

with the gushings of the novel writer. The last two chapters are devoted to considerations of mental hygiene, to explaining what nervousness, irritability, and melancholia are, and the best way of maintaining neural health. He is a firm believer in the dominance of the first seven years of life, when the health of the nervous system is made or marred, for as the child is directed in these early years so will he incline for the rest of his life.

Professor Fraser-Harris has undertaken a difficult task, but he has done it uncommonly well, and produced a book that is readable, informative, and balanced.

MILITANT MEDICINE.

THE title *Aesculapius Armaque*,⁵ which Major RITCHIE of the Royal Army Medical Corps has chosen for his series of articles on military medical subjects, parodies the "arma virumque" of our schooldays, but is neither so euphonious nor so robust as the Virgilian original. Be that as it may, everyone who is interested in the author's criticisms on war and the medical service, which have already appeared in the *Journal* of the Royal Army Medical Corps, will be glad to have them published in one handy volume, for the articles are full of excellent ideas, afford much food for thought, and are written in an incisive and distinctive style.

There are a dozen articles in all. The first two are the longest and are, perhaps, the most interesting. *Mars et Hygea*, the heading of the first—we are thankful it was not *Hygea Marsque*—contains a series of paragraphs on the relationship of preventive medicine to the conduct of war. The author foreshadows a time when men with medical qualifications will study war in all its branches at military schools, until the greater part of the duties and responsibilities of the administrative services will rest in the hands of the medical officer. The historian of the Trojan war described the medical officer as ἀνὴρ πολλῶν ἀνράξιος ἄλλων. Thus do Homer and Major Ritchie think alike. "Hygiene," according to the author of *Aesculapius Armaque*, "may become Q." We cannot follow him so far. He refers to hygiene as having been nursed in penury, and implies that good sanitation in the field is largely a matter of carpentry, its appliances being constructed from the leavings of other services, such as empty ration boxes, oil drums, and petrol tins. This is all very true, field sanitation being essentially a matter of improvisation. But it scarcely amounts to the elaborate and complicated functions of a quartermaster-general's branch. Other paragraphs of this chapter wander in an easy saunter through wide fields. They touch on evolution of armies, fashions in fighting "as variable as women's clothes," types of transport, the Geneva Convention which may "peter out," and skin affections, culling their flowers of diction where they may. Prophetic and somewhat gloomy visions of future warfare end in a well deserved eulogy of the work of the army medical service before the war. "The foundations of its fame were carefully laid during the years of peace; its preparations were remarkably complete; it saw big and thought big; and it was perhaps the keenest branch of a keen pre-war army." "*Sententiae vagae*," the heading of the next article, would have been more appropriate for the first, and scarcely indicates its character, for it is concerned mainly with army medical organization before, during, and after the war, and the various modifications induced by circumstances or suggested by a hypothetical future.

The remaining articles refer to similar subjects, such as the efficiency value of a wider outlook for the medical and other services of the army, the pros and cons of chemical warfare, a vigorous policy in hygiene, bacteriology in the next war, and certain domestic matters affecting the Royal Army Medical Corps. They are all well worth reading if only for the enjoyment of Major Ritchie's arresting style of writing. It is not too much to say that *Aesculapius Armaque* shines as a new constellation in the firmament of army medical literature, and brightens a type of writing that has seldom emitted sparks from its somewhat massive solidity.

⁵ *Aesculapius Armaque*. By Major M. B. H. Ritchie, D.S.O., R.A.M.C. London: J. Bale, Sons and Danielsson, Ltd. 1927. (Demy 8vo, pp. 112, 5s. net.)

NOTES ON BOOKS.

A NOTABLE service has been done by Dr. R. H. A. PLIMMER in the production of his textbook on biochemistry.⁶ Biochemistry has been generally somewhat hampered through a lack of books devoted expressly to the subject. The necessary literature for a vigorous pursuit of the study was too much scattered for easy access. Authors of textbooks were formerly too reluctant to specialize. The older school adhered to the view that chemistry could not be properly understood if the study were confined to a single branch of it. That view was proper when the whole range of chemistry was shorter, and it is still true that the foundation of chemistry is the same for all its branches. But as chemistry extended its boundaries its branches became more disconnected, and it is now almost impossible to deal with any one of them except as a unique subject. In this development there is, it is evident, a danger that the fundamental principles of chemistry may also be made sectional for different groups of students. Dr. Plimmer has deliberately avoided this danger, and has emphasized his action in the title he has chosen, which describes the volume as a textbook of organic chemistry directed to its biological aspects. It conjoins practical and theoretical treatment in a well connected arrangement, thus facilitating as well as encouraging careful and thorough work. The present form of the book is a development from earlier editions, revised in accord with the dictates of experience.

Yet another small manual comes from the indefatigable pen of Dame MARY SCHARLIEB. It is written in conversational style, but with the clarity which characterises all her books. It is entitled *The Psychology of Childhood*,⁷ but the preface states that it is not intended to be a treatise on the psychology of children, but as a popular guide for parents in their difficult and important task of preparing the children of the present day to be the parents of the future. The early pages are devoted to a consideration of the development of the senses of the infant, the links between mind and spirit, and the child's religion. Chapter IV deals with parental duties. After quoting the present birth rate the author says: "To whatever causes we attribute this enormous falling-off of citizens to our Empire, and whether we consider this condition an asset or a detriment, it is surely evident that the smaller number of children ought to be more carefully guarded and more wisely instructed if we are to have an adequate supply of healthy, well trained, and spiritually satisfactory citizens." The remainder of the book, with the exception of the final chapter, is given to the consideration of the various groups of abnormal children. Dr. Scharlieb explains the accepted definitions of "idiot," "imbecile," "Mongolian," etc., and quotes figures showing the percentage proportion of each to the population. This is a very useful part of the book, and should clear away much misapprehension on the subject. The last chapter deals with suggestion, discipline, and punishment, and should be helpful to all who have any dealings with children.

Dr. T. M. DISHINGTON has written a little book which seems to be his confession of faith in the system of medicine to which he adheres. It is cast in the form of a novel—*The Patient's Dilemma*.⁸ The novel is slight, the most of it a dialogue between a doctor perplexed with the problems of sickness and one who is filled with a sublime confidence in the powers of the similimum. Assuming that the expressions put in the mouth of one of his characters are those the author holds, Dr. Dishington is a whole hogger for the claims of homoeopathy. For the most part the argument is what we have heard before, the revelation of the similimum, and the defence of the infinitesimally small dose, whose power is now held to be proved since it is alleged that in such dilution the drug assumes a colloid form and therefore is the more assimilable and potent. Sometimes his argument runs away with him. The treatment of insanity by this system is under discussion, and on one page we read, "A healthy boy receives a head injury . . . becomes an uncontrolled fiend. . . . The surgeon, by merely restoring the internal plate of the skull to its proper alignment may cause a complete disappearance of every morbid mental process." On the opposite page we read, "A person with a frail physique and a tubercular lung may have a clear brain, and the natural sweet disposition may have full expression, but if the lung-state has been healed by local means, the disease-force, not neutralized or cured, may expend itself on the brain and insanity be the ultimate end of the patient." This is a strange doctrine.

⁶ *Practical Organic and Biochemistry*. By R. H. A. Plimmer, D.Sc. New edition. London and New York: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd. 1926. (Roy. 8vo, pp. x + 568; 67 figures, 1 plate. 21s. net.)

⁷ *The Psychology of Childhood: Normal and Abnormal*. By Mary Scharlieb, D.B.E., M.D., M.S.Lond. London: Constable and Co., Ltd. 1927. (Cr. 8vo, pp. xi + 194. 6s. net.)

⁸ *The Patient's Dilemma, or Why not Homoeopathy?* By T. M. Dishington, M.B., Ch.B.Glas. London and Glasgow: Gowans and Gray, Ltd. 1927. (Fcap. 8vo, pp. 166. 2s. 6d. net.)

The cure of a local lesion of the brain brings sanity, but the cure of a local lesion of the lung brings insanity! Considering the known frequency of healed tuberculous lesions of the lung in the population generally most of us should be insane. The humorist says we are! It is not clear for what class of reader this little book is written; the layman would scarcely understand it, though he might be mystified; for the medical reader (and since the dialogue is between medical men it would appear to be for them) it is somewhat thin.

IMPERIAL SOCIAL HYGIENE CONGRESS.

AN Imperial Social Hygiene Congress, organized by the British Social Hygiene Council, was held in London, under the presidency of the Right Hon. Major-General J. E. B. SEELY, during the first week of October. It was attended by delegates from Government departments, home and overseas, certain international bodies, such as the League of Nations Health Organization, six British and three Indian universities, about forty local authorities in Great Britain, and a large number of medical and educational societies and societies interested in social welfare. The British Medical Association was represented by Dr. H. G. DAIN, Dr. C. E. S. FLEMING, and Mr. Bishop Harman. The Congress did its work in six sections, which had for their subjects the medical, the educational, and the administrative aspects of social hygiene, and the problem of venereal disease in India, in the colonies, protectorates, and mandated territories, and among seamen.

The Congress opened with a banquet at which Mr. Neville Chamberlain, Minister of Health, was the principal guest. Mr. CHAMBERLAIN, in proposing the toast of "Health and Empire," referred to two health projects which, centering in London, had much imperial significance. One of these was the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, which, when housed in its new building in Gower Street, would make London more than ever a world centre for the study and control of the scourges of the tropics. The other was the project, now at the point of realization, for a post-graduate school in London, thanks to an arrangement between a committee over which he himself had presided and the authorities of the West London Hospital. Such a school would afford far-reaching opportunities for medical men from all parts of the Empire. The toast of "Delegates and guests" was in the hands of Mr. E. B. TURNER, who referred with great gratification to the growth and the widening scope of what was originally the National Council for Combating Venereal Diseases. Among those who responded were Professor JADASSOHN, president of the corresponding German organization, and Sir FAZL-I-HUSSAIN, a member of the Indian delegation to the Assembly of the League of Nations, who emphasized the high qualifications of the men in control of public health in India.

The Modern Treatment of Syphilis.

The medical session, under the presidency of Mr. DAVID LEES, produced two outstanding contributions. The first was by Colonel L. W. HARRISON, who spoke on the modern treatment of syphilis and its results. He emphasized the importance of starting treatment before the serum reactions became positive. The minimum amount of treatment for a sero-negative primary case, in his experience at St. Thomas's, was twenty injections, totalling 10 to 12 grams of "914," with mercury or with bismuth, and for sero-positive primary and early secondary cases quite 50 per cent. more. The method of administering mercury or bismuth simultaneously with arsenobenzol had advantages over that of following a course of one by a course of the other, especially from the point of view of preventing neuro-recurrences. The coincidence of negative reactions in serum and positive in cerebro-spinal fluid was so uncommon, and the inconveniences attending lumbar puncture were so great, that routine examination of the fluid might safely be omitted in cases which ran a straightforward and satisfactory course from the serological point of view.

The other paper was by Professor F. J. BROWNE, director of the obstetric unit, University College Hospital, who spoke on the management of cases of venereal disease in ante-natal and post-natal clinics. He laid down a series of principles which he regarded as the minimum necessary

for the proper diagnosis and treatment of venereal disease in pregnancy, and advocated compulsory notification of pregnancy at an early period, say the third or fourth month; only in that way could all cases of syphilis in pregnancy be discovered at a stage when effective treatment might be carried out.

Administrative Aspects of Social Hygiene.

The session dealing with the administrative aspects of social hygiene was presided over by Dr. T. F. DEWAR, medical officer of the Scottish Board of Health, who said that in Scotland the incidence of venereal diseases was regarded as being still far too high, although there were indications that syphilis at least was less common and formidable than it was ten years ago. The need for further legal powers was being considered in Scotland cautiously but earnestly. Dr. J. R. KAYE, medical officer of health for the West Riding, referred to the special administrative difficulties with regard to gonorrhoea, and especially in that large class of married women suffering from this disease with whom the authorities found it exceptionally difficult to get into touch. One solution might be to have clinics open for admission at any time of the day, and to provide special facilities at child welfare centres, so that the women could attend with due regard to their household duties and without fear of neighbours' comments. There were other persons who were totally indifferent to treatment; for them probably the only incentive might be the visualization of museum specimens showing the results of venereal diseases, as in the Hunterian collection. The following-up system in the past had not been adequate, for 20 per cent. or more had relinquished treatment prematurely. Some means such as notification, and, if necessary, threatened publicity, was indicated in his opinion, particularly when the lapse might mean infection for others.

Dr. T. FERGUSON, venereal diseases officer at Darlington, read a paper on congenital syphilis as a problem in public health administration, and deplored the delay which was common before the infected child received treatment. For the administrator, he said, the two salient facts concerning syphilis in the pregnant woman were that active specific treatment of the mother during pregnancy could almost eliminate congenital syphilis, and that the earlier in pregnancy the treatment was instituted the greater was the certainty of securing a healthy child. Every ante-natal examination should be made with the possibility of syphilitic infection prominently in the mind of the examining physician, and when practicable a syphilographer should be in actual attendance at the ante-natal centre. Dr. Ferguson pleaded that a systematic campaign against congenital syphilis should be a routine function of the public health department.

Venereal Disease in the Navy.

Half a dozen papers were read on the welfare of seamen from this point of view, and Surgeon Captain T. B. SHAW, R.N., communicated some observations on the incidence and prevention of venereal disease in the Navy. He pointed out the steady drop in incidence in the Navy up to 1915, and that now, once again, after a rise stimulated by the war, the figure was falling to pre-war level. The percentage rate of gonorrhoea was increasing. Fifty years ago gonorrhoeal infections accounted for about half the total, but 72 per cent. of the cases entered on the sick list for venereal diseases in 1924 were due to gonorrhoea or its sequelae. This was due largely to the fact that no specific treatment for gonorrhoea had as yet been evolved. Of the stations, China had the highest incidence of venereal disease, and the home station the lowest. He discussed means of prevention in the Navy, including education, local disinfection, early diagnosis and treatment, recreation and physical training, quarantine and restriction of leave.

A large proportion of the papers read at the Congress had to do with the state of affairs in India and other parts of the Empire, and on another page we refer to Sir Frederick Lugard's contribution on the training of the African in medicine, which, if a little aside from the main theme of the congress, is interesting, especially in view of Sir Frederick's long record as an administrator of British protectorates.