

precious relics of McDowell, a gavel with the hammer end made from the doorknob of his "office," and another with the handle fashioned out of timber from his house, are made the subjects of a plate; they are piously preserved by the society, to which they have been presented. Dr. Herbert Spencer took an active part in the discussions, and besides his historical paper on ovariectomy read an instructive communication on ovarian tumours complicating pregnancy, labour, and the puerperium. The subjects for debate were not confined to ovarian disease, many excellent contributions on other gynaecological questions being included in this volume. We may turn attention to one, relatively original, which reminds us of the writings of Sir Frederick Treves in his early days. Dr. Reynolds of Boston, as a gynaecologist, and Dr. Lovett, as an orthopaedic surgeon, publish a joint abstract report on investigations now being carried on in relation to the influence of corsets and high-heeled shoes on the symptoms of pelvic and static disorders. The discussion after the reading of the report was both active and instructive. Other papers deserve attention on this side of the Atlantic, especially Laphorn Smith's treatise opposing the sterilization of every woman who has undergone Caesarean section, and Howard Kelly's contribution on subtotal hysterectomy so as to preserve the menstrual function.

The solid volume of the *Transactions of the Southern Surgical and Gynaecological Association for 1908*,<sup>9</sup> is in appearance almost a facsimile of the last mentioned. The papers collected and arranged by Dr. HAGGARD are equally substantial, but there comes first a short address delivered by the President (Dr. Parham of New Orleans), entitled *Conservative Surgery, Then and Now*. He reminded the association that modern surgery has been accused of turning the hospital into an hotel for the temporary care of the vivisected, whilst, on the other hand, a great American surgeon declared last year at another association meeting that an operation means a confession of failure. The dispute about radical measures and expectant treatment is very old; 1833 is, as far as our science and art are concerned, ancient history. In that year alone, under the influence of Broussais 41 million leeches were imported into France. That certainly meant radical treatment open to legitimate criticism. Radical surgery was then rampant in the domain of amputation; physical strength, nerve, and celerity being too freely displayed by those who possessed such qualities. It was inevitable that awkward blunders occurred. Brodie found a small abscess in the lower end of the tibia after amputation of a leg for obstinate pain of long duration. Three years later he came across what he recognized as a similar case, and evacuated the pus by aid of the trephine, and permanent cure ensued. "The amputation," Dr. Parham justly observed, "may have been more spectacular, but the other was more commendable in conception and result." Brodie's experiences form an object lesson, for we see how the great surgeon taught himself. Dr. Parham quotes Paget's advice about "the courage to do little," and the wise words of our brilliant contemporary Moynihan, "Speed should be the achievement, not the aim, of the operator." The volume includes some excellent communications. Goldsmith of Atlanta reports an instance of dermoid cyst of the kidney, so interesting to the pathologist and surgeon that an abstract of the case has been published in the *EPITOME* for February 5th, as it ought not to be overlooked in British and Continental European literature of the kidney and abdominal surgery. Norment Baker, of Montgomery, Alabama, contributes a paper on elephantiasis of the male genitalia. Both in his cases, and in a third related by Doughty, of Augusta, Georgia, the patients were negroes. Norment Baker has been able to collect not more than 30 indigenous cases of *Filaria sanguinis hominis* occurring in the United States. The volume contains some excellent communications, read specially for discussion, on cancer of the uterus, the transverse abdominal incision, treatment of abdominal aneurysm by wire, and other familiar subjects.

<sup>9</sup> *Transactions of the Southern Surgical and Gynaecological Association*. Vol. xxi. Twenty-first Session, held at St. Louis, Mo., December 15th, 16th, and 17th, 1908. Edited by W. D. Haggard, M.D. Nashville, Tenn.: Published by the Association, 1909. (Med. 8vo. pp. 542.)

## NOTES ON BOOKS.

THE author of *My Lady of Aros*,<sup>10</sup> JOHN BRANDANE, is, we fancy, a new writer, and certainly one of promise. His novel centres round certain doings in a Scottish island not long after Forty-Five, when Jacobites and Hanoverians had not yet ceased from mutual troubling; when plots, spying, treachery, and self-sacrifice were still to the fore; when inter-clan vendettas were still common and the depopulation of Scotland by emigration was but just commencing. Its special interest for medical men lies in its hero being a naval surgeon's mate, and in wounds, fractures, and an outbreak of "plague" or typhus fever, all playing an important and perfectly credible part. Indeed, the comparative credibility of the story is one of its virtues; in addition the plot hangs together, the characters stand out clearly, and the interest is well sustained.

DR. JAMES BURNET, of Edinburgh, has published a rewritten and enlarged edition of the *Hints on Prescription Writing*,<sup>11</sup> which first saw the light a few years ago. The point of view from which the subject is approached is that of a student who has to satisfy an examiner that his knowledge of the abbreviated terms used in writing prescriptions in ordinary life is adequate. To this end he must prove that he can not only translate a prescription laid before him, but himself write in either English or Latin full directions for the dispenser and the patient, with due regard to dosage and compatibility of ingredients. The subject is illustrated by supplying answers to questions set at recent examinations. The pamphlet is written so succinctly and to the point that it may well be found more useful by those for whom it is intended than some more ambitious efforts of wider scope.

There has come into our hands a book named *The Prayer Quest*,<sup>12</sup> its author being Dr. W. WINSLOW HALL, a medical man in active practice in London; a subtitle of the book is, *A Physiological Extension*. Though the work of an enthusiast, it is that of a plainly sane and reasoning enthusiast, and one who is in close touch both with the times and with science, and can write good English prose and versify cleverly. On this account the volume is worth perusal by any one, and study by many; whatever the beliefs or disbeliefs of readers, they are likely to find much with which they can agree, and perhaps some of their vaguer ideas pleasantly crystallized for them.

<sup>10</sup> *My Lady of Aros*. By John Brandane. London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Co. 1910. (Cr. 8vo. pp. 328. 5s.)

<sup>11</sup> *Hints on Prescription Writing*. By James Burnet, M.A., M.D., M.R.C.P.E. Second edition. Edinburgh: John Currie. 1910. (Medium 16mo. pp. 31. Price 1s.)

<sup>12</sup> *The Prayer Quest*. By W. Winslow Hall, M.D. Edin. London: Headley Bros. 1910. (Crown 8vo. Pp. 144.)

## MEDICINAL AND DIETETIC PREPARATIONS.

### *Piutinol.*

WE have received from Messrs. A. and M. Zimmermann (3, Lloyds Avenue, London, E.C.) a sample of piutinol, which is a compound intended for the preparation of sulphur baths at home. It is a brown alkaline liquid, and is described as an alcoholic solution of polysulphides and hyposulphites with the volatile oils of coniferae, and the results of tests confirmed this description. Piutinol makes a milky mixture with water, with a strong smell of essential oils blended with the odour of the higher sulphur compounds; on addition of acid sulphur is precipitated in large quantity and sulphuretted hydrogen liberated. It will doubtless prove useful for the purpose for which it is intended, and will put sulphur baths within the reach of those who are unable to visit the natural springs.

At the end of 1909 there were 23 lepers in the German empire. The number in the foregoing year was 25.

THE number of women students in the medical faculties of the Prussian universities in the winter semester of 1909-10 was 266, as against 188 in the corresponding period last year.

WE have received from Messrs. De Dion a book of instructions compiled for the benefit of those who use the very popular 8-h.p. (model CD) and 10-h.p. (model CL) cars of this firm. It has been brought out because the book of instructions hitherto issued by the firm, and relating to all its models, has grown too bulky and complicated for general use. In future each model will have its own book of instructions. The book before us is very clearly written, and though relating specifically to the particular models in question might be found useful by the user of any car. Copies can be obtained on application.