

siderable detail. The plates can be used in other ways as well. The idea is ingenious, and has been carefully carried out, and though we cannot see any likelihood of any general use being made of them in the dissecting-room, they may be found of service in the subsequent revision of work already done, and as a reference when access to a dissecting-room is impossible.

Though the text, too, illustrates the principles enunciated, we do not think that the author has succeeded in presenting his subject in a way likely to attract the average reader. Some of the changes in treatment and nomenclature, made, says the author, with "a definite aim at clearness, conciseness or ease in handling the facts," seem unnecessary, and in some cases even misleading. Of what assistance is the term "interfissural area of the liver" (quadrate lobe) to the student who has been taught the form of the generalized mammalian liver and is able to recognize the right lateral fissure in the human specimen when it is present? The statement, too, that "the testes themselves, like the ovaries, are covered not by peritoneum but by germ epithelium," is misleading as it stands, and needs amplifying to give the correct impression. Moreover, we cannot accept *in toto* the statement that "the small sac is not a diverticulum of the great sac," since that part of the small sac which lies behind the liver develops as a right-sided pocket from the great sac during the first month of development. Indeed, at one stage there are two such pockets—right and left—though the left one soon disappears. The general get-up of the book is unattractive, and the type of the contents pages seems unnecessarily prominent and varied.

THE "MEDICAL ANNUAL."

The editor of the *Medical Annual*¹² is once again to be congratulated on the production of a highly useful volume. Among its other virtues is that of keeping to the same arrangement as its predecessors, and thus not confusing those who have learnt to rely upon it as a reference work. In bulk it is slightly less portly than last year's volume, and the number of different contributors is also somewhat less, but the former point is a virtue rather than a defect, while almost without exception those placed in charge of the different branches and subdivisions of medicine and surgery bear already well known names. The writers of one or two of the articles dealing with subjects of a specialist kind are not resident in this country; this, again, is a possible advantage, since in some of the special departments of medicine feeling tends to run high. To an active participant in any fray strict impartiality and accuracy of focus must ever be difficult of attainment. A good many articles have a certain topical interest—that, for instance, in which Mr. Whippel Gadd sums up the outstanding features of the Insurance Act and indicates their general bearing on medical practitioners, pharmacists, and hospitals. It is very clearly written, but not all readers are likely to share his apparent belief that if the demands of the medical profession overtop the sums available, the Insurance Commissioners, *motu proprio*, could solve the difficulty by ordering an increase of contributions. Also timely is the well illustrated article in which Mr. Charles Leedham-Green endeavours to awaken a keener interest in regional anaesthesia, by showing in how many more circumstances it is utilizable than is commonly known. In the articles on ear disease evidence is supplied that what is described as "the conservative radical mastoid operation, first brought to general attention by Heath," has numerous advocates, especially in America and on the Continent. Corresponding evidence that aurists as a class are paying any considerable attention to the question of the best way of alleviating the condition of those who are admittedly incurably deaf is unfortunately lacking. Sea-water treatment is also considered, but not, as two years ago, at great length; this year, after a brief reference to the fact that the treatment has been exploited by the lay press, the writer continues as follows:

The supposed virtue of the sea water lies apparently in the fact that by addition of spring water it is rendered isotonic with human blood. Whether the particular combination of salts in sea water has any special value in cases of infantile diarrhoea is doubtful; certainly its use by some scientific observers has

not justified the extravagant claims made for it; any method of supplying fluid to an infant drained of water by severe diarrhoea has, as has been recognized for many years, a life-saving value in many cases, and subcutaneous administration has been practised for a long time for this purpose.

NOTES ON BOOKS.

THE advanced ambulance handbook, *First Aid to the Injured*,¹³ by Messrs. WARWICK and TUNSTALL, has now become a standard work on the subject, and the issue of its seventh edition (sixtieth thousand) within ten years is ample testimony to its utility. This new edition has been thoroughly revised, and the latest stretcher and wagon drill has been incorporated from the R.A.M.C. Training Manual, special drawings having been prepared from photographs. These illustrations of stretcher and wagon drill are a feature of the book.

In *District Nursing*¹⁴ is to be found an account by Miss MABEL JACQUES of this work as conducted in American cities, together with advice derived from her own experience as to the ends which should be kept in view by those who are nurses themselves or by those who wish to start district nursing associations. Though one gathers that work of this order is comparatively in its infancy in America, useful hints might no doubt be gathered from its pages by those similarly engaged in Great Britain.

The popularity in America of Dr. STEVENS's *Manual of the Practice of Medicine*¹⁵ is sufficiently evidenced by the number of editions which have appeared since its first publication in 1892. The ninth edition, like its predecessors, is intended to assist students in building up their knowledge by clinical observation and attendance at lectures. Used in this way it may be useful to British as well as American students, though one can hardly agree with the author that the saying, "half our knowledge we must snatch, not take," can rightly be applied to practical medicine.

An account of the important series of discussions held last year at Caxton Hall on the subject of poverty and its prevention has been published in a large volume entitled, *National Conference on the Prevention of Destitution*.¹⁶ The work was divided into six sections—namely, public health, education, unemployment, mental deficiency, legal, and financial sections. The views and suggestions set forth in the various papers and in the course of the discussions form a species of encyclopaedia of current ideas on the whole subject. The volume, therefore, has a certain degree of permanent interest, and may be found useful as a kind of reference book for some years to come.

Anyone who has ever had the smallest experience of nursing has probably felt the difficulty of catering successfully for sick people. More particularly is this the case with regard to convalescents, whose reawakening appetite must be skilfully flattered at the same time that a delicate digestion has to be taken into full account. Miss FLORENCE B. JACK's excellent *Cooking for Invalids in Home and Hospital*,¹⁷ of which a new and revised edition has recently appeared, should therefore prove of great assistance to all who may be called upon to exercise their tact and ingenuity in ordering meals for the sick-room. Miss Jack's recipes, which combine the threefold advantages of being light, nourishing, and economical, are also extremely practical; and they are given with a simplicity and conciseness that should enable the veriest tiro in invalid cooking to try her hand with some measure of success. A few specimen menus and some useful hints on the art of poultice-making help to complete this invaluable little work, which should find its way to a handy place on the bookshelves of every home.

¹³ *First Aid to the Injured and Sick*. An Advanced Ambulance Handbook. By Major F. J. Warwick, M.B., M.R.C.S., and Major A. C. Tunstall, M.D., F.R.C.S. Seventh edition. Bristol: John Wright and Sons. 1911. (Fcp. 8vo, pp. 260. 1s. net.)

¹⁴ *District Nursing*. By Mabel Jacques, with an introduction by John H. Pryor, M.D. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1911. (Cr. 8vo, pp. 176.)

¹⁵ *A Manual of the Practice of Medicine*. Prepared especially for students by A. Stevens, A.M., M.D., Lecturer on Medicine in the University of Pennsylvania. Ninth edition. Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders Company. 1911. (Post 8vo, pp. 573; 19 illustrations. 2.50 dols. net, or 12s. 6d. net.)

¹⁶ *National Conference on the Prevention of Destitution*. Proceedings of the Conference held May 30th and 31st and June 1st and 2nd, 1911. London: P. S. King and Son. 1911. (Roy. 8vo, pp. 766. 10s. 6d. net.)

¹⁷ *Cooking for Invalids in Home and Hospital*. By Florence B. Jack. A new edition, revised and enlarged. London and Edinburgh: T. C. and E. C. Jack. 1912. (Post 8vo, pp. 207. 2s. net.)

¹² *The Medical Annual*. Thirtieth Year—1912. Bristol: John Wright and Sons, Ltd. (Demy 8vo, pp. 734. Price 8s. 6d. net.)

Men and Measures,¹⁸ by Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel EDWARD NICHOLSON, is for the most part a historical account of the evolution of the chief systems of weights and measures in use at the present day, both in the British Empire and elsewhere. The author accepts the view that the earliest measures were those of length, derived from parts of the body; of the fundamental units the principal appears to have been the cubit, the length of the fore-arm from elbow to finger-tip, about 18 or 19 in. The cubit underwent many changes, and a chapter is devoted to the various cubits which have been of importance; the foot was two-thirds of a cubit, and the cubic foot of water became the standard of weight known as the talent, from which other weights were derived; various talents existed, however, at different times and in different places, and a most interesting account is given of these. The book shows evidence of historical research of no mean order; the author is not only concerned, however, with the historical aspect of the subject, but holds strong views as to the superiority of the Imperial system of weights and measures over the metric system, with which many people desire to replace it. The book will be read with much interest on account of the views put forward on this practical question, as well as for the sake of the historical facts.

With the approach of summer there should be a demand for the excellently illustrated booklet entitled *Camping for Boys*.¹⁹ It is a description by Mr. J. H. WHITEHOUSE, M.P., of the secondary schoolboy's camp, how it came into existence, what is done thereat, and what its objects are. It is worth perusal both by parents and medical men, and if read also by schoolboys, as, indeed, it is intended to be, a call for an increase in the number of these camps is likely to be heard. In a final note Mr. Whitehouse, who is honorary warden of the camp, expresses his readiness to receive communications relating to the camp, if addressed to him at the House of Commons.

The *Maerchen*,²⁰ to her translation of which A. C. CATON has given the title *Children*, is a pleasantly told fairy tale by which some parents in a difficulty may convey to their children an answer to the child's question, "Where do babies come from?" It is suggested that instruction from botany and zoology may follow this introduction. There are some who find that the story of the egg may be told to children, and that the wonder of truth is none the less when it is divested of the atmosphere of pietistic mystery.

¹⁸ *Men and Measures: A History of Weights and Measures, Ancient and Modern*. By Edward Nicholson, F.I.C., F.C.S., Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel, Army Medical Department. London: Smith, Elder and Co. 1912. (Demy 8vo, pp. 325. 7s. 6d. net.)

¹⁹ *Camping for Boys*. By J. H. Whitehouse, M.P., Honorary Secretary National League of Workers with Boys, and Warden of the Secondary Schoolboys' Camp. London: P. S. King and Son. 1911. (Crown 8vo, pp. 80, 69 illustrations. Paper cover, 1s. net.)

²⁰ *Children. A Maerchen* by Hugo Salus. Translated by Altheia C. Caton. Second and revised edition. London. 1912. The Mother Books I. (Pp. 28. Price 1s. net.)

MEDICINAL AND DIETETIC ARTICLES.

Colloidal Selenium.

SOME therapeutical experiments with a colloidal selenium in cases of cancerous growth have lately been made in Paris. They were suggested by the recent work of Wassermann (BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, January 6th, 1912, p. 39). An attempt was made to prepare a colloidal selenium by the various methods which have been in vogue for several years past, such as that of Paal and Koch, but these were found invariably to give too large particles, or at least particles not of uniform size. Dr. André Lancien, who has undertaken the experiments on their physical side, then resorted to an electrical method of pulverizing the selenium, apparently the method of starting an arc between two electrodes and producing very fine disintegration. From the product thus obtained, which possesses all the physico-chemical properties of ordinary selenium, and has been named "Selenium A," a colloidal solution was prepared, suitable for injections. We gather from communications to the Société Médicale des Hôpitaux de Paris on February 16th and March 1st that this substance has produced some interesting modifications when applied, in the first instance, to a large maxillary adenopathy secondary to a cutaneous epithelioma, and, in the second, to a glandular mass accompanying cancer of the rectum. Professor Jules Thiroloix, who brought forward the first of these observations, states that periodical intravenous injections of from 4 to 8 c.cm. of the colloidal selenium was followed by rigor accompanied by

rise of temperature, and that after five weeks the growth in the maxillary region suddenly increased in size and became fluctuating. Several punctures were then made in the mass, and a large amount of viscous, inodorous, aseptic fluid withdrawn. The mass disappeared almost entirely. Numerous particles of colloidal selenium were discovered in the fluid, and the cells appeared to be filled with them. Great reserve must be observed in drawing conclusions, but it appears to be established that the colloid is not toxic and that it has an action upon very vascular epitheliomatous masses. In the other case, recorded by Professor Netter, the injections made into the muscles of the gluteal region produced no febrile phenomena and resulted in a considerable diminution of the enlarged glands and functional improvement. The effect, if any, upon the tumour itself remains to be seen. This colloid, Selenium A, is prepared according to Dr. Lancien's technique by the Laboratoires Couturioux, 57, Avenue d'Antin, Paris, and bears the name of "Seleniol."

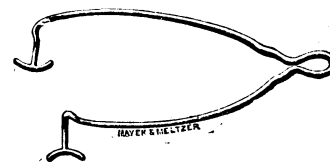
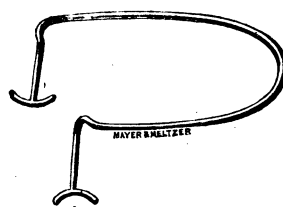
Mergentheim Tablets.

The water of the Karlsquelle, Mergentheim, is distinguished by the high proportions of sodium chloride, sodium sulphate, and magnesium sulphate which it contains in association with small quantities of several other salts. The Mergentheim tablets, supplied by Messrs. A. Siebert and Co., London, E.C., are made from the salts of this spring, and are intended to be dissolved in water to reproduce the natural water. Examination of a sample of the tablets gave results in accordance with the stated composition, and for any one wishing to drink the water without visiting the spring they furnish a means of preparing it as required. It is perhaps a disadvantage that they do not form a clear solution.

MEDICAL AND SURGICAL APPLIANCES.

Wound Retractor Prongs.

DR. H. ELLIOT-BLAKE (Bognor) writes: The wound retractor prongs are with a U- or V-shaped spring, and have been designed for self-retention and quick dilatation in wounds in minor surgery, and as an independent help to keep the unnecessary fingers of the assistant outside the wound. The prongs at the wound ends have a half-moon shape, the tips being slightly sharpened, and this arrangement admits of an increased hold upon the sides without doing damage. Both the elbow and the thickening at the back strengthens the resilience of the springs, especially when made of silver. The silver construction in my instruments when in the presence of a wound electrolyte probably enhances a cleaner and an antiseptic quality. The designs have been carried out by Messrs. Mayer and Meltzer, London.



Stethoscopic Chest-piece.

Dr. W. B. COLQUHOUN (London, W.C.) writes: In the issue of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL for March 23rd, 1912, p. 678, you have a review of a new stethoscopic chest-piece designed by Dr. Laurence M. Routh, and manufactured by Messrs. Krohne and Sesemann. With regard to this idea I am afraid that I must claim precedence by about five years. The chest-piece I designed was for precisely the same purpose—namely, to prevent raising a patient in bed. Also the phonophore principle of the chest-piece allowed examination through clothes, and the special ear-pieces needed no metal springs for retention in the ears. This stethoscope of mine was illustrated and reviewed at the annual meeting and exhibition at Exeter in August, 1907, and the review concerning it will be found in the SUPPLEMENT to the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL for August 31st, 1907. The instrument, chest-piece, ear-pieces, and also, which is important, the locking arrangement for fixing the movement of the revolving chest-piece in any desired position, was made for me by Messrs. Arnold and Sons, as may be seen on the block illustrating the instrument.