

Notes on Books

Dietetics or Nutrition in Health and Disease,⁷ by Dr. W. HEUPKE, is one of the series of monographs on medical practice edited at the Dresden Medical School. The general aim is to provide textbooks which will enable the practitioner of medicine to keep in touch with recent advances in medical science. The volume under review is excellently adapted for this purpose, since the author has given a clear and comprehensive account of his subject in less than 200 pages. In the first part we find a short summary (20 pages) of the general theory of nutrition. One-third of this is devoted to the vitamins, and the author has succeeded in giving a brief but very clear account of the vitamin requirements of man. The other main sections are the composition and characteristics of foodstuffs, nutrition in health, nutrition in disease, and artificial feeding. The section on nutrition in disease contains a clear and short account of all the chief forms of special diets such as diabetic, ketogenic, salt-poor, and obesity diets. The essential feature of a book of this kind is that it should provide an adequate amount of clear and accurate information, and the volume passes this test extremely well.

In the preface to his book, *A Short History of Tuberculosis*,⁸ Dr. G. NORMAN MEACHEN states that he has endeavoured "to provide what Dr. Ernest Ward thinks all such studies should do—namely, 'interest, entertainment, and instruction.'" It is to be regretted that the author has not succeeded in any of these respects. Dr. Meachen does not appear to have made his mind up beforehand whether it was to be a history of tuberculosis in general or of tuberculosis in England, or whether the subject was to be treated in chronological order or according to the various problems presented by the disease. The style is difficult to digest, consisting mostly of single-sentence paragraphs, often bearing no relation to each other. Repeated quotation of other people's opinions and sayings produces an irritating effect, not lessened by such printing as "extrapleural resection of from 1 to 6 in. of ribs XI to I via a paravertebral incision." The space apportioned to various subjects or workers is often unrelated to their importance in the history of tuberculosis (thus Villemin's work is dismissed in ten lines), and some of the subject-matter is put down quite uncritically, as, for instance, that dealing with B.C.G. or with Spahlinger's vaccine. Nevertheless, the book should form a very handy volume for looking up dates and names connected with tuberculosis. It contains good photographs of Koch and Piquet and an amusing plate of "Queen Mary touching a scrofulous boy."

Accurate dosage in radium therapy is so obviously important that Dr. KARL ZIMMER's excellent little monograph on Radium Dosimetry⁹ will be welcome to all who are engaged in this branch of our profession. As it is a work of a highly specialized character, our notice of it must be brief, but brevity does not indicate a lack of appreciation. The monograph includes a critical study of the present position of the subject, and is furnished with an excellent bibliography.

The Normal and Pathological Physiology of the Movements of the Alimentary Canal,¹⁰ by Professor W. CATEL of Leipzig, is a work whose scope is indicated by its title. The first part deals with the anatomy and normal physiology of gut movements and the second will be devoted to the derangements caused by disease. The author intends

⁷ *Diatetik die Ernährung des Gesunden und des Kranken*. By Dr. Wilhelm Heupke. *Medizinische Praxis*, Band XX. Dresden and Leipzig: T. Steinkopff. 1936. (Pp. 192. RM. 9.50; geb., RM. 10.80.)

⁸ *A Short History of Tuberculosis*. By G. Norman Meachen. London: John Bale, Sons and Danielsson, Ltd. 1936. (Pp. 105; 4 figures. 3s. 6d.)

⁹ *Radiumdosimetrie*. By Dr. Karl G. Zimmer. (Fortschritte auf dem Gebiete der Röntgenstrahlen Ergänzungsband 49.) 1936. Leipzig: G. Thieme. (Pp. 40; 33 figures. RM. 6.50.)

¹⁰ *Normale und Pathologische Physiologie der Bewegungsvorgänge im Gesamten Verdauungskanal*. By Professor Dr. Med. Werner Catel. Teil I. *Methodik, Anatomie, Normale Physiologie*. Leipzig: G. Thieme. 1936. (Pp. 250; 87 figures. M. 11.50; geb., M. 13.)

to include in the future the secretions and absorption from the gut, and thus to produce a textbook covering the physiology and pathology of all the gut functions. The part under review deals in a competent manner with the physiology of gut movements, and the text is supplemented by a large number of illustrations. The outstanding facts regarding the subject have been established for a number of years, and hence the account given does not contain many striking novelties. Some of the chief advances made in recent years are the recognition of the importance of movements of the muscularis mucosae and of the intestinal villi, the influence of vitamin lack on intestinal activity, and the study of the nervous control of the gut in primates. An adequate account of all these subjects is given.

The art of hydrotherapy requires for its practice not only knowledge but the skill that comes from daily experience. The attractive little textbook, by RUTH LE QUESNE and MARY GRANVILLE (Cassell, 6s.), like the late Dr. Calthrop's work, is founded on courses of teaching, in this case for the qualifying C.S.M.M.G. examination, in which hydrotherapy is now included. It should provide a sound basis for the "assistants" who aspire to be artists in hydrotherapy. One of the Continental pioneers in this method of treatment was accustomed to say that no physician could understand hydrotherapy unless he was prepared to put his own hands in the water. England in the nineteenth century had not a few lay practitioners of remarkable skill, although without scientific knowledge. The lay worker is now better provided, but it would seem a pity if this subtle and intricate art (for so these authors show it to be) should be left too much in non-medical hands. Most readers will be surprised at the wide range and application of the hydrotherapeutic method as here briefly described, and by the different reactions induced by small variations in temperature, duration, and technique. An excellent table sets forth the reactions of the "neutral" bath as compared with those which follow from baths at lower or higher temperatures.

Preparations and Appliances

CONCENTRATE OF RICE POLISHINGS

Ryzamin-B (Burroughs Wellcome and Co.) is a concentrate of rice polishings which contains fifty international units of vitamin B₁ per gram. The concentrate is a syrupy preparation which is quite palatable, and a daily dose of 0.4 gram is suggested as a supplement to the diet where this is partially deficient in vitamin B₁. In serious conditions, such as beriberi or late sprue, a daily dose of 4 grams or more is indicated.

The extent to which deficiency of this vitamin occurs in this country is well known to be a matter of dispute. Obvious signs of deficiency are very rare, but many authorities believe that a diet containing a large proportion of white bread is likely to cause enough deficiency in vitamin B₁ to produce derangement of the functions of the alimentary canal. Furthermore, the relation between various forms of polyneuritis and deficiency of vitamin B₁ is a problem which is at present attracting much attention.

CITRATED FERROUS CHLORIDE

Ferrous chloride (citrated) is a new iron preparation (British Drug Houses Ltd.) which promises to be of considerable service in the treatment of anaemia. In recent years it has been shown that preparations such as reduced iron, Bland's pill, and iron and ammonium citrate are only effective when given in massive doses. The disproportion between the minimum effective dose and the maximum amount of iron absorbed is indeed very striking. It is believed that the absorption of iron depends on the formation of ferrous chloride in the stomach, and hence this salt appears to be the rational form in which to administer iron. Unfortunately ferrous chloride is easily oxidized to ferric chloride, and this has hindered its clinical use. The new preparation consists of tablets of citrated ferrous chloride, which are protected from oxidation by a coating of a special varnish. These tablets promise to provide an effective means of iron therapy which avoids the difficulties sometimes associated with massive treatment.