

Reviews

THE IMPORTANCE OF BURNS

A New Approach to the Treatment of Burns and Scalds. By Leonard Colebrook, F.R.S., F.R.C.O.G. (Pp. 174; illustrated. 12s. 6d.) London: Fine Technical Publications, 39, Wilton Road, S.W.1. 1950.

This book is an account of the author's very important work demonstrating how to minimize the effects and reduce the mortality due to burns and scalds. The study began in Glasgow and was then continued in the Birmingham Accident Hospital. From 1945-8, among 490 burns and scalds treated at that hospital the death rate was only 2.7%. This is a striking contrast to the rate of 26% recorded in London in the early days of this century. The points in treatment on which Dr. Colebrook lays stress are the avoidance of haemoconcentration by giving plasma at once and the elimination of sepsis. Not only is the elimination of sepsis important because it reduces mortality, but also because it saves unnecessary pain. His experience has shown that "all the misery of burned people in the past was due to inflammation." If sepsis is avoided early skin grafting becomes possible, and in this way the stay in hospital and the period of incapacity can be reduced by 50%.

Dr. Colebrook points out, however, that these objects can be attained only by a complete recasting of arrangements for dealing with these difficult cases. He therefore proposes that centres for the treatment of burns should be established, and he then proceeds to describe in detail how these centres can be organized and what staff is required to man them. His proposals are put forward cogently, but it is possible to read between the lines that he thinks little attention will be paid to them. We are slow in this country to adopt improvements which involve changes in organization, as, for example, in the management of operating-theatres for the elimination of sepsis there. We refuse to be moved by early enthusiasm, and when the enthusiasm has cooled we fold our hands in resignation.

Dr. Colebrook has made a most important contribution to medical treatment. His book should be read by all, for it demonstrates what contributions can be made by the investigator who shows how scientific knowledge can be applied in practice.

J. H. BURN.

A VETERAN GYNAECOLOGIST

Tom Cullen of Baltimore. By Judith Robinson. (Pp. 435; illustrated. £1 1s.) London: Geoffrey Cumberlege (Oxford University Press). 1949.

"A great gynaecologist, an inspiring and generous leader, and a man whose genius is excelled only by his humanity." These words are not taken from an obituary notice. They appeared in a review in the *British Medical Journal* (October 7, 1939) of two volumes of the collected papers of the Johns Hopkins gynaecological department; and they referred to the subject of this book, now a veteran of 82. His life has been written by a gifted and enthusiastic fellow Canadian, who obviously felt that Dr. Cullen was a heaven-sent gift for a biographer.

I think I enjoyed most the chapters dealing with Cullen's background. The son of a Wesleyan minister with an English wife, a large family, and a small income, Cullen had a

puritanical upbringing strongly infused with ideas about the value of work and character. Nothing in the book is more touching than the evidence of Cullen's love for his parents and his devotion to his widowed mother. After the premature death of his father he took on his shoulders the education of his younger brother and sisters at a time when he was far from well off. During his college career he added to the family income by delivering newspapers. This involved very early rising, "at first by compulsion, afterwards by choice," and to this habit and his capacity for sleep at any time and in any position he attributes his ability to do what ought to be done. After a distinguished college career he was appointed one of the residents in the Toronto hospital. There he saw Kelly of Baltimore operate, and resolved to become a surgeon. He followed his fellow student Lewellys Barker to Baltimore and was attached to Kelly's pathological laboratory, where he spent several hard-working years.

Right through the book it is made plain that Cullen regards pathology as the only true basis for surgery, and many tributes are paid to Kelly as a brilliant leader and a most generous friend. It was Kelly who lent him the money to go to Germany, where nearly all the early Johns Hopkins men seem to have got inspiration.

No attempt will here be made to detail what gynaecology and abdominal surgery owe to Cullen. It is a part of medical history, but many interesting and personal sidelights emerge in this volume. He has written many books on different aspects of his work, and says, incidentally, that he reckons he "lost between sixty and seventy thousand dollars on them; but it was worth it." He pays a great tribute to Dr. Hurd, who not only insisted on his publishing, but was the man chiefly responsible for the inception of the famous Johns Hopkins Bulletins.

Cullen found time for many causes outside surgery. He was for many years prominent in the work of the American Medical Association. He was the originator in the U.S.A. of the campaign for the earlier recognition of cancer, in which he at first incurred much opposition from many of his colleagues. He was active in many civic enterprises which had to be fought for. As a friend said of him: "Tom never asked for anything for himself. He never asked for anything unreasonable, and when he once started he never stopped. Never." His successes with his "wants" are told, often with humour, and they explain how it is that Cullen is one of the most honoured of Baltimore's citizens. The book is a handsome one with many good portraits and a full bibliography. I have only one criticism to make of it: I think it might have been even better if the author had been less expansive in parts.

ALFRED COX.

CHANGING VIEWS ON RHEUMATISM

The Rheumatic Diseases. By G. D. Kersley, M.A., M.D. (Cantab.), F.R.C.P., T.D. Foreword by Sir Francis R. Fraser, M.A., M.D.Ed., F.R.C.P. Third edition. (Pp. 143; illustrated. 15s.) London: William Heinemann Medical Books. 1950.

Since the second edition of this book was published in 1945 an entirely new approach to the rheumatic diseases, and indeed to medical thought in general, has been made possible by the work of Hench and his colleagues at the Mayo Clinic and by Selye's theory of the adaptation syndrome. As a result of this a flood of new work has been poured out in the literature, so far mostly in America,

but also in this country and elsewhere, and the writer of any new book on rheumatism must face the difficulty of deciding how far he can include very recent and perhaps highly speculative and unconfirmed work. If the author has not been entirely successful in avoiding the appearance of having rushed to include the very latest work up to the moment of going to press, it is at least a good fault and his selection has been judicious. His chapter on endocrinology describes in a simple manner much that is entirely absent from other English textbooks on this subject. It is unfortunate that there has been an error in the plate giving the formulae of some important steroids, 17-hydroxy-11-dehydrocorticosterone and 11-dehydrocorticosterone being confused.

The other sections on the clinical features and treatment of the rheumatic diseases are extremely sound and of a remarkable conciseness, coupled with readability and completeness. If the chapter on fibrositis tends to lag behind more recent approaches to non-articular rheumatism it follows none the less the best of the traditional lines of thought, and much that is unsound has been avoided. Dr. Kersley reviews in a highly sceptical spirit the place of the disk lesion as an aetiological factor in sciatica, and he stresses the other causes of this syndrome, particularly those due to ligamentous and soft-tissue lesions. He goes so far as to suggest that neurological signs are not necessarily indicative of nerve-root pressure and that diminution of the ankle jerk may occur in fibrositic conditions. Indeed, he claims that all the clinical findings of a prolapsed disk may be reproduced in a severe attack of fibrositis, a view which must make the differential diagnosis extremely difficult—which it no doubt is. But these are minor criticisms of an otherwise first-class book which reflects the best of modern rheumatological teaching in a form suitable for students, postgraduates, and general practitioners.

W. S. C. COPEMAN.

EXAMINATION OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

Practical Neurological Diagnosis. With special reference to the Problems of Neurosurgery. By R. Glen Spurling, M.D. Fourth edition. (Pp. 268; illustrated. £1 17s. 6d.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1950.

This is the fourth edition of Spurling's book to appear since 1935, the main changes since the last edition being a complete revision of the chapter on the cerebellum and the addition of an account of the hypothalamus and a glossary of neurological terms. The latter is an unusual and useful feature in a book of this type. A short account is given of history-taking in neurological cases, and the methods of examination of the nervous system are described along orthodox lines. The author's description of Romberg's test, however, differs fundamentally from the method of performing the test and of interpreting it usually adopted in this country. He describes a positive test as swaying or falling when the patient stands with his eyes open, while it is usual to define a positive test as increase of unsteadiness when the eyes are closed. If the latter criterion is adopted a positive test is indicative of impairment of posterior-column function and not of cerebellar disease. A description of abnormalities in the cerebrospinal fluid and a short but helpful description of the role of radiology in neurological diagnosis complete the volume. The book is a valuable elementary introduction to examination of the nervous system and to interpretation of abnormal neurological signs.

J. W. ALDREN TURNER.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Review is not precluded by notice here of books recently received

The Psycho-Analytic Reader. Edited by R. Fliess, M.D. (Pp. 358. 18s.) London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis. 1950.

Popular Fallacies. By A. S. E. Ackermann, B.Sc., F.C.G.I., M.Cons.E., Hon.F.S.E., A.M.I.C.E., M.R.S.I. Introduction by Sir R. Gregory, Bt., F.R.S. 4th ed. (Pp. 843. 30s.) London: Old Westminster Press. 1950.

Aids to Materia Medica. By G. H. Newns, M.D., M.R.C.P. 4th ed. (Pp. 204. 5s.) London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox. 1950

Guide to Good Health. By an Octogenarian Doctor. (Pp. 11. 1s.) London: H. K. Lewis. 1950.

Progressive Professional Nursing. By M. E. Grey, S.R.N., S.C.M. (Pp. 104. 6s.) Edinburgh: Livingstone. 1950.

Medicine and Mankind. By A. Sorsby, M.D., F.R.C.S. 2nd ed. (Pp. 232. 12s. 6d.) London: Staples. 1950.

The Health of the People. By S. Leff, M.D., D.P.H. (Pp. 288. 12s. 6d.) London: Victor Gollancz. 1950.

Gastroscopy. By R. Schindler, M.D., F.A.C.P. 2nd ed. (Pp. 433. £7 10s.) London: Cambridge University Press. 1950.

Children with Mental and Physical Handicaps. By J. E. W. Wallin, Ph.D. (Pp. 549. 42s.) London: Staples. 1950.

Primary Carcinoma of the Vagina. By R. G. Livingstone, M.D. (Pp. 73. 15s.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles Thomas. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1950.

Employment Relations in a Group of Hospitals. By J. Woodward, M.A. (Pp. 115. 5s.) London: Institute of Hospital Administrators. 1950.

Essentials of Urology. By J. C. Ainsworth-Davis, M.A., M.D., B.Ch., F.R.C.S., F.R.C.S.Ed. (Pp. 734. 50s.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1950.

Menstruation and Its Disorders. Edited by E. T. Engle (Pp. 358. 37s. 6d.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles Thomas. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1950

Clinical Nutrition. Edited by N. Jolliffe, M.D., and others. (Pp. 925. 90s.) London: Cassell. 1950.

The Care of the Aged Sick. (Pp. 11. 4d.) London: St. John Ambulance Association. 1950.

An Introduction to Pathology. By G. Payling Wright, D.M., F.R.C.P. (Pp. 569. 30s.) London, New York, and Toronto: Longmans Green. 1950.

Laboratory Manual of Biochemistry. By B. Harrow, Ph.D., and others. 3rd ed. (Pp. 149. 11s. 6d.) Philadelphia and London: Saunders. 1950.

Proctology in General Practice. By J. Peerman Nesselrod, B.S., M.S., M.Sc.(Med.), M.D., F.A.C.S., F.A.P.S. (Pp. 276. 30s.) Philadelphia and London: Saunders. 1950.

Infrared Radiation Therapy Sources and their Analysis with Scanner. By L. Rovner. (Pp. 34. 11s.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles Thomas. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1950.

Massage reflektorischer Zonen im Bindegewebe. By H. Leube and E. Dicke. Introduction by W. Kohlrausch. 4th ed. (Pp. 83. M. 4.50.) Jena: Gustav Fischer. 1950.

Die Physiologie der Zeugung des Menschen. By H. Knaus. 3rd ed. (Pp. 485. M. 50.) Vienna: Wilhelm Maudrich. 1950.

Die Klinische Röntgendiagnostik der Inneren Erkrankungen. By H. Assmann. 6th ed. Parts 1 and 2. (Pp. 1,023. M. 59.60 and M. 75.60.) Berlin, Göttingen, and Heidelberg: Springer. 1949.

El Sexo a Voluntad. By R. A. Ascorti. (Pp. 54. No price.) Buenos Aires: El Ateneo. 1947.