

## Reviews

### PROBLEMS OF AGEING

*Problems of Ageing. Biological and Medical Aspects.*  
Edited by E. V. Cowdry. (Pp. 758; 121 figures. 45s.)  
London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox. 1939.

This authoritative publication of the Josiah Macy, jun., Foundation is a timely and logical sequel to the survey of the problem of arteriosclerosis brought out in 1933 and also edited by the professor of cytology in Washington University, St. Louis, who performed a similar service for the successful *Special Cytology* (1928) by thirty-five contributors. This present symposium is fortified by a foreword from Mr. Lawrence K. Frank of the Foundation, which, in 1937 sponsored a conference on ageing at Woods Hole, attended by fifteen out of the twenty-six contributors. The wide scope of the contents—psychological, sociological, economic, as well as physical and biological—is illustrated in the masterly introduction by Dr. John Dewey, emeritus professor of philosophy, Columbia University, New York.

The first four chapters deal with ageing in plants, protozoa, and invertebrates, insects, and vertebrates, and then, under the title "Human Cultural Levels," Dr. Clark Wissler, professor of anthropology at Yale, shows how far anthropometry has elucidated the problems of old age, and how much remains to be settled—for example, whether the bodies of all peoples and under all environments age in the same way and at the same time. Dr. Louis I. Dublin, statistician to the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, New York, writes on longevity in retrospect and prospect, and supplies much statistical matter from which may be quoted the remarkable rise in the mean expectation of life at birth in the United States from 35.5 years in 1789 to a little more than sixty years in 1930. He concludes that by some inexorable law still to be discovered and clarified Nature has allotted to man a life span of about a hundred years, but few there be that complete this span.

The remaining nineteen chapters, and five-sixths of the volume, are devoted to the more purely medical aspects of old age and admirably summarize the detailed knowledge now available, much of which is due to researches carried out by the individual authors. Professor W. B. Cannon of Harvard describes ageing of the homeostatic mechanisms—the condition of relative constancy in the internal environment of the living parts—which become progressively limited in their efficiency. Dr. A. E. Cohn of the Rockefeller Institute writes with wide experience, flavoured with wise philosophy, on ageing of the cardiovascular system and the blood. Professor E. B. Krumbhaar takes charge of the lymphatic tissues, the editor looks after the tissue fluids, and Dr. Macdonald Critchley, the only contributor from this side of the Atlantic, deals with the nervous system in old age. The psychological aspects in general are considered by Professor W. R. Miles, and in reference to sex by Dr. G. Hamilton. Professor Lewellys Barker reviews ageing from the point of view of the clinician with a plea for greater attention from his colleagues. This is a storehouse of knowledge and must long be a source of reference.

HUMPHRY ROLLESTON.

### HISTOLOGY OF INTRACRANIAL TUMOURS

*Histological Technique for Intracranial Tumours.* By Dorothy S. Russell, M.D. (Pp. 71; 6 plates. 7s. 6d. net.)  
London: Oxford University Press. 1939.

Two requirements seem necessary to justify the production of yet another medical textbook: first, special experience of the author in a particular field of work; and, secondly, the existence of a real need among a section of the profession for help in such a field. Dr. Russell's *Histological Technique for Intracranial Tumours* fulfils these two requirements. A pathological report based on the modern classification of cerebral tumours is now expected from any general laboratory. The special staining methods necessary are not widely known, and the general worker has often great difficulty in selecting methods from the larger handbooks. It is therefore valuable that Dr. Russell has made available from her own experience a list of the methods necessary for a specific problem—namely, the diagnosis of cerebral tumours.

The general plan of the book is excellent. Important details which might be considered elementary are emphasized, beginning with the handling of the specimens. The staining methods are clearly set forth, and the methods necessary for different types of tumour are grouped together in the final chapter. Methods for the rapid diagnosis of biopsy material are rightly included, as neurosurgeons are tending more and more to force such a study on their colleagues in the laboratory. The aim of the book has been adequately achieved, though perhaps more details about the applicability of the methods to celloidin material would have tended to make the work more complete. The book will, however, be found invaluable to the general histologist confronted with the problem of the diagnosis of cerebral tumours, and the specialist in this field will also on occasion find it useful for reference.

### ESSENTIALS OF RADIOGRAPHY

*Positioning in Radiography.* By K. C. Clark. (Pp. 482; 1,190 figures. 63s.) London: W. Heinemann. 1939.

The book by Miss K. C. Clark is large and expensive, but it is well worth the money. The 1,190 illustrations, including photographs of subjects in position for radiography, the resulting radiographs, and numerous line drawings, form the foundation of this volume, and are accompanied by commendably concise descriptions of radiographic techniques. Both photographs and radiographs are magnificently reproduced and are technically of the highest quality.

The first hundred pages deal with the bones of the extremities and describe the positions used in everyday radiography, as well as certain positions which are of value for patients so severely injured that standard views are difficult to obtain. In this respect the humerus, shoulder-joint, and scapula are particularly well described. Next come the spine, pelvis, and thoracic cage. A further one hundred or more pages are devoted to the skull, and here the sections on the radiography of the sinuses, of the temporal bones, and of the ventricular system are especially valuable. The heart and aorta are adequately dealt with, and a short account of kymography follows. The chapter on the respiratory system is good, but the brief note on the principles underlying tomography might well be clarified a little. The technique of the barium meal and the barium enema lies within the province of the radiologist rather than of the radiographer, for whom this book is primarily intended, so the somewhat sketchy nature of the section on the alimentary tract may perhaps be excused. The technique indicated for the administra-

tion of the barium enema indicates a certain lack of familiarity with the practical details of this type of work. The chapters on the gall-bladder and on the urinary tract are well written and fully illustrated, and the various positions used in obstetric radiography are indicated. In the localization of foreign bodies in the lung the danger of employing on the postero-anterior view is wisely stressed. But in connexion with foreign bodies in the orbit and eye Sweet's localizer is not mentioned, although this is the most usual method in this country. Considerable attention is paid, however, to methods based on the movement of the shadow of the foreign body when the eye is moved, in spite of the fact that this is now recognized to be an inferior method of localization for foreign bodies within the eyeball. Dental radiography is admirably described and illustrated, and the book ends with short sections on the soft tissues, myelography, stereography, and cineradiography. The index is complete and well arranged.

This is a book that should be in every x-ray department. It is one which has long been wanted, both by radiographers and by radiologists. The author, the publishers, and Ilford Limited are to be congratulated on a very fine piece of work.

### THERAPEUTIC PROGRESS IN 1938

*L'Année Thérapeutique. Médications et Procédés Nouveaux.* By A. Ravina. Thirteenth year, 1938. (Pp. 188. 25 fr.) Paris: Masson et Cie. 1939.

It is an interesting part of any matter to read how it strikes a contemporary. For many years Professor Ravina has published a series of reviews of therapeutic advances under the title *L'Année Thérapeutique*. The thirteenth number, that for 1938, is arranged on similar lines to the preceding volumes: first, extracts from medical journals, French, German, and English, dealing with the treatment of some diseases and symptoms; then some old and new methods of treatment; and, finally, a section on new medicines. Readers will find the reports, culled from many sources, accurate and likely to be helpful. The index is well prepared and full.

It is rather as a review of therapeutic progress seen through the eyes of a critical observer, giving an idea of the trend of present-day medicine, that the book has a broader appeal. To the logical French mind, injection (*piqûre*) has always been the method of choice for administering drugs, and this both for local and general effect. Vaccines have only a limited application and are rarely recommended. The modern intravenous anaesthetics are much used, and, keeping in mind some gross contraindications, may be used with comparative safety. Local injections are much advocated—novocain, and a less toxic product, percaïne, for pain in many situations; in some rheumatic conditions local injections of the patient's own blood withdrawn from a vein (autohaemotherapy) are shown to be valuable. Cocainization of the phrenic nerve in intractable hiccup, pilocarpine for Ménière's disease, and the use of acetylcholine and histamine injected round the affected joints in chronic rheumatism or brought to the peri-articular tissues by ionization are other methods which have proved successful. Drugs of the sulphonamide group are now on the crest of the wave, and their use in many infections, especially coccal infections, is established. Their value appears to lie in the concentration in the blood of the anti-bacterial substance; this is rapidly excreted, but may have harmful effects on parenchymatous organs, and there are risks in their use. Provided the urinary excretion is good and there is no fall in the red blood corpuscles, however, the drug should be pushed to adequate dosage

in spite of some cyanosis; insufficient doses are almost useless. The hormones are finding wider application; insulin not only for diabetes but also combined with sugar for hepatic disease and alcoholism; heparin in post-operative thrombosis and blood transfusion; and the male and female hormones of pituitary and gonads, which have been differentiated and classified, not only in the disorders of menstruation and pregnancy but also in cases of asthenia, enlarged prostate, enuresis. Valuable reports are added on the use of the various vitamins. Many good results in the treatment of neuralgias and peripheral pains are attributed to the vitamin B<sub>1</sub>; vitamin C is reported to assist histidine in the treatment of peptic ulcer; and an oily preparation of vitamins A and D has helped in clearing purulent rhinitis.

### SURGICAL ANATOMY

*Surgical Anatomy.* By C. Latimer Callander, A.B., M.D., F.A.C.S. With a Foreword by Dean Lewis, M.D., Sc.D., LL.D., F.A.C.S. Second edition. (Pp. 858; 819 figures. 45s. net.) London: W. B. Saunders. 1939.

The second edition of Callander's *Surgical Anatomy* has been revised and reset; moreover, much new matter and many new illustrations have been added. The enormous amount of work which this rearrangement has entailed can only have been accomplished with the co-operation and assistance of many workers, among whom the artists, Mr. Sweet and Miss Gelken, are to be congratulated on the skilful manner in which some of the new "multi-figured drawings" have been executed. Notwithstanding the inclusion of recent work on, for example, ganglionectomy of the lumbar sympathetic system, resection of the sacral plexus, and the surgical treatment of conditions affecting the posterior mediastinum, the lungs, heart, and pericardium, the revision has not been accompanied by any increase in the size of the volume, since much which has now become obsolete has been omitted. The author has not erred in the direction of describing operations which are only seldom performed, and then only by a limited number of specialists, but has apparently endeavoured to keep within the bounds of the everyday work of a general surgeon, or of ophthalmic, ear, nose, and throat, or gynaecological practitioners. Among much which is worthy of note one may specially mention the section on intestinal anastomoses. There are, too, admirable reviews of the surgical anatomy of the vertebral column and spinal cord and of the principal operations on the limbs, among which the author's "tendo-plastic amputation through the femur at the knee" may be cited as an example of how much detailed information may be clearly conveyed by a brief description in the text when this is combined with the "multifigured" type of illustration. The book will be particularly valuable to students and medical practitioners who wish to acquire a general knowledge of surgical procedures without making a complete study of those full technical details which are only to be found in monographs on the operative surgery of special regions.

### DISORDERS OF MENSTRUATION

*Menstrual Disorders: Pathology, Diagnosis and Treatment.* By C. Frederic Fluhmann, B.A., M.D., C.M. (Pp. 329; 119 figures; 12 tables. 22s. 6d. net.) London: W. B. Saunders. 1939.

This book gives an orderly presentation of modern knowledge of human ovarian function. Professor Fluhmann has the gift of simple classification and clear statement, and there is no mistiness about his outlook on the still unfinished edges of the picture. His chapter on the sex