of Biochemistry in Relation to Human Physiology. By T. R. Parsons, M.A., B.Sc. Sixth edition. (Pp. 462. 10s. 6d. net.) Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, Ltd.

Micro-diffusion Analysis and Volumetric Error. By Edward J. Conway, M.B., D.Sc. (Pp. 306; 49 figures. 25s. net.) London: Crosby Lockwood and Son.

To have reached a sixth edition in the space of sixteen years indicates a success no greater than that which was predicted for Mr. Parsons's book when it was originally published. The intervening period has seen practically only those changes dictated by the necessity for keeping the book right up to date. Even the original set of chapter headings has been retained without alteration until this occasion, when the volume has gained an entire chapter. This marks, as the author puts it, "a turning point in its history." Sterols and steroids can no longer be denied the dignity of a chapter to themselves. Mr. Parsons has in exceptional degree the art of simplifying while at the same time keeping to accurately scientific presentation. He possesses a style which makes for easy reading, and in which homely illustration and analogy are seen to advantage. For instance, to point out in relation to the ω -oxidation of fatty acid chains that the subsequent oxidation is "dangerously like burning a candle at both ends" is to use a simile that could not be bettered—except perhaps by the omission of the word "dangerously." The new chapter fully maintains the author's reputation for rendering complex subjects easy of assimilation, and also illustrates in interesting fashion the type of minute and subtle changes in chemical molecules which might govern sex differences. As introductory reading the book is excellent.

A few years ago Professor Conway introduced into analytical practice the principle of micro-diffusion, in

conjunction with a simple and robust standard apparatus. Both principle and apparatus have been found to be of wide application, particularly for serial analyses of certain types. These include determinations of ammonia, urea, blood alkali reserve, chloride, and bromide. The main object of the book is the description of the various applications of the micro-diffusion method. Part I is devoted to the standard "unit" and accessory apparatus, with an account of the general principles governing their use, while Part II furnishes the detailed analytical technique. Throughout both these parts the question of attainable accuracy is kept continually in the foreground, but it is in Part III that the important subject of volumetric error is treated as a theme in itself. It should prove of great interest to all scientific workers who may require to use volumetric technique, and even those who have no aptitude for mathematics can profit from a study of the questions at issue as well as the general conclusions. An appendix deals with the factors governing urea excretion, and describes the use of the simple "normality ratio" as a practical means of estimating renal function. Its theoretical counterpart, embodied in the author's diffusion-pressure formula, is shown to have a sounder basis than the better-known "clearance" formulae.

Notes on Books

A tenth edition of *Bell's Sale of Food and Drugs* has been made necessary by the upheaval in this branch of public health law created by the Food and Drugs Act, 1938. This Act has largely codified the laws governing the purity of food, but it also makes many important amendments in the law, and contains sections relating to a number of subjects—for instance, unsound food, food-poisoning, the sale of horseflesh, and the cleansing of shellfish—which were previously to be found in the Public Health Acts. The scope of the book has therefore been much enlarged. It is not unhandy but it is very complete; and besides the annotated text of the statutes and regulations—numerous and varied—which govern its subject, it contains a bibliography of official publications, a collection of circulars and memoranda which have been sent by the Ministry of Health to local authorities, and some useful chemical notes on some of the commoner forms of adulteration. The publishers are Butterworth and Co., and the price is 15s.

In our review of the first edition of the *Textbook of General Surgery*, by WARREN H. COLE and ROBERT ELMAN (January 16, 1937), we commented that in an otherwise excellent survey of the field of modern surgical practice the most disappointing section was that relating to fractures. Some improvement of this section is noticeable in the second edition (New York and London: D. Appleton-Century Company; 40s.). The general arrangement of the text has not been altered, but new advances have been included and there has been some deletion of relatively unimportant material. Reference is made in this edition to the prevention and treatment of bleeding in jaundice by vitamin K, and numerous applications of sulphanilamide therapy are described. The account of the histamine flare test is given for determining amputation level as indicated by the collateral circulation. "Flare" is written as "glare" in one place, but proof-correcting has been better than in the first edition. This is a sound work on modern surgical practice which can be safely recommended as a guide both to students and practitioners.

Home Nursing for Everybody, by DORIS E. WEBB (Faber and Faber; 2s. 6d.) is a small book in simple language for those who have had no training in nursing. The book is well written and attains its object. It should be of service at a time when every household must be prepared to deal with sickness and emergency without trained assistance.